Preparation for Adulthood Skills, Knowledge and Experiences Framework

Introduction

Preparation for Adulthood is a key responsibility of education providers supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It should be an integral part of planning from the earliest years, enabling children and young people to develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and experiences they need to lead fulfilling adult lives.

This Skills, Knowledge and Experiences Framework has been developed to support schools, colleges and practitioners in identifying the building blocks that contribute to successful Preparation for Adulthood outcomes. It is designed to complement the Preparation for Adulthood Outcomes Framework by providing examples of the skills, knowledge and experiences that may support young people in working towards their longer-term aspirations and outcomes.

The framework is organised around the four nationally recognised Preparation for Adulthood pathways:

- Education, Training and Employment
- Independent Living
- Community Inclusion
- Health and Wellbeing

Within each pathway, a range of suggested skills and areas of learning are provided. The framework is not intended to be a checklist that every young person must achieve. Instead, it should be used flexibly to support person-centred planning, curriculum development, outcome setting and the identification of meaningful next steps based on a young person's strengths, interests, aspirations and individual circumstances.

To support consistent understanding and implementation, each skill is accompanied by a brief explanation of why it may be important in adult life. This helps to strengthen the connection between day-to-day learning opportunities and longer-term Preparation for Adulthood outcomes.

Schools may use this framework to:

- Review and enhance their Preparation for Adulthood curriculum offer.
- Identify opportunities to embed Preparation for Adulthood across the wider curriculum.
- Support outcome setting and annual review discussions.
- Inform provision mapping and transition planning.
- Monitor progression towards greater independence over time.
- Identify gaps in learning, experiences or provision.

The framework should be used alongside the Preparation for Adulthood Outcomes Framework, recognising that young people will develop skills at different rates and that progress may look different for each individual. The focus should remain on supporting every young person to achieve the best possible outcomes and move towards a fulfilling and meaningful adult life.

Examples of Meaningful Experiences

In addition to developing skills and knowledge, young people benefit from meaningful experiences that allow them to apply learning in real-life contexts. The examples below are not intended to be exhaustive or mandatory, but provide suggestions that schools, colleges and practitioners may wish to consider when planning Preparation for Adulthood opportunities. The appropriateness of experiences should always be determined by the young person's strengths, aspirations, age and stage of development.

Education, Training and Employment

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Self-Awareness and Aspirations	Identifies strengths, interests and talents	Helps young people make informed decisions about education, training and employment.
	Explores career aspirations and future goals	Supports planning for a meaningful and fulfilling adult life.
	Understands personal support needs	Enables young people to seek appropriate support and advocate for themselves in education and employment settings.
	Develops confidence and resilience	Supports successful participation in learning, employment and adult life.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Preparing for Education, Training and Employment	Creates a CV or personal profile	Provides evidence of skills, achievements and experiences when applying for opportunities.
	Completes application forms	Supports access to education, training and employment.
	Participates in interviews	Helps young people prepare for recruitment and selection processes.
	Understands workplace expectations	Supports successful participation in employment.
	Recognises appropriate workplace behaviour	Helps sustain positive working relationships and employment opportunities.
	Understands rights, responsibilities and equality in the workplace	Supports inclusion and self-advocacy in adult environments.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Employability Skills	Communicates effectively with others	Communication underpins success in education, employment and everyday life.
	Works as part of a team	Most employment and community activities require collaboration with others.
	Solves problems and makes decisions	Supports independence and confidence in unfamiliar situations.
	Organises time and prioritises tasks	Helps individuals manage responsibilities effectively.
	Follows instructions and completes tasks	Supports sustained engagement in learning and employment.
	Demonstrates reliability and punctuality	Supports positive educational and employment outcomes.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Experiences and Opportunities	Attends careers events and provider open days	Increases awareness of future opportunities and choices.
	Participates in work experience	Provides practical understanding of the workplace.
	Engages with employers and professionals	Develops confidence, aspirations and employability skills.
	Understands supported internships and employment pathways	Enables informed decision-making about post-16 and post-18 pathways.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Functional and Digital Skills	Uses literacy skills in everyday situations	Reading and writing are essential for independence and employment.
	Uses numeracy skills in practical contexts	Numeracy supports financial management and everyday decision-making.
	Uses email and digital communication appropriately	Digital communication is increasingly required in education and employment.
	Uses technology safely and effectively	Supports participation in modern workplaces and society.

Examples of Meaningful Experiences

Careers Exploration	Further Education and Training	Employability Experiences	Self-Advocacy and Future Planning
Meeting employers from different sectors. Attending careers fairs. Taking part in workplace visits. Listening to guest speakers from industry. Meeting apprentices, trainees and employees with SEND. Participating in enterprise activities. Exploring vocational pathways and occupations.	Attending college open events. Participating in taster days. Visiting sixth forms, colleges and training providers. Experiencing different learning environments. Meeting support staff from future settings. Attending transition visits.	Work experience placements. Supported work experience. Job shadowing opportunities. Volunteering placements. School-based enterprises. Charity fundraising projects. Running a small business or enterprise activity. Participating in mock interviews. Completing application forms. Creating a CV and personal profile.	Leading aspects of annual review meetings. Developing a one-page profile. Participating in person-centred planning. Presenting aspirations and future goals. Meeting careers advisers. Attending transition planning meetings.

Independent Living

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Daily Living Skills	Prepares food and drinks safely	Supports health, wellbeing and independence.
	Understands healthy eating	Enables informed lifestyle choices.
	Develops household skills such as cleaning and laundry	Supports greater independence at home.
	Organises belongings and personal responsibilities	Helps manage everyday life effectively.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Money Management	Recognises money and understands value	Supports financial independence.
	Pays for goods and services	Enables participation in everyday community life.
	Budgets and manages spending	Helps individuals make informed financial decisions.
	Understands banking and savings	Supports long-term financial wellbeing.
	Recognises scams and online financial risks	Promotes personal safety and financial security.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Travel and Community Safety	Uses travel routes and timetables	Increases access to opportunities and independence.
	Understands road and personal safety	Promotes confidence and safety in the community.
	Travels independently or knows how to access support	Enables participation in employment, education and leisure activities.
	Plans journeys using digital tools	Supports independent travel and problem-solving.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Decision Making and Self-Management	Makes everyday choices and decisions	Supports autonomy and self-determination.
	Understands rights and responsibilities	Helps individuals participate fully in society.
	Manages routines and personal organisation	Supports independence across all areas of life.
	Understands housing and future living options	Supports planning for adulthood and future independence.

Examples of Meaningful Experiences

Daily Living Experiences	Money Management Experiences	Travel and Community Navigation	Housing and Future Living
Preparing simple meals. Following recipes independently. Shopping for food items. Comparing prices when shopping. Planning a meal on a budget. Using kitchen equipment safely. Taking responsibility for personal belongings. Completing household tasks such as cleaning and laundry.	Purchasing items independently. Using cash in the community. Using debit or prepaid cards. Managing a personal budget. Planning spending for trips or activities. Saving towards a chosen goal. Comparing value and making informed purchasing decisions.	Independent travel training. Using public transport. Reading timetables. Planning routes using apps. Walking safely within the community. Visiting unfamiliar locations. Practising road safety skills. Accessing community facilities independently.	Visiting supported living schemes. Exploring different housing options. Participating in independent living programmes. Discussing future accommodation choices. Visiting university accommodation. Taking part in overnight residential experiences.

Community Inclusion

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Friendships and Social Relationships	Develops and maintains friendships	Positive relationships contribute to wellbeing and social inclusion.
	Communicates appropriately in different situations	Supports successful relationships and community participation.
	Understands different perspectives	Helps build empathy, respect and positive interactions.
	Resolves disagreements appropriately	Supports healthy and sustainable relationships.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Safe and Healthy Relationships	Understands personal boundaries	Promotes safety and respectful relationships.
	Understands consent and choice	Supports healthy adult relationships and personal autonomy.
	Recognises healthy and unhealthy relationships	Helps individuals keep themselves safe.
	Knows where to seek support or advice	Supports safeguarding and wellbeing.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Community Participation	Accesses activities within the local community	Encourages social inclusion and belonging.
	Participates in clubs, groups or volunteering	Develops skills, connections and confidence.
	Contributes to decisions that affect them	Supports self-advocacy and active citizenship.
	Understands their role within the community	Encourages participation and social responsibility.
	Develops awareness of diversity and inclusion	Supports respectful participation within diverse communities.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Digital Participation	Uses social media safely	Supports safe participation in modern society.
	Recognises online risks	Promotes personal safety and informed decision-making.
	Builds positive digital relationships	Supports communication and community participation.
	Understands digital citizenship	Encourages responsible and respectful online behaviour.

Examples of Meaningful Experiences

Developing Relationships	Community Participation	Self-Advocacy and Participation	Relationships and Personal Safety	Social and Leisure Experiences
Participating in group activities. Joining lunchtime or after-school clubs. Taking part in team projects. Building relationships with peers beyond friendship groups. Working collaboratively on shared tasks. Participating in peer mentoring programmes	Joining community groups. Accessing libraries, leisure centres and community venues. Participating in volunteering. Attending local events and festivals. Taking part in youth groups. Contributing to environmental projects. Participating in citizenship activities.	Joining a school council. Becoming a youth ambassador. Participating in SEND participation groups. Contributing to service consultations. Speaking at events or conferences. Supporting co-production activities. Sharing views about services and support.	Participating in relationship education activities. Discussing healthy friendships. Learning about online relationships. Practising communication and conflict resolution skills. Exploring personal boundaries and consent through age-appropriate teaching. Learning how to seek help and support.	Joining sports clubs. Attending social events. Participating in creative arts activities. Taking part in organised trips and visits. Exploring hobbies and interests. Accessing leisure opportunities outside school.

Health and Wellbeing

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Understanding Health and Wellbeing	Understands personal health needs	Supports informed decision-making and independence.
	Recognises factors that affect wellbeing	Promotes positive physical and emotional health.
	Understands healthy lifestyle choices	Supports long-term health outcomes.
	Understands the importance of sleep, exercise and nutrition	Contributes to overall wellbeing and quality of life.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Managing Health Needs	Attends health appointments	Supports engagement with healthcare services.
	Communicates health needs to others	Enables individuals to access appropriate support.
	Manages medication appropriately where relevant	Supports safe management of health conditions.
	Understands healthcare services and how to access them	Prepares young people for adult health services.
	Orders prescriptions or arranges appointments where appropriate	Supports increasing independence.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Emotional Health and Resilience	Recognises and communicates emotions	Supports emotional wellbeing and relationships.
	Uses strategies to manage anxiety and stress	Promotes resilience and wellbeing.
	Identifies trusted people and sources of support	Encourages help-seeking when needed.
	Develops confidence and self-esteem	Supports participation across all areas of adult life.

	Skill, Knowledge or Experience	Why This Matters for Adulthood
Personal Safety and Wellbeing	Recognises unsafe situations	Supports personal safety.
	Understands how to seek help in an emergency	Promotes independence and confidence.
	Makes informed choices relating to health and wellbeing	Supports self-determination and quality of life.
	Understands personal care and hygiene	Contributes to health, wellbeing and social inclusion.

Examples of Meaningful Experiences

Understanding and Managing Health	Healthy Lifestyle Experiences	Emotional Health and Wellbeing	Personal Care and Independence	Managing Risk and Staying Safe
Attending health appointments. Preparing questions for healthcare professionals. Understanding prescribed medication. Learning how health services operate. Visiting healthcare settings. Understanding support available through adult health services. Carrying and sharing relevant health information.	Taking part in sports and physical activities. Accessing local leisure facilities. Participating in healthy eating programmes. Learning to prepare healthy meals. Trying a range of physical activities. Developing personal fitness goals.	Participating in wellbeing programmes. Accessing mentoring opportunities. Learning relaxation and stress-management techniques. Exploring emotional regulation strategies. Taking part in resilience-building activities. Identifying trusted adults and support networks.	Managing personal hygiene routines. Learning self-care strategies. Developing age-appropriate independence in daily routines. Making informed choices about personal wellbeing. Understanding changing health needs as part of transition to adulthood.	Learning emergency procedures. Practising how to seek help. Understanding online safety. Exploring personal safety in the community. Learning about substance misuse risks. Practising safe decision-making in everyday situations.

Significant Transition Experiences

Preparation for Adulthood is a gradual process that takes place throughout a child or young person's educational journey. Alongside the development of skills and knowledge within each Preparation for Adulthood pathway, there are key transition experiences that can help young people prepare for future changes, make informed decisions and build confidence for adulthood.

These experiences often contribute to more than one Preparation for Adulthood pathway and provide important opportunities for young people to develop independence, self-advocacy and an understanding of the support and opportunities available to them in adult life.

The examples below are intended to support transition planning and should be considered alongside the individual strengths, aspirations, needs and circumstances of each young person.

Examples of Meaningful Experiences

- Attending transition reviews.
- Visiting future education settings.
- Meeting adult health professionals.
- Meeting adult social care practitioners.
- Developing a transition passport.
- Attending transition events and information sessions.
- Contributing to transition planning.
- Experiencing increased independence before moving to a new setting.
- Building relationships with future support teams.
- Participating in travel training linked to a future destination.

Meaningful Preparation for Adulthood is not solely achieved through the development of individual skills. Opportunities to experience change, explore future options, contribute to decision-making and build familiarity with new environments and services are equally important. Providing young people with a range of planned and purposeful transition experiences can support successful outcomes across all four Preparation for Adulthood pathways and help them move towards adult life with greater confidence and independence.