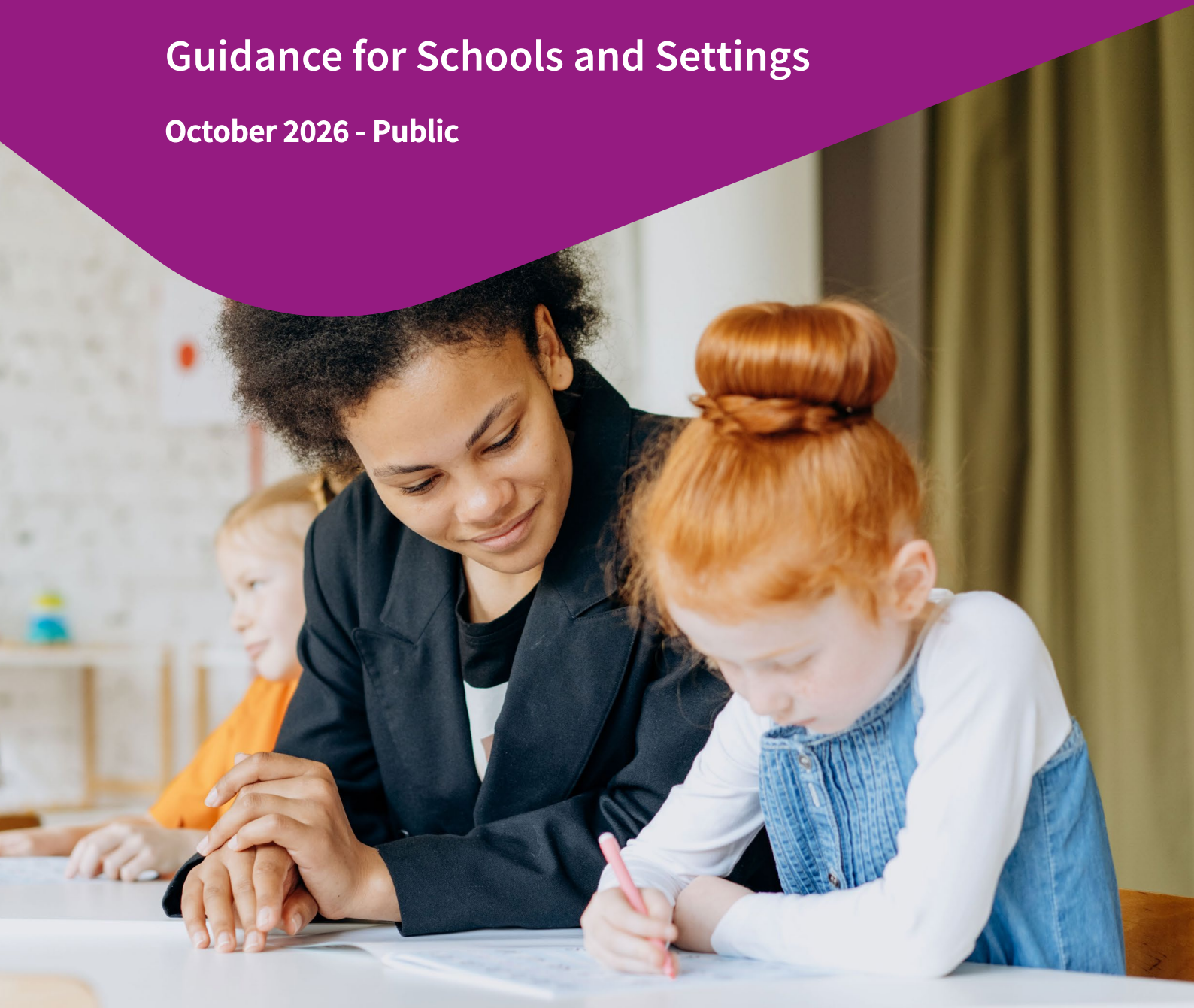
DERBYSHIRE County Council

Derbyshire's Approach to

Preparation for Adulthood from the Earliest Years

Guidance for Schools and Settings

October 2026 - Public



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Derbyshire's Approach to Preparation for Adulthood from the Earliest Years

Introduction

Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) is not a single event, it is a continuous process that begins in the early years and supports children and young people to build the skills, confidence, and independence needed for life beyond education.

All children and young people will have dreams and aspirations for their adult life, however, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) often face more barriers to success. It is important that every child and young person, including those with SEND, is provided with the support they need to enable them to move successfully through their educational journey and beyond into their adult life, so that they can reach their full potential and achieve their individual aspirations.

The transition from childhood to adulthood involves more than academic achievement; it encompasses four key areas of development, known as the four Preparation for Adulthood pathways:



Education, Training and Employment



Independent Living



Community Inclusion



Health and Wellbeing

This guide provides practical strategies and examples to help staff in educational settings to integrate Preparation for Adulthood into curriculum planning, review processes, and everyday learning and enrichment opportunities, helping to ensure that all children and young people have the tools they need to succeed as they move into their adult life. This guide has been co-produced in collaboration with young people, their families, and professionals across the SEND partnership.

Our sincere thanks to all contributors whose feedback, expertise and experiences helped shape this guidance.

Our Vision in Derbyshire

Every child and young person is able to follow their dreams, be valued for who they are, be safe and know they belong.

Turning Our Vision Into Reality

In Derbyshire we share one clear goal: to make sure every child and young person with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can live their best life. We want every child and young person to feel safe, happy and healthy, and to know they belong.

Everything we do is driven by this shared commitment. We believe every child and young person should be valued for who they are, supported in their learning, and connected to their community. By working together, we will help them to follow their dreams, grow in confidence, and achieve their full potential.

This guidance has been developed in the context of national reforms and expectations, including the White Paper, Every Child Achieving and Thriving. The White Paper sets out a national ambition to improve outcomes, strengthen inclusion, and ensure that every child receives the right support at the right time. It also reflects the wider principle of Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life, recognising that education begins long before primary school and that opportunities for all children to learn, grow and thrive must be in place from the earliest years.

This guidance supports the ambition set out in the White Paper to strengthen inclusive practice within mainstream education, ensuring that most children and young people with SEND can have their needs met effectively in their local school, with specialist support where required.

This guidance also supports a consistent approach to Preparation for Adulthood across Derbyshire, aligning with national expectations to ensure equitable experiences and outcomes regardless of setting.

This guidance should be read alongside Derbyshire's Transitions Guidance for Schools and Settings.



Key Principles

This guidance is underpinned by the following key principles.

Inclusive practice:

Ensuring that all children and young people have access to opportunities and have the tools and the support that they need to participate and to succeed.

Starting early and embedding PfA:

Ensuring that PfA is an embedded element of the support in place from an early age. Early conversations help shape aspirations and identify support needs.

Formal PfA planning from Year 9:

Beginning formal PfA planning for young people with SEND by Year 9 (age 13–14), or earlier where possible, to ensure a seamless transition as they move on from school.

Person-centred and strengths-based planning:

Focusing on the child or young person's aspirations, strengths, and interests, and not just on what they find difficult or what support they need. All children and young people will be recognised for their unique capabilities.

An individualised and holistic approach:

Robust planning across all four PfA pathways that is individualised and tailored to the strengths and needs of each child or young person.

Promotion of self-advocacy:

Ensuring that all children and young people can express their needs, preferences and rights, so that they are able to choose what they want for their adult life.

Promotion of autonomy:

All children and young people are supported to make their own decisions and have control over their own life choices. Young people tell us that it is important that they are aware of their rights and supported to exercise them as they get older.

Empowering families:

Families shared that effective communication is key, and access to relevant information is essential to the planning process.

Multi-agency collaboration:

Families say that there needs to be greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities of all involved, and a more coordinated approach to support across education, health and social care. We must all work in collaboration to ensure coordinated support and shared goals.

High aspirations:

Promoting ambition and focusing on 'what is possible' not 'what is available'. Supporting pathways into paid employment and economic independence is a key priority, reflecting national ambitions to improve long-term outcomes for young people with SEND.

What is Preparation for Adulthood?

Preparation for Adulthood is not a phrase that children and young people tend to use when discussing their future.

Instead, they might talk about 'growing up', which may include things like:

- Forming views about their own future
- Making their own decisions
- Leaving school
- Moving into further education or training
- Going to higher education/university
- Leaving home
- Travelling
- Getting a job

Some children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), may require targeted or specialist support to enable them to achieve their individual life goals and the most aspirational outcomes. It is important that all children and young people are provided with appropriate support to prepare them for adulthood from an early age.

The SEND Code of Practice (0–25 years) places a strong emphasis on PfA and sets clear expectations for educational settings and other services.



Chapter 8 of the Code of Practice states that Preparation for Adulthood should begin from the earliest years, not just at transition points. When SEND is first identified, families should be informed that most children with the right support can achieve employment, independent living, and community participation.

Support must be tailored to the young person's strengths, aspirations, and needs, involving them and their families/carers in decision-making. Annual reviews of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans from Year 9 onwards must include PfA outcomes.

The Four Preparation for Adulthood Pathways

Preparing for adulthood means preparing for:

Education, Training and Employment

Developing aspirations, skills, and experiences that lead to meaningful work.

Independent Living

Building practical life skills and promoting self-advocacy and autonomy. Budgeting, independent living skills and tenancy readiness.

Community Inclusion

Encouraging participation in social, leisure, and cultural activities, and promoting inclusion of all young people in their local communities.

Health and Wellbeing

Promoting physical and emotional well-being for a healthy adult life.

Good preparation for adult life needs to start early and requires services to work collaboratively. High aspirations are crucial to success and the focus should be on the strengths and capabilities of the child/young person, and the outcomes that they want to achieve.



Building Blocks for Adult Life

While the four PfA pathways are interconnected and equally important, it can be helpful to think about them as a series of building blocks that support one another.

Health and Wellbeing provide the foundation for all other areas of Preparation for Adulthood. Physical health, emotional wellbeing, communication, sensory regulation, self-regulation, and body awareness enable children and young people to engage in learning, build relationships, develop independence, and access opportunities within their communities. When children and young people feel safe, regulated, healthy, and emotionally supported, they are more able to participate in everyday activities and develop the skills needed for adult life.

Building on this foundation is **Community Inclusion**. Meaningful relationships, a sense of belonging, participation in community activities, and social connections help children and young people develop confidence, identity, and social capital. These experiences create opportunities to practise communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and self-advocacy in real-life situations.

As children and young people become healthier, more connected, and more confident in their communities, they are better positioned to develop **Independent Living** skills. These include managing daily routines, personal care, travel, budgeting, decision-making, self-advocacy, and taking increasing responsibility for their lives.

The development of health, social participation, and independence creates strong foundations for **Education, Training and Employment** outcomes. Sustained participation in education, learning, training, volunteering, and employment often relies on good physical and mental health, resilience, self-regulation, communication skills, confidence, and increasing independence.

This does not mean that work on employment should wait until all other areas are secure. Rather, it highlights that improvements in health and wellbeing often enable greater participation in community life, which in turn supports the development of independence and employability skills. For children and young people with SEND, strengthening the foundations of health and wellbeing can be transformational. When children and young people are supported to regulate, communicate, develop positive relationships, and feel that they belong, they are more likely to achieve positive long-term outcomes across all areas of adult life.



The Voice of Children and Young People

Throughout development of this guidance, we have engaged with young people to gain their views about what is important to them, and this has informed our approach.



These are some of the views that they shared:

"I think it's important to have people around me to support me as I move into adult life."

"I'd like help to travel on my own."

"I'd like more healthy eating advice."

"As I'm over 18, I may need help getting employment or a work placement."

"I think it's important to know how to keep safe."

Empowering Families

Working closely with parents/carers is essential to ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people. Parents/carers are key in supporting their child's development, decision-making, and transition planning, and they often have the deepest understanding of their child's strengths, needs, and aspirations. Effective collaboration with parents/carers enhances communication and trust, helping to ensure that PfA planning is person-centred and aligned with the child/young person's long-term goals.



Parent carers in Derbyshire have shared the following views related to Preparation for Adulthood, and this feedback has shaped the approach taken in this guidance.

"A more coordinated approach to support across education, health and social care is needed."

"Greater clarity about transitions rights and responsibilities is required."

"Improve information and communication with parent carers."

The experiences and aspirations shared by children, young people and families provide a clear vision for Preparation for Adulthood in Derbyshire. They remind us that successful preparation is not simply about accessing services, but about supporting young people to lead fulfilling lives, achieve their goals and have genuine choice and control over their futures. Their voices should remain at the heart of Preparation for Adulthood planning and decision-making.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the children, young people and families who generously shared their experiences, views and aspirations.

A Whole School/Setting Approach to Preparation for Adulthood

A whole school/setting approach to PfA means embedding opportunities for independence, decision-making, and life skills into everyday practice for all children and young people, not just those with SEND. This ensures that every child and young person develops the foundations for adult life through age-appropriate experiences across the curriculum and wider school/setting activities.

By adopting an inclusive universal approach, all educational settings create a strong foundation for targeted and specialist support where this may be needed, ensuring that Preparation for Adulthood is seen as a shared responsibility and an expected part of education for all.

As part of the universal inclusive offer, schools should deliver Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education that is tailored to reflect the needs of their pupils. PSHE should also build on the content already outlined in the national curriculum and in statutory guidance on drug education, financial education, sex and relationship (RSE) education, and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle.

Providing careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for all children and young people is an important element of the universal inclusive approach. Secondary schools and colleges are required to provide careers guidance for those in Year 7 and above which is aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks. Primary schools also have an important role to play in helping their pupils to explore their aspirations and develop the skills needed for further education, training and employment as they get older.

As part of a whole school/setting approach:

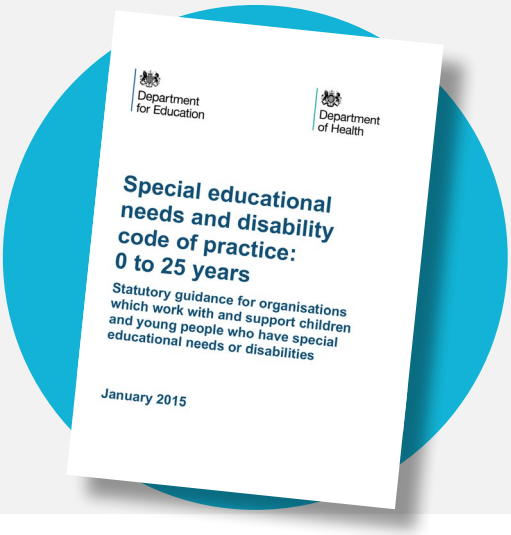
- Support the aspirations of all children and young people.
- Provide appropriate workforce development to the staff team to ensure that the curriculum offer meets the needs and aspirations identified by children and young people.
- Use evidence-based best practice to inform development of the curriculum offer.
- Embed Preparation for Adulthood across the curriculum and wider school life.
- Involve children and young people in planning and decision-making.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers.
- Promote independence, self-advocacy and choice.
- Develop links with employers, education providers and community organisations.
- Create opportunities for community participation and developing friendships.
- Align planning and outcomes with the Preparation for Adulthood pathways.
- Celebrate progress and achievement.
- Monitor and review the impact of Preparation for Adulthood provision.
- Plan transitions early and proactively.
- Remove barriers and promote inclusive opportunities.
- Foster a culture where Preparation for Adulthood is everyone's responsibility.
- View Preparation for Adulthood as a continuous journey that is embedded throughout a child or young person's educational experience.

Targeted and Specialist Support

An inclusive whole school/setting approach to Preparation to Adulthood ensures that all pupils develop essential life skills and independence, however some children and young people may require additional support to achieve their aspirations. Targeted and targeted plus interventions build on the universal inclusive offer by providing structured opportunities and tailored guidance for those who need extra help, such as small-group sessions or focused transition planning. For pupils with more complex needs, specialist support offers highly individualised strategies, often involving multi-agency collaboration and bespoke outcomes. Together, these layers create a continuum of support that enables every learner to prepare effectively for adulthood, regardless of their starting point.

The SEND Code of Practice says…

- Being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life transforming for children and young people with SEND.
- This support needs to start early and should centre around the child or young person's own aspirations, interests and needs.
- All professionals working with them should share high aspirations and have a good understanding of what support is effective in enabling children and young people to achieve their ambitions.



Where children and young people access alternative provision, Preparation for Adulthood must remain a central focus, ensuring continuity of aspirations, skills development, and transition planning.

Universal, targeted and specialist support work together to provide a graduated approach to Preparation for Adulthood, enabling children and young people to access the level of support they need at different stages of their journey. Building aspirations, developing skills and planning for the future should begin early and continue over time, helping every child and young person prepare for a fulfilling adult life.

Preparation for Adulthood from the Earliest Years

It is essential that Preparation for Adulthood is an integrated element of the curriculum offer in educational settings across all key stages, starting in the Early Years. Each key stage offers unique opportunities to build skills in the four PfA pathways. Here are some examples of practical strategies for each key stage, and more detailed examples are included within the toolkit that accompanies this guidance.

The information is presented by key stage; however, it is important to remember that all children progress differently, and therefore this should be used as a guide and tailored for each individual child/young person.

Early Years

Early childhood is a critical period for developing confidence, communication, and decision-making. These skills form the basis for later independence in education, employment, health, and community life.

- **Voice and Choice:** Give children opportunities to make decisions.
- **Independence:** Encourage self-care and responsibility.
- **Communication:** Support children to express needs and preferences.
- **Problem-Solving:** Foster resilience through play and exploration.

Key Strategies

Develop communication skills

- Use play-based approaches, visuals, Makaton/Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) where needed
- Encourage choice-making and expressing preferences

Promote independence

- Encourage self-feeding, dressing, toileting routines
- Embed approaches that build independence

Build social interaction

- Structured play, turn-taking, shared attention
- Early peer engagement

Community links

- Visits to parks, shops, libraries and other community settings
- Routine-based experiences

Work with families

- Support parents/carers to build independence skills at home
- Share strategies consistently across settings

Key Stage 1

Children are developing confidence, communication, and problem-solving skills. These early experiences influence their ability to make choices, manage responsibilities, and advocate for themselves as they grow.

- **Voice and Choice:** Encourage children to express preferences and make decisions.
- **Independence:** Build practical skills for self-care and learning.
- **Communication:** Support clear, respectful expression of needs.
- **Resilience:** Teach problem-solving and coping strategies.

Key Strategies

Develop independence

- Encourage dressing, tidying, and managing belongings
- Use visual timetables and structured routines

Early communication and decision-making

- Provide opportunities to make choices (activities, snacks, tasks)
- Support expressive communication - speech, symbols, or Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Early careers education

- Classroom roles (helper, register monitor, tidy-up leader)
- Role play (shops, cafés, different jobs)

Social skills development

- Turn-taking, sharing, and group play
- Structured support for friendships

Community awareness

- Visits in the local community
- Basic road safety and keeping safe in the community

Key Stage 2

During key stage 2, children are developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and social skills. They may be ready for more responsibility and can begin to understand the link between choices and consequences.

The focus should be on embedding skills that prepare pupils for independence, self-advocacy, and autonomy - essential for successful transitions into secondary education and beyond.

- **Voice and Choice:** Encourage pupils to express opinions and make decisions.
- **Independence:** Build skills for managing learning and personal responsibilities.
- **Communication:** Teach clear, respectful self-expression and negotiation.
- **Resilience:** Promote problem-solving and coping strategies for challenges.

Key Strategies

Develop responsibility

- More complex classroom jobs
- Managing homework and equipment

Develop life skills

- Understanding money (coins, simple transactions)
- Understanding time (daily schedules, sequencing)

Develop aspirations

- Explore a range of jobs through curriculum links
- Invite visitors or use themed careers days

Strengthen independence

- Planning simple tasks independently
- Problem-solving activities

Community engagement

- Trips to shops, libraries, leisure centres and other community settings
- Begin using simple transport concepts (e.g. recognising bus stops/signs)

Emotional literacy

- Understanding feelings and self-regulation
- Building resilience and coping strategies

Key Stage 3

Pupils begin to develop identity, confidence, and responsibility. They may be ready for more complex decision-making, managing their own learning, and understanding the link between choices and future opportunities.

- **Voice and Choice:** Empower pupils to express opinions and make informed decisions.
- **Independence:** Build skills for managing time, learning, and personal responsibilities.
- **Communication:** Teach assertive, respectful self-expression and negotiation.
- **Resilience:** Promote problem-solving and coping strategies for challenges.

Key Strategies

Structured careers education aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks

- Link subjects to real-world jobs
- Early exposure to labour market awareness
- Delivery of the Gatsby Benchmarks

Develop independence skills

- Organising schoolwork, time management
- Personal organisation and responsibility
- Independent travel skills including road safety, journey planning
- Supported travel experiences

Life skills development

- Basic cooking, budgeting awareness
- Decision-making and risk awareness

Person-centred planning

- Involve young people in discussions about their future
- Identify strengths and interests

Social and community inclusion

- Encouraging participation in clubs and activities
- Building confidence in social situations

For young people with SEND, the SEND Code of Practice clearly sets out the requirements for formal Preparation for Adulthood planning for young people with SEND in secondary school.

From key stage 3 onwards, planning should include individualised support in the following areas:

- Exploring suitable post-16 pathways that will support the young person's aspirations and lead to higher education or employment options.
- Discussion about training options such as apprenticeships and supported internships.
- Support to develop employability skills and prepare for employment, including work experience opportunities.
- Support to ensure that the young person can take part in hobbies and interests, keep in touch with friends, and access community facilities.
- Help to understand what welfare benefits may be available to them when they are in work, including Access to Work.
- Discussion about where the young person wants to live and what support they might need to live independently. Local housing options should be explored, and information about social care support should be provided.
- Information about personal budgets and direct payments, if appropriate.
- Advice and support to enable the young person to travel independently.
- Advice about health care services so that the young person knows which services will support them as they get older. Information should be provided about annual health checks for young people with a learning disability.



Key Stage 4

This stage is critical for preparing young people for life beyond education. They will be making key decisions about qualifications, careers, and personal goals. Building confidence, resilience, and practical life skills now will help them thrive in adulthood.

- **Voice and Choice:** Empower pupils to make informed decisions about their future.
- **Independence:** Develop skills for managing time, learning, and responsibilities.
- **Communication:** Teach assertive, respectful self-expression and negotiation.
- **Resilience:** Promote problem-solving and coping strategies for real-world challenges.

Key Strategies

Intensive careers guidance

- Individual pathways planning (linked to aspirations)
- Clear progression routes (college, apprenticeships, training, supported internships)
- Delivery of the Gatsby Benchmarks

Work-related learning

- Meaningful work experience placements
- Employer engagement and encounters

Independent travel training

- Moving towards independence where appropriate
- Real-life journey practice

Functional life skills

- Cooking, budgeting, managing time
- Understanding bills and responsibilities

Active involvement in annual reviews

- Clear Preparation for Adulthood outcomes
- Young person's voice is central to planning and review

Preparing for transition

- Visits to colleges or post-16 providers
- Taster sessions and transition programmes
- Development of transition plans

Post-16

At this stage, young people are making significant decisions about careers, further education, and life skills. They need practical Preparation for Adulthood, including financial literacy, self-management, and resilience to thrive in diverse environments.

- **Voice and Choice:** Empower learners to make informed decisions about their future.
- **Independence:** Develop skills for managing time, finances, and responsibilities.
- **Communication:** Teach assertive, professional self-expression and negotiation.
- **Resilience:** Promote problem-solving and coping strategies for real-world challenges.

Key Strategies

Clear pathways to employment

- Employment preparation programmes, work experience opportunities, supported internships and apprenticeships
- Vocational learning linked to labour market needs

Real-world experience

- Long-term work placements rather than short tasters
- Job coaching and employer partnerships

Independent living skills

- Managing money, cooking, housing awareness
- Understanding bills, tenancy, benefits

Health and wellbeing independence

- Self-managing appointments and medication where appropriate
- Understanding healthy lifestyles

Stronger community inclusion

- Access to leisure, volunteering, and social networks
- Reducing reliance on specialist-only environments

Post 16 Study Programmes

Post-16 study programmes are designed to be flexible and person-centred, offering pathways that include academic qualifications, vocational training, work experience, and opportunities to build independence. They support the four Preparation for Adulthood pathways by embedding practical learning alongside formal education. For example, work placements and employability skills sessions prepare students for the workplace, while life skills and travel training promote independence. Collaboration between education providers, families/carers, and local services ensures that programmes are tailored to individual aspirations, enabling young people to transition confidently into further education, employment, or adult services.

All students aged 16-19 (and, where they have an EHC plan, those aged over 19 and up to age 25) should follow a coherent study programme which provides stretch and progression and enables them to achieve the best possible outcomes in adult life. Study programmes are designed to provide students with a structured learning programme aimed at supporting their development and progression in line with their career pathways.

Study programmes should be individually tailored, but will typically include:

- Qualifications that stretch students and prepare them for further study or employment.
- Maths and English (where not already achieved).
- Work experience to give students the chance to apply their skills in real life conditions.
- Other non-qualification activity to develop broader skills and support progression.

Repetition is discouraged where it does not support progression.

For students not taking qualifications, their study programme should focus on high quality work experience and other activities that build employability and independence, including options such as Supported Internships. Funding for study programmes is based on a full-time programme that comprises around 600 learning hours across an academic year. This means that study programmes are typically delivered across 3 or 4 days each week during term-time.



Transition to Adulthood

As young people approach adulthood and move towards leaving education, planning should increasingly focus on the practical arrangements, opportunities and support required to help them achieve their aspirations and experience a successful transition into adult life.

Key Strategies

Pathways into sustained employment

- Ongoing job coaching where needed
- Employer support and reasonable adjustments

Housing pathways

- Exploring supported living, independent tenancies
- Practical experience of independent living skills in real-life settings

Financial independence

- Managing benefits, wages, and budgeting
- Keeping safe from financial exploitation

Community participation

- Building friendships beyond school/college
- Access to inclusive community opportunities

Integrated adult services transition

- Smooth handover from children's to adult services where appropriate
- Early planning for transitions into adult services (from Year 9 onwards at the latest)



Strategies Across All Age Groups

Certain approaches underpin effective Preparation for Adulthood regardless of age, stage or pathway. The following strategies should be considered throughout a child or young person's educational journey.

Transition support:

Ensuring proactive transition arrangements are in place for transitions between activities, classes, year groups and key stages.

Robust transition planning which is built on strong collaboration between families/carers, educational settings, and support services ensures that individual needs are understood and addressed, creating continuity and stability. Effective transitions lay the foundation for consistent attendance, emotional well-being, and academic achievement, setting children up for a successful journey through education and beyond.

Functional skills as essential building blocks:

Including functional literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

Functional skills are essential building blocks for successful transitions into adulthood. These skills underpin all four PfA pathways. For example, being able to manage money, read instructions, communicate effectively, and use technology confidently enables young people with SEND to access work opportunities, live independently, and participate fully in society. Without strong functional skills, everyday tasks become barriers rather than stepping stones. Embedding functional skills development across all stages of education, from early years through to post-16, ensures that young people are equipped not only for qualifications but for real-life independence and resilience.

A relational approach:

The importance of building strong relationships, including with pastoral teams and keyworkers.

A relational approach is central to successful PfA. Building strong, respectful relationships ensures that planning and support is truly person-centred and reflects individual aspirations. It is important to invest time in understanding the child/young person's story, strengths, and goals, creating a foundation for co-production and shared decision-making. This approach also helps reduce anxiety during transitions. Relational practice fosters continuity across education, health, and social care, enabling smoother transitions and better outcomes. PfA is most effective when relationships drive the process, ensuring that every young person feels valued and empowered to shape their futures.

These cross-cutting strategies support children and young people to make progress towards their aspirations across all four Preparation for Adulthood pathways. The following section outlines the outcomes that schools, settings and practitioners may wish to consider when supporting children and young people on their journey towards adult life.

Preparation for Adulthood Outcomes

Well-written outcomes are central to effective Preparation for Adulthood planning and support. Outcomes should be ambitious yet realistic, reflecting the individual's strengths, aspirations, and needs across the four Preparation for Adulthood pathways. This section provides practical guidance to help staff to develop outcomes that are person-centred, measurable, and aligned with long-term aspirations. By focusing on quality and clarity, educational settings can ensure that support plans, transition plans and annual reviews are meaningful and actionable.

When writing person-centred outcomes, it is good practice to include:

- The child/young person's name written in the first person
- The timescale by which the outcome will be achieved
- The skill/skills to be developed
- What the development of the skill will make possible for the child/young person.

Ensure that each outcome is linked to the child/young person's aspirations. Also, don't forget to identify the support that the child/young person will need to help them achieve the outcome, and ensure that this is added to their annual review/individual plan.

Example Outcomes by Key Stage

The following list not intended to be exhaustive but can be used as a guide. The outcomes may meet one or more of the PfA pathways.

Early Years

(Outcomes should align to the Early Learning Goals in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework)

By the end of Early Years Foundation Stage:

- I will be able to take part in a range of simple cooperative play or turn-taking games for at least 5 minutes in a small group of children, supported by a familiar adult, so that I can build positive relationships with others and participate more confidently in group activities.
- I will be able to communicate consistently and effectively using vocalisations and non-verbal means, so that I can make my preferences known, have my needs understood and participate more fully in everyday activities and interactions.
- I will be able to follow adult direction to focus for 5 minutes on a non-preferred activity that I have not chosen myself, so that I can take part in a wider range of learning experiences and develop the skills needed to learn alongside others.
- I will be aware of common dangers in my environment and respond to visual and/or verbal warnings from adults, so that I can keep myself safe and participate more confidently in everyday activities and new environments.

Key Stage 1

By the end of Key Stage 1:

- I will be better able to recognise common risks in my environment and respond appropriately to reminders from adults, so that I can keep myself and others safe during everyday activities.
- I will be able to dress and undress independently, including managing fastenings appropriate to my age and stage of development, so that I can take part in daily routines with greater independence and confidence.
- I will be better able to understand that others may think differently to me by listening to others' views, waiting, taking turns, sharing and recognising social cues during interactions with familiar adults and peers, so that I can build positive relationships and take part successfully in social activities.
- I will start learning tasks independently following an adult instruction on at least 3 out of 5 occasions, so that I can participate more independently in classroom activities and learning opportunities.

Key Stage 2

By the end of Key Stage 2:

- I will develop my attention and self-regulation skills so that I can focus on an adult-led activity for at least 20 minutes on 80% of occasions, enabling me to engage more successfully in learning and classroom activities.
- I will be able to use a range of strategies to recognise, monitor and manage my sensory needs and maintain my attention in the classroom, so that I can participate in learning with greater independence and confidence.
- I will feel safe, valued and supported within my educational setting and develop positive relationships with trusted adults, so that I can attend regularly and engage confidently in school life.
- I will be able to recognise and talk about my strengths, abilities and support needs, so that I can develop confidence, make positive choices and advocate for myself when appropriate.

Key Stage 3

By the end of Key Stage 3:

- I will be able to communicate confidently and maintain conversations with a range of familiar and less familiar people in different settings, so that I can build relationships, participate in my community and prepare for increased independence in adulthood.
- I will engage purposefully with at least two peers during a shared activity for at least one hour each day, so that I can develop friendships, teamwork skills and confidence in social situations.
- I will independently use speech-to-text software to record and demonstrate my learning, so that I can access the curriculum more successfully and communicate my knowledge and ideas with confidence.
- I will be able to recognise when I need support and communicate this to a trusted adult, so that I can advocate for myself and play an active role in decisions that affect me.

Key Stage 4

By the end of Key Stage 4:

- I will have participated in a range of meaningful work-related learning and work experience opportunities so that I can identify my strengths, interests and preferences and make informed decisions about future education, training and employment pathways.
- I will have developed the skills and confidence needed to travel independently to familiar destinations, including my post-16 setting where appropriate, so that I can access education, employment and community opportunities more independently.
- I will be able to recognise potential risks and use appropriate strategies to keep myself safe at school, online and in my community, so that I can participate confidently and safely in learning, social and community activities.
- I will be able to identify and use a range of strategies to support my mental health and wellbeing and know how and where to access support in further education, training or employment settings, so that I can manage challenges effectively and seek help when needed.

Post-16

By the end of Post-16:

- I will be able to identify my strengths, interests and support needs so that I can make informed decisions about my next steps in education, employment or training, and communicate these clearly during reviews, interviews and planning meetings.
- I will be able to manage my daily timetable, appointments and deadlines with increasing independence, using digital tools or organisational strategies that work best for me, so that I can participate confidently in college, work placements and community activities.
- I will have developed the confidence and skills to advocate for reasonable adjustments in education, work or community settings, so that I can access opportunities on an equal basis and maintain my wellbeing.
- I will be able to travel independently to a range of familiar and unfamiliar places linked to my study programme, work experience or social life, using public transport or other safe travel methods that suit my needs.
- I will have gained practical experience in real work environments that match my interests, so that I can understand what is expected of me in the workplace and decide which employment pathways feel right for me.
- I will be able to manage my own health and wellbeing needs with increasing independence, including recognising early signs of stress or anxiety and using strategies or support services that help me stay well.
- I will be able to participate confidently in my community — including shops, leisure venues, clubs or volunteering opportunities — so that I can build meaningful relationships and develop the independence I need for adult life.
- I will understand my rights and responsibilities as an adult, including how to keep myself safe online, in relationships and in the community, so that I can make informed choices and seek help when I need it.

Preparation for Adulthood Annual Reviews

All annual reviews for young people in Year 9 and above must include a focus on preparing for adulthood.

Planning must be centred around the individual and explore the young person's aspirations and abilities, including:

- What they want to be able to do when they leave post-16 education or training (with reference to the four PfA pathways).
- The support they need to achieve their ambitions.
- How the young person wants that support to be available and what action should be taken to provide it.
- It should also identify the support the young person may need as they prepare to make more decisions for themselves.

Transition planning will be built into the revised EHC Plan, and clear outcomes should be agreed that are ambitious and stretching in order to prepare the young person for their adult life.

Support to prepare for further/higher education, training and/or employment:

- This should include identifying appropriate post-16 pathways that will lead to these outcomes.
- Training options such as supported internships and apprenticeships should be discussed, or support for setting up your own business.
- The review should also cover support in finding a job and learning how to do a job (for example, 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.
- This should also include discussing where the young person wants to live in the future, who they want to live with and what support they will need.
- Local housing options, support in finding accommodation, housing costs and benefits and social care support should be explained.

Support to participate in society and be included in the local community:

- Including understanding mobility and transport support, how to find out about social and community activities, and opportunities for engagement in local decision-making.
- This also includes support in developing and maintaining friendships and relationships and being able to access the local community independently.

Support in maintaining good health in adult life:

- Including effective planning with health services and helping children and young people understand which health professionals will work with them in adulthood.

Reflective questions:

1. What do you do in your setting to ensure that Preparation for Adulthood planning is individualised and person-centred?
2. How do you support young people to share their views and aspirations and how do you ensure these are listened to?
3. How do you ensure that all four PfA pathways are discussed in annual reviews and that appropriate planning and support is provided for all young people with an EHC Plan?
4. What tools do you use to support effective PfA planning in your setting?
5. How do you ensure that all staff working with a young person are aware of their individual PfA outcomes and the support required?

Tips for Effective Preparation for Adulthood Annual Reviews

These tips have been prepared to help facilitators ensure that reviews are strengths-based, meaningful, person-centred, and outcome driven.

Centre the young person:

- Use accessible formats (e.g., visuals, symbols) to help the young person express their views.
- Support self-advocacy by involving them in setting goals and reviewing progress.
- Celebrate achievements to build confidence and motivation.

Be outcome-focused:

- Ensure that SMART outcomes are identified (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
- Link outcomes to the four PfA pathways: Education, Training and Employment, Independent Living, Community Inclusion, and Health and Wellbeing.
- Ensure outcomes reflect the young person's aspirations, not just service availability.

In preparation:

- Gather input from all relevant professionals (e.g., education staff, social workers, health professionals).
- Review progress against previous outcomes and identify barriers or successes.
- Ensure all documentation is up to date and accurate.

Use person-centred tools and templates:

- Use a PfA outcomes tool to guide discussions.
- Refer to the Local Offer for available services and support.

Plan for transitions:

- Discuss next steps (e.g., college, training, supported employment) early and clearly.
- Consider visits or taster sessions e.g. with post-16 providers.
- Ensure transition assessments (e.g. under the Care Act) are planned if needed.

Review Checklist

Use the checklist below to help guide discussions and ensure key actions are undertaken. However, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list, and it is important that reviews are person-centred and individualised.

Education, Training and Employment:

- Have the young person's career/employment aspirations been identified and discussed?
- Have appropriate PfA outcomes and support/provision been identified to help them achieve these aspirations?
- Have the next steps for education/training/employment been explored – e.g. for those young people in key stage 4, have post-16 options been discussed? For those already in post-16 provision, have supported employment options been considered?
- Have supported internships, apprenticeships and pathways to paid employment been explored?
- Have entrepreneurial options been explored if appropriate?
- For those aspiring to move into higher education pathways, have the different options been discussed e.g. higher-level apprenticeships, foundation courses?
- Has the young person accessed careers advice and guidance, work experience, volunteering or do they have a part time job?
- Does the young person have a vocational profile in place?
- Is the young person aware of support available to help them to achieve employment in the future for example Derbyshire Disability Employment Service?
- Is the young person care experienced? If so, they may already be living in supported accommodation or with carers. Therefore, next stages and plans will need to be considered in line with their circumstances moving forward.

Independent Living

- What life skills does the young person need to develop for managing money, cooking, travel, and household tasks?
- Have the young person's future independent living aspirations been discussed?
- Have appropriate PfA outcomes and support/provision been identified to help them achieve these aspirations?
- Are they aware of their housing options and where they can seek advice and guidance about this in the future?
- Has a transition assessment been discussed if the young person may have eligible needs as defined by the Care Act?
- Has signposting been provided to services such as Welfare Rights?

Community Inclusion

- Does the young person have opportunities to build friendships, relationships, and participate in local activities?
- What skills might they require in order to maintain friendships and relationships effectively?
- Have appropriate PfA outcomes and support/provision been identified to help them achieve their goals in this area?
- What support may be needed to access leisure, volunteering, and social networks? Is the young person aware of how they access information about this?
- Is the young person able to keep themselves safe whilst out in the community? Are they aware of the Safe Places scheme and app?
- Using public transport and engaging with community services. What skills might be required in this area? Is a referral to Community Connectors appropriate? Is the young person aware of where else they can access support e.g. social prescribers, voluntary sector organisations?

Health and Wellbeing

- Transition planning from children's to adult health services: have relevant health professionals contributed to the review and is there a transition plan in place?
- Support for managing physical and mental health needs: is the young person aware of how to access support? For example, are they aware of how to access universal services such as the GP, dentist and opticians? Ensure that young people with a learning disability who are eligible for annual health checks are aware of how to access this support.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles and self-care: what is the young person working towards in this area? What skills might they need to build or develop?



Young People Preparing to Make Their Own Decisions

As young people develop and form their own views, they should be more involved in decisions about their own future. After compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16) the right to make requests and decisions under the Children and Families Act 2014 applies to them directly, rather than to their parents/carers. Parents/carers and other family members can continue to support young people in making decisions, or act on their behalf, provided the young person is happy for them to do so.

The specific decisions which apply to young people directly from the end of compulsory school age include:

- the right to request an assessment for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan
- the right to make representation about the content of their plan
- the right to request a particular institution is named in their plan
- the right to request a Personal Budget for elements of an EHC plan
- the right to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEN and Disability).

This does not mean that parents/carers are excluded. The local authority, schools, colleges, health services and other agencies should continue to involve parents/carers, particularly when the young person is not yet 18 years old. Typically, young people this age will still want support and advice from their parents/carers on decisions that affect them, but the final decision rests with the young person.

Recognising the increasing independence of young people once they reach age 16 and beyond, the local authority has a number of legal responsibilities such as:

- Making sure information, advice and support is available directly to young people; independent of their parents/carers if that is want they want.
- Making sure that all reviews of Education, Health and Care Plans for children and young people, especially from age13-14 onwards, include a focus on preparing for adulthood.
- Making sure that children and young people have access to support from an independent skilled supporter or advocate if they want or need this.
- Making sure services they provide – such as housing, children's social care and adult social care – help children and young people prepare for adulthood.
- Carrying out an adult care transition assessment for young people approaching, or aged 18 and over with SEND, if they think it will benefit that young person.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005

The right of young people to make a decision is subject to their capacity to do so as set out in the Mental Capacity Act (MCA). The underlying principle of the MCA is to ensure those who lack capacity are empowered to make as many decisions for themselves as possible and that any decision made, or action taken on their behalf, is done so in their best interests.

Supporting Young People to Choose: Self-Advocacy and Autonomy

As children and young people are supported to prepare for adulthood, developing self-advocacy and autonomy becomes essential for building confidence, independence, and resilience.

Self-advocacy is the ability to understand one's own needs, communicate them effectively, and make informed decisions about personal goals and support. It empowers individuals to have a voice in shaping their future, ensuring that choices reflect their aspirations rather than being made solely by others. It is important to ensure that advocacy support is in place for those who need this.

Autonomy complements self-advocacy by fostering the skills and mindset needed to take responsibility for everyday life decisions. This includes managing health, education, employment, and social relationships. Encouraging autonomy does not mean removing support; rather, it involves creating opportunities for young people to build decision-making skills in safe, supportive environments.

Together, self-advocacy and autonomy are cornerstones of successful Preparation for Adulthood. They help young people navigate complex systems, access resources, and build the confidence to lead fulfilling lives.



Practical Strategies to Promote Self-Advocacy

Schools and settings can support the development of self-advocacy through everyday opportunities that help children and young people build confidence, express their views, make choices, and participate in decision-making.

Start early with everyday choices

- Encourage decision-making in daily routines (e.g., choosing clothes, planning meals).
- Use these moments to discuss consequences and build confidence in making choices.

Teach communication skills

- Support young people to express preferences clearly and respectfully.
- Role-play scenarios such as asking for help, negotiating, or saying "no."

Provide accessible information

- Offer clear, age-appropriate explanations about rights, options, and responsibilities.
- Use visual aids, easy-read materials, or digital tools to make information understandable.

Involve young people in planning

- Include them in meetings about education and future goals.
- Ask open-ended questions like "What matters most to you?" or "What would you like to try?"

Create safe opportunities for risk-taking

- Allow children and young people to make mistakes and learn from them in a supportive environment.
- Gradually increase responsibility (e.g., leading part of a group activity, taking on a classroom role).

Model and reinforce self-advocacy

- Demonstrate how to speak up respectfully and problem-solve.
- Celebrate successes when young people advocate for themselves.

Connect to peer and community networks

- Encourage participation in youth forums, clubs, or advocacy groups.
- Peer support can boost confidence and provide role models.

Use person-centred planning tools

- Tools like "All About Me" profiles or "One-Page Profiles" help young people articulate their strengths, needs, and aspirations.
- Review and update these regularly to reflect growth and changing goals.

Planning for Adult Services, Support and Transitions

Transitioning on from Children's Services

The Care Act 2014

Under the Care Act the local authority has a duty to carry out a transition assessment for a young person or carer, in order to help them plan, if they are likely to have needs once they (or the child they care for) turn 18. If a young person is likely to have needs when they turn 18, the local authority must assess them when it considers there is a significant benefit to the individual in doing so.

In order to request assessment for a young person who is likely to have eligible needs once they turn 18, the trained team at Call Derbyshire can offer advice and support.

Young people with a social worker (including children in care)

Young people who are supported by Derbyshire social care services will be allocated a named worker to support them through the process of transition into adulthood from age 14 onwards. Their allocated worker will work with the young person, their parents/carers and those already supporting them to ensure that their transition is positive, and that the young person has choice and control over how they want to live their life. The young person's named worker will help guide them through the transition process, linking with the young person, and their parents/carers, friends and support workers, to plan how to achieve their aspirations. They will be supported to think creatively about their life and their goals. The named worker will be part of regular review meetings with the young person, parents/carers, and all professionals involved to make sure that the changes they have planned are right for them and that they are in touch with the right people and organisations to move them forward with plans for their adult life in their own way.

Transitioning to Adulthood

Thinking about a young person's hopes, abilities and aspirations for the future can be daunting. Using a planned approach, with the young person at the centre and the wider support network around them, can help make planning for the next step easier to manage.

What happens and when?

Conversations should start with young people, parents/carers, and professionals, from the age of 14 years. If the young person has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, social care, or early help involvement, this helps to think about how they can be supported to reach their full potential.

Between 15 and 16 years of age, young people may be starting to think about college, where they would like to live and how they will socialise with friends and family for example.

At age 16 to 17 years, it is good practice to have the input of adult social care if the young person is likely to meet the adult eligibility criteria. They can start gathering information for an adult care assessment (based on the Care Act 2014).

For assessment and support planning, The Care Act 2014 outlines:

'Where it appears to a local authority that a child is likely to have needs for care and support after becoming 18, the authority must, if it is satisfied that it would be of significant benefit to the child to do so and if the consent condition is met, assess—

- whether the child has needs for care and support and, if so, what those needs are, and
- whether the child is likely to have needs for care and support after becoming 18 and, if so, what those needs are likely to be'.

While there's no set age for assessments to be completed (under the age of 18), the local authority should assess young people referred, on an individual basis, and indicate when they think it will be 'of significant benefit' to complete the assessment.

Care Act Eligibility

Below is a guide to eligibility for adult care services.

Some young people will meet the eligibility criteria and others may not, depending on their individual identified need and circumstances, and their identified outcomes. Some young people may be signposted to reablement services, preventive services, or services such as Community Connectors who work short-term to support young people/adults to find sustainable, meaningful links in the community.

Under the Care Act, the eligibility threshold determines whether a person has eligible care and support needs that the local authority must meet. A person is eligible if all three conditions are met:

1. Needs arise from a physical or mental impairment or illness

This includes physical disability, learning disability, mental health conditions, or long-term illness.

2. As a result, the person is unable to achieve 2 or more specified outcomes

Unable includes situations where someone:

- cannot do it at all
- can do it only with significant difficulty
- can do it but it causes distress/anxiety
- can do it but it endangers health or safety
- takes significantly longer than normally would be expected

The specified outcomes are:

- Managing and maintaining nutrition (eating and drinking)
- Maintaining personal hygiene
- Managing toilet needs
- Being appropriately clothed
- Being able to make use of the home safely
- Maintaining a habitable home environment
- Developing and maintaining family or other personal relationships
- Accessing and engaging in work, training, education or volunteering
- Making use of necessary community facilities/ services (e.g. transport, shops)
- Carrying out caring responsibilities for a child

3. There is a significant impact on wellbeing

The difficulty achieving the outcomes must have, or be likely to have, a significant impact on the individual's wellbeing, considering areas such as:

- Independence
- Social inclusion
- Emotional wellbeing
- Safety
- Control over day-to-day life

Derbyshire Leaving Care Service

For young people supported by the leaving care service, a leaving care worker will be there to make sure that there is someone for the young person to contact if they need support. A leaving care worker is allocated from age 16. The support on offer will be explained to the young person and is also included in the Derbyshire leaving care local offer document. Support can include:

- social activities to help the young person meet other young people who are leaving or who have already left care
- help to find accommodation when the time is right to leave care
- help to achieve individual aspirations
- help with cooking and practical things
- help with filling in forms
- help to put the young person in contact with organisations and specialist services
- help to cope with the many unexpected things that can pop up when you live on your own
- support into education or employment via university, apprenticeships, or a work experience qualification
- help with personal and family relationships

How much contact the young person will have depends on how much support they need. But as a minimum their worker will see them every 8 weeks unless agreed otherwise.

What will happen and when?

When the young person reaches age 15 and a half, their social worker will automatically refer them to the leaving care team covering the area where they live.

By 16, the social worker will have completed their pathway plan. This covers how the young person plans to lead their adult life and how they can be supported to get ready for this. It also includes issues like how they manage your money, how to get help with health, where the young person plans to live and their intentions about education, employment, and training. The young person will meet with their leaving care worker shortly after their 16th birthday.

Other people will be involved in this too – for example carers and key worker, the Virtual School, and others – to help to draw up the best possible plan to help the young person into adulthood. Usually, the leaving care worker will be the main worker after age 18.

The Pathway Plan

A pathway plan covers:

- accommodation and housing issues
- personal support
- education, training and work issues
- health and development
- life skills
- financial issues.

The young person will be fully involved in this process to ensure that what goes into the plan is what they want in it. The pathway plan will help set out what they want to happen and who will help them to achieve it. The plan will be in place until at least the age of 21.

Preparing for the End of an EHC Plan

As young people move on from education and into their adult life, their EHC Plan will come to an end. This is called 'ceasing to maintain' the EHC Plan. The EHC Plan will usually come to an end at the end of an academic year to allow the young person time to complete their study programme and allow time to plan arrangements for any support that may be required when the EHC plan ceases.

Section 45 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifies the circumstances for ceasing an EHC Plan. An EHC Plan will cease when:

- A young person has taken up full time paid employment (excluding an apprenticeship).
- A young person has started higher education (university or other higher education study).
- A young person aged 18 and over has left education and no longer wishes to engage in further learning.
- A young person has turned 25.
- It is no longer necessary for special educational provision to be made for the young person.

It is important to think about what a final annual review meeting will look like. It is widely recognised that time needs to be given to marking the occasion when a young person will leave education and move into adulthood. The final review meeting is a great opportunity to celebrate achievements and milestones, and to think about any further actions that need to be taken to allow the young person to move successfully into their adult life. It is also a chance to acknowledge the support of those around them.

Reflective questions:

1. How do you promote independence for children and young people in your setting?
2. How do you support children and young people to develop and share their own views about their interests/strengths/needs?
3. How do you ensure that all children and young people in your setting benefit from appropriate Preparation for Adulthood planning and support?
4. How do you ensure that Preparation for Adulthood is an explicit element within the support plans you have in the setting?
5. How do you incorporate the goals and aspirations of children and young people into their support plans?
6. When do you begin to have discussions related to employment/careers? What does this look like?
7. How do you ensure that you have a robust careers education offer and meet all of the Gatsby Benchmarks?
8. Is PfA embedded in the curriculum offer in your setting?
9. Are staff trained in Preparation for Adulthood and transition planning?
10. Are children/young people and their families involved in discussing and planning PfA outcomes at annual reviews?
11. How do you support young people who are aged 16+ to understand and exercise their decision-making rights under the Mental Capacity Act?

Implementing Preparation for Adulthood in Your Setting

How to Implement Preparation for Adulthood in Your Setting

Effective Preparation for Adulthood requires a whole-setting approach which is embedded within leadership, curriculum design, pastoral support, partnerships and everyday practice.

Key actions include:

- Aligning PfA pathways with existing priorities (e.g. inclusion, careers education, wellbeing)
- Appointing a PfA lead or linking responsibility to SEND leadership
- Ensuring staff at all levels understand the four PfA pathways.

Leaders are accountable for ensuring staff have the knowledge and confidence to embed Preparation for Adulthood across curriculum and practice, supported by ongoing professional development.

Embedding PfA in the Curriculum

PfA should be woven throughout the curriculum from the earliest stages, with increasing focus and specificity as pupils progress.

Practical approaches:

- Map curriculum content against PfA pathways to identify strengths and gaps
- Integrate real-life contexts into teaching (e.g. budgeting in maths, travel training in geography)
- Provide structured opportunities for developing independence (e.g. decision-making, self-advocacy)
- Ensure careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is inclusive and starts early for pupils with SEND.

For learners with additional needs, pathways should be clearly linked to their EHC Plans or support plans, ensuring PfA aspirations inform outcomes/targets and provision.

Person-Centred Planning and High Aspirations

A central principle of PfA is maintaining high aspirations for all pupils. Educational settings should use person-centred approaches to ensure that each child/young person's voice, interests, and ambitions are at the heart of planning.

Good practice includes:

- Involving children/young people meaningfully in their reviews and target setting
- Using tools such as one-page profiles and aspiration-based planning
- Engaging families as key partners in shaping outcomes
- Challenging assumptions and limiting beliefs about future possibilities.

Building Real-World Experiences

Experiential learning is critical to preparing children and young people for adulthood. Educational settings should create opportunities for pupils to engage with the wider world. Examples:

- Work experience placements and employer encounters
- Supported internships or vocational pathways (where appropriate)
- Independent travel training
- Participation in community activities and volunteering
- Access to college link courses or transition programmes.

These experiences should be planned, supported, and reviewed to maximise learning and confidence.

Developing Independence Skills

Independence should be fostered progressively across all key stages.

Educational settings can:

- Provide explicit teaching of life skills (e.g. cooking, money management, personal care)
- Gradually reduce reliance on adult support where appropriate
- Encourage self-management strategies (e.g. organisation, timekeeping)
- Incorporate independence goals into daily routines.

Partnership Working

Effective PfA implementation relies on strong collaboration with external partners.

Educational settings should:

- Work closely with families to align expectations and support transitions
- Engage with local authorities, further education providers, and training organisations
- Build links with employers and community groups
- Involve health and social care professionals where relevant.

Multi-agency working ensures a coordinated approach and smoother transitions.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Educational settings should regularly review the impact of their PfA approach. This includes:

- Tracking progress towards PfA outcomes for individual pupils
- Gathering child/young person and family feedback
- Evaluating the quality of experiences (e.g. work placements)
- Reviewing destination data (education, employment, training outcomes).

Findings should inform continuous improvement and future planning.

Preparation for Adulthood School/Setting Checklist

Vision and Ethos

- [ ] We have a clear, shared definition of Preparation for Adulthood
- [ ] PfA is embedded in our school/setting improvement priorities
- [ ] High aspirations are promoted for all learners with SEND
- [ ] PfA is introduced from early years onwards

Curriculum and Learning

- [ ] PfA pathways are embedded across the curriculum
- [ ] Links are made between PfA and PSHE, RSE, and careers education
- [ ] Learning includes real-life and meaningful contexts
- [ ] Pupils develop functional literacy, numeracy, and communication skills
- [ ] Opportunities for problem-solving and independence are built into lessons

Person-Centred Planning

- [ ] Pupils contribute to their own planning and reviews
- [ ] One-page profiles or similar tools are used
- [ ] EHCP outcomes reflect long-term PfA goals
- [ ] Families are actively involved in planning
- [ ] Pupil aspirations are regularly reviewed and updated

Employment and Careers

- [ ] Pupils are exposed to the world of work from an early stage
- [ ] Careers education is inclusive and tailored to SEND learners
- [ ] Employer encounters and visits are provided
- [ ] Pupils access work-related learning or enterprise activities
- [ ] Appropriate work experience opportunities are available
- [ ] Links exist with supported internships / local employers

Independent Living Skills

- [ ] Pupils develop everyday life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting)
- [ ] Independence is progressively developed across key stages
- [ ] Opportunities for travel training are provided where appropriate
- [ ] Pupils are supported to make choices and take appropriate risks

Community Inclusion

- [ ] Pupils access community-based activities
- [ ] Opportunities for volunteering or social participation are available
- [ ] Social and communication skills are actively taught
- [ ] Pupils are supported to develop friendships and relationships

Health and Wellbeing

- [ ] Physical health and activity are promoted
- [ ] Pupils are supported with emotional wellbeing and resilience
- [ ] Pupils are taught how to manage their own health needs
- [ ] Self-advocacy skills are developed

Transition Planning

- [ ] PfA is a focus for annual reviews from Year 9 onwards (at the latest)
- [ ] Clear pathways to post-16 options are identified
- [ ] Transition planning involves relevant professionals/agencies
- [ ] Pupils access transition visits and preparation activities
- [ ] Information is effectively shared with next providers

Working with Families

- [ ] Families receive clear information about PfA pathways
- [ ] Regular conversations about future aspirations take place
- [ ] Families are signposted to local support and services
- [ ] Communication is accessible and person-centred

Whole-School/Setting Approach

- [ ] There is a named PfA lead or champion
- [ ] Staff receive training on PfA principles
- [ ] PfA is embedded across all departments and roles
- [ ] Leaders monitor the quality of PfA provision

Outcomes and Impact

- [ ] Progress is measured beyond academic attainment
- [ ] Evidence includes independence, confidence, and life skills
- [ ] Pupil voice and case studies are used to demonstrate impact
- [ ] Destinations data is tracked and reviewed where appropriate
- [ ] Data is used to monitor long-term outcomes for example post-16 destinations, employment, and independence, with a focus on reducing inequalities for learners with SEND

Inclusion and Accessibility

- [ ] PfA applies to all learners, including those with complex needs
- [ ] Activities are adapted to meet individual needs
- [ ] Assistive technology and support strategies are used where required
- [ ] Small steps of progress are recognised and valued

Glossary

Glossary of Key Terms

Annual Review
A yearly review of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan to assess progress, update outcomes, and plan next steps, including Preparation for Adulthood.

Autonomy
The ability and opportunity for a young person to make their own decisions and have control over their life choices.

CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance)
Support provided to help children and young people understand career options and pathways into employment or further learning.

Community Inclusion
One of the four PfA pathways, focusing on participation in social, leisure, and community activities and developing relationships.

Co-production
A collaborative approach where children, young people, families, and professionals work together to plan and deliver support.

Early Years
The stage of development from birth to age 5, where early foundations for independence, communication, and decision-making are developed.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan
A legal document outlining a child or young person's special educational needs, the support required, and outcomes to be achieved, including PfA outcomes.

Employment (PfA Pathway)
One of the four PfA pathways focusing on preparing for and gaining meaningful paid work.

Functional Skills
Practical skills in literacy, numeracy, and digital competence that support independence and everyday life.

Health and Wellbeing (PfA Pathway)
One of the four PfA pathways focusing on physical health, mental wellbeing, and developing skills for a healthy adult life.

Independent Living (PfA Pathway)
One of the four PfA pathways relating to developing life skills such as managing money, housing, travel, and self-care.

Inclusive Practice
An approach ensuring all children and young people have equal access to opportunities and support to succeed, regardless of need.

Mental Capacity Act (2005)
Legislation that supports individuals to make their own decisions where possible and ensures decisions made on their behalf are in their best interests if they lack capacity.

Multi-Agency Working
Collaboration between education, health, and social care services to provide coordinated support for a young person.

Person-Centred Planning
An approach that places the child or young person's views, strengths, and aspirations at the centre of planning and decision-making.

Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)
A continuous process beginning in early years, supporting children and young people to develop skills, confidence, and independence for adult life.

PfA Pathways (Four Areas)
The four key areas that structure preparation for adulthood:
- Education, training and employment
- Independent living
- Community inclusion
- Health and wellbeing

PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education)
A curriculum subject that supports development of life skills, wellbeing, relationships, and preparation for adult life.

Self-Advocacy
The ability of a young person to understand and communicate their needs, preferences, and rights, and to make informed choices.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)
A legal term referring to children and young people who require additional support due to learning difficulties or disabilities.

Specialist Support
Highly individualised support for children and young people with complex needs, often involving multiple services.

Targeted Support
Additional support for children and young people with emerging or identified needs, often delivered through short-term interventions.

Targeted Plus Support
Enhanced, coordinated support for children and young people with more persistent or complex needs requiring multi-agency involvement.

Transition Planning
The process of preparing for changes between life stages (e.g. school to college, children's to adult services).

Whole-School/Setting Approach
An approach where Preparation for Adulthood is embedded across all aspects of provision, for all pupils, not only those with SEND.