



Preparing for Adulthood (PfA): A Guide for Young People with SEND

RANi Need to Know Guides | Young person post 16 Advisory sheet 2

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Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) is about helping young people with SEND move into the next stage of life with confidence, independence, and support. This guide explains the legal duties, support available, and steps to plan for a successful transition from school to adult life.

What Is Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)?

PfA is the **process of planning for life after school** for young people with SEND, focusing on four key areas:

1. Employment and higher education
2. Independent living
3. Participating in society
4. Being as healthy as possible

Disclaimer: This resource is intended to provide general information and should not be considered legal advice. While RANi strives to ensure the content is accurate and current at the time of publication, we cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage, or inconvenience that may result from using or relying on the information provided.

This planning begins no later than **Year 9 (age 13–14)** and continues through to age 25 where necessary, especially for those with an **EHC plan**.

Legal Framework

Preparing for Adulthood is set out in:

- The **Children and Families Act 2014**
- The **SEND Code of Practice 2015**
- The **Care Act 2014** (for social care transition)
- The **Equality Act 2010**

Local authorities have a legal duty to support young people's transition and ensure appropriate **education, health and social care planning** is in place.

The Four PfA Pathways Explained

1. Employment, Further Education and Training

- Includes support to explore careers, develop employability skills, and access:
 - Further education
 - Supported internships
 - Traineeships
 - Apprenticeships
- EHCP outcomes should include **preparation for work**, where relevant
- Young people should get **careers advice** and support to build confidence and CVs

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2. Independent Living

- Help young people make choices about where they want to live in the future
- Explore options like:
 - Living at home with support
 - Supported living
 - Residential placements (where needed)
- Teach life skills like budgeting, cooking, travel training

3. Participation in Society

- Support to:
 - Join clubs or community groups
 - Build friendships and relationships
 - Make informed decisions and engage in social life
- Includes access to social care where needed

4. Health and Wellbeing

- Transition planning for adult health services
- Promote good physical and mental health
- Ensure support continues through GP, CAMHS/adult mental health, therapies
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and self-care

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When Should Planning Start?

- Must start in **Year 9** for those with an EHCP (age 13–14)
- Schools and local authorities must involve:
 - The young person
 - Parents/carers
 - Health and social care professionals
- Each Annual Review after Year 9 must consider **PfA outcomes**

Planning should be person-centred, led by the young person's goals, hopes and strengths.

The Role of the EHCP in Preparing for Adulthood

The EHC plan should:

- Include **clear outcomes** linked to the 4 PfA areas
- Be **ambitious** and tailored to the young person's needs
- Include input from **health and social care** teams as needed
- Be **reviewed at least annually**

Local authorities must ensure there is:

- **A local offer** that includes PfA options
 - **Clear support pathways** through education, training, social care and health
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Support Available

Support	Who provides it
Careers Advice	School, college, careers services
Travel Training	School, local authority, independent providers
Supported Internships	Colleges and employers
Social Care Assessment	Local authority children's or adult services
Transition Health Planning	GPs, school nurses, NHS transition teams
Independent Living Support	Social care, housing teams

Mental Capacity and Decision-Making

From age 16, young people are presumed to have the **mental capacity** to make decisions unless proven otherwise.

If a young person lacks capacity for a particular decision, the **Mental Capacity Act 2005** applies, and decisions must be made in their **best interests**, involving them as far as possible.

Parents no longer have automatic rights to make decisions for their child after age 16.

Transition to Adult Social Care (Care Act 2014)

- The local authority must assess the young person's needs for **adult social care** before they turn 18
 - They must provide a **transition assessment** where it's likely a young person will have eligible needs
 - Young people should not face a "cliff edge" in support when turning 18
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What Happens If the EHCP Is Ceased Before Age 25?

The EHCP should **only be ceased** if:

- The young person **no longer needs special educational provision, or**
- They are **no longer in education or training**

If the LA tries to cease the plan:

- They must notify the young person and their parents/carers in writing
- They must offer **a right of appeal** to the SEND Tribunal
- The EHCP remains in place during the appeal process

Checklist for Families and Young People

- ✓ Start transition planning in **Year 9 or earlier**
- ✓ Be actively involved in **Annual Reviews** and setting outcomes
- ✓ Make sure EHCPs reflect **PfA goals**
- ✓ Request support from **social care and health professionals**
- ✓ Ask for a **transition assessment** before age 18 (social care)
- ✓ Plan post-16 and post-19 education early (college, supported internship, etc.)
- ✓ Know your **rights to challenge decisions**

Support and Resources

You can get further support from:

- **RANi** – Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **Local Offer** - Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **SENDIASS** – Local impartial information and advice service for parents and young people www.iasmanchester.org
- Preparing for Adulthood Programme

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- **IPSEA** – Independent Provider of Special Education Advice:
www.ipsea.org.uk
- **Contact** – A national charity supporting families with disabled children:
www.contact.org.uk

If you'd like help preparing your request or understanding your appeal options, RANi can provide guidance and templates.

Remember:

Always keep a copy of all correspondence you send, along with proof of postage or delivery. If you send documents by post, we recommend using a **signed-for** service. If sending by email, request a **read receipt** if possible.

Get in Touch

If you need more information or have a question, we're here to help.

Email us: info@rani.org.uk

Please include:

- Your name
- Your child's name
- Your child's date of birth
- Your query

Or, if you prefer, you can fill out our online **contact form** and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

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