

A Parent's Guide to Preparing for Adulthood for Students with SEND

Forest Way School

The process of preparing for adulthood (PfA) for young people with SEND should start early, long before your child turns 18. The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015 emphasises PfA, which covers four key outcome areas:

- **Higher education and/or employment.**
- **Independent living.**
- **Participating in society** (including friendships and community contributions).
- **Being as healthy as possible** in later life.



Phase 1: Laying the Foundations (Starting at Year 9)

Statutory Planning through the EHC

At Forest Way we start preparation for adulthood at the Year 9 annual review (age 13–14) and every review after that. These reviews will set targets that help your child achieve steps towards the four PfA outcomes.

Careers Guidance

Forest Way delivers careers advice to all young people from Year 8. This advice is tailored to meet the individual needs of our pupils informing them of the options available to them. Parents should work closely with the school and careers adviser to identify suitable post-16 pathways for their young person.

Developing Independence and Self-Advocacy Encourage

Encourage your child to be at the centre of all discussions and decisions, ensuring their goals and needs are the focus. Making increasingly complex choices should be part of their preparation for adult life from the earliest years. When preparing for transition and review meetings, ensure you talk to your child about how they want to share their views, especially regarding their hopes and aspirations for the future. Forest Way work hard to ensure that the views of our young people are shared and we achieve this through 'pupil voice' videos that are shared at annual review meetings. Or, if appropriate and meaningful for the pupil they can be present at their review.



Phase 2: Post-16 Education and Training Options

Pupils at Forest Way are offered 3 years in Post 16. It may not be the right choice to stay for 3 years. We will aim to work with pupils and their families to consider the right options for each individual.

See more details below.

Forest Way Post 16	Offers familiarity, structure, and continued SEN support. Programmes lead to Functional Skills Qualifications normally at Entry Level 1, 2 or 3.
Supported Internships	We currently offer a supported Internship through Project Search at Amazon for Year 14. They typically last for one academic year and include on-the-job training and support from a dedicated job coach. Internships are based primarily at an employer with an aim to achieve sustainable paid employment.

Options available to our young people Post 19

Specialist Settings	<p>Cater for young people with SEN only or those with more complex or specific needs. Placement usually requires an EHC plan and is agreed upon through the annual review process.</p> <p>(Seek more information from SENSE College Loughborough and Homefield College)</p>
Apprenticeships	A programme combining paid-on-the-job training with study towards qualifications. Inclusive apprenticeships offer adjustments for those with learning difficulties or disabilities.
Individually-Tailored Education	For young people who cannot access formal settings or need support focusing on small steps of progress (e.g., communication, independent travel training, managing money). This provision can include a mixture of college-based learning and other activities. Plan would be made with support of YADT and SENA.
Mainstream Further Education (FE) Colleges	<p>Offer a wide range of academic, vocational, "stepping stone" courses (Maths/English), and courses combining study with work experience or "life skills" to prepare for adult life. Support is provided through SEN support or an EHC plan.</p> <p>(Seek more information from Loughborough College, Leicester College, South Derbyshire)</p>



Financial Support for Post-16 Study

Tuition is free for 16–18 year olds. Young people aged 19–25 with an EHC plan also receive free tuition, provided the course meets the outcomes specified in their plan.

The 16–19 Bursary Fund offers support, including a vulnerable student bursary (up to £1,200 annually) or a discretionary bursary based on family income, which can help with travel or equipment costs.

Phase 3: The Transition to Adulthood (Age 18+)

1. Mental Capacity and Decision Making

The **Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA)** applies to everyone aged 16 or over in England and Wales.

Assumption of Capacity: Every person aged 16 and over must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established otherwise. Capacity is decision-specific; a young person may have the capacity to make some decisions but not others.

Best Interests: If your child lacks the mental capacity to make a specific decision, any decision made on their behalf must be in their best interests. Parents/carers must consider the young person's past and present wishes, feelings, and beliefs.

Supported Decision Making: Before making a decision for them, all practical steps must be taken to help the young person make the decision themselves. They must be provided with the relevant information in an accessible format and feel at ease.

2. Legal Authority for Financial Decisions

Once a young person turns 18, you lose the automatic right to manage their finances, including bank accounts or property.

If the Young Adult has Capacity: They may choose to create a Property and Affairs Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), appointing someone (an attorney) to manage their finances if they lose capacity in the future. They must be 18 to make an LPA, but preparatory paperwork can start before.

If the Young Adult Lacks Capacity: You must apply to the Court of Protection (CoP) for an order, either a one-off order for a specific financial decision, or a deputyship for ongoing financial management. A deputyship order is needed for assets like savings or a Child Trust Fund (CTF).

State Benefits: To manage state benefits (like Personal Independence Payments or PIP) on behalf of a young adult who lacks capacity, an individual can apply to the DWP to become an appointee.



Note that being an appointee doesn't give the authority to access other assets, such as bank accounts or CTFs, which requires a CoP order.

3. Health and Social Care Transitions

Social Care (Care Act 2014): This legislation replaces the system for supporting disabled adults aged 18 or over. If your young person is likely to need adult social care support, they should receive a transition assessment. The process focuses on providing help based on assessed needs and promoting the young person's overall wellbeing. The Young Adult's Disability Team (YADT) will be in touch with you normally before your child's 18th birthday and may attend their Year 13 and year 14 review. If your child is in receipt of a health budget they may not be eligible for YADT support from social care.

Care Plans and Budgets: If eligible for adult social care, the local authority draws up a Care Plan. This plan determines a Personal Budget for care, which may be managed by the local authority or received as Direct Payments by you or the young person, allowing greater control over choosing and managing support (e.g. hiring personal assistants). Social care services may be charged for, based on the young person's financial circumstances (not the parents').

Health Services: Transition planning begins through the EHC plan annual review process

4. Housing and Independent Living

PfA planning should include discussions about where your relative would like to live and who they would like to live with. Housing options for adults with SEND include:

Supported Living: Living independently (rented or owned) with support offered giving the person control over their daily life.

Residential Care: Housing and care provided together as a comprehensive package.

Shared Lives: A person lives in a family setting with a suitable carer.

Living at Home with Support: Arranging additional support through adult social care if the person chooses to remain in the family home.

You can apply for Housing Benefit to contribute to rent costs, depending on the young person's low income and financial circumstances.

Early planning and looking at the local authority's offerings is vital



Parent Checklist: How to Engage in the Transition Process

Action Point	When to Start
Start Planning Discussions	Year 9 (Age 13-14) at the EHC plan annual review.
Promote Independence	Encourage your child to make small, complex choices, acting as a skill-building process for adult life.
Research Post-16 Options	Explore academic, vocational, and work-based pathways (Apprenticeships, Supported Internships) well in advance.
Engage with Healthcare	Ensure health professionals attend the EHC reviews and start building a relationship with the young person's GP.
Check Local Support	Consult your Local Offer website for information on education, health, and social care services in your area. https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability https://families.leicester.gov.uk/send-local-offer/ https://www.localoffer.derbyshire.gov.uk/home.aspx#!/directory info@sensiassleicestershire.org.uk (offering impartial confidential information, advice, and support)
Prepare for Adult Social Care	If needed, request an Adult Needs Assessment or transition assessment under the Care Act 2014.
Address Mental Capacity	If your young person is approaching 18 and may lack capacity for major decisions, familiarise yourself with the MCA 2005 principles.
Secure Legal Authority (If needed)	If capacity is lacking, begin the process for deputyship through the Court of Protection to manage financial assets like the bank accounts or Child Trust Funds before they turn 18.
Look After Yourself	As a carer, remember you are entitled to support: you have the right to request a carers assessment to identify the support you need.

