



# **Preparing for Adulthood (PFA)**

**Factsheet Number 26 August 2025**



**Disclaimer**: This is a guide and should not be treated as legal advice. Although SENDIASS Manchester makes all reasonable efforts to ensure that the information contained in this factsheet is accurate and up to date at the time of publication, we cannot accept responsibility for outcomes suffered because of reliance placed upon it.

## All factsheets are correct as of August 2025.

## **Background to Preparing for Adulthood**

In September 2014, the Children and Families Act came into force. This brought about changes in the way children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) are supported in education.

The law grants new rights to young people who are over 16 and no longer of compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16)

In the law and guidance these people are called ‘young people.’ Young people can make decisions about the support they receive, and this includes taking control of their own EHC plan if they are able to.

Young people have the right to make decisions about their education and support, including:

* + Requesting an EHC needs assessment.
	+ Participating in the development and review of their EHC plan.
	+ Appealing decisions to the SEND Tribunal.

These rights apply unless the young person is deemed not to have mental capacity, in which case decisions may be made on their behalf.

You can find more information here [**Preparing for Adulthood: All Tools & Resources - NDTi**](https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/preparing-for-adulthood-all-tools-resources)

**Preparing for Adulthood – Four Pathways**

1. **Employment, Education, and Training** Includes support for:
	* + Further and higher education
		+ Apprenticeships and traineeships
		+ Supported internships.
		+ Voluntary work
		+ Self-employment
		+ Access to supported employment services
2. **Independent Living**
	* Focuses on:
		+ Having choice and control over daily life
		+ Living arrangements (e.g. supported living, shared housing)
		+ Managing finances and tenancy
		+ Accessing personal budgets and support
3. **Community Inclusion**
	* Encourages:
		+ Building friendships and relationships
		+ Participating in social and leisure activities
		+ Contributing to the local community
		+ Developing social skills and confidence
4. **Health**
	* Aims to ensure:
		+ Good physical and mental health
		+ Access to adult health services
		+ Support with managing health conditions.
		+ Promoting healthy lifestyles and wellbeing

These pathways are designed to help young people aged **14–25** with SEND plan for a fulfilling adult life, whether or not they have an EHC plan.

## **The importance of Preparing for Adulthood**

Being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life transforming for children and young people with SEND.

This support needs to start early (from year 9) and should centre on 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. When children are meaningfully involved, this can change their attitude, behaviour and learning and make positive changes and decisions.

## **Starting Early - LAs duties**

##

Local authorities must ensure that the EHC plan review at Year 9 (aged 13-14years), and every review, thereafter, includes a focus on Preparing for Adulthood.

Planning must be centred around the individuals and explore the young person’s aspirations and abilities, what they want to be able to do when they leave post-16 education or training and the support, they need to achieve their ambition. the Education and Health Care plan must fit the child/young person and not the other way around.

Transition planning must be built into the revised EHC plan and should result in clear outcomes being agreed that are ambitious and stretching and which will prepare young people for adulthood. It is important that the transition planning is specified and quantified in section F of the revised plan.

## **LAs responsibilities to YP with EHC plans**

For children and young people with EHC plans, discussions about post-16 options will be part of the Preparing for Adulthood focus of EHC plan reviews, which must be included as part of the review from Year 9 (age 13-14).

This is a legal duty found in regulation 20(6) and regulation 21(6) of The SEN and Disability Regulations 2014 (The SEND Regulations 2014).

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/regulation/21](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/regulation/20%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

The local authority must ensure these reviews take place, and schools and colleges must cooperate with the local authority in these reviews.

If a young person wants to attend a different school (sixth form) or a college, then that school or college must cooperate.

## **Annual Reviews and Preparing for Adulthood**

From Year 9 onwards, every annual review of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan must include a focus on preparing for adulthood. This includes:

**Planning for Key Life Outcomes**

* Support for education, employment, and training (including apprenticeships, supported internships, and volunteering).
* Planning for independent living, including housing and support arrangements.
* Encouraging community participation, friendships, and relationships.
* Promoting health and wellbeing into adult life.

**Post-16 Options and Transitions**

* Identifying the best post-16 provision to help achieve the young person’s aspirations.
* Inviting post-16 providers to annual reviews where appropriate.
* Ensuring clear planning for transitions to further education, employment, or training.

**Young Person’s Voice**

* The views, wishes, and feelings of the young person must be central.
* From age 16, the young person’s views are paramount, unless they lack capacity.

 **Transition to Adult Services**

* Planning for adult social care and health services should begin early where needed.
* This includes referrals and assessments under the Care Act 2014 and NHS Continuing Healthcare where applicable.

## **Timescales in Manchester for school leavers**

###

### **Autumn term**

* Schools – provide Careers Education and Guidance
* Gather up to date information/advice from families, education, health care.
* Focus on aspirations / proposed outcomes.
* Additional time provided to produce careers advice report.
* Young people attend open days/visits and apply for college, training, apprenticeships etc… (some colleges have earlier deadlines)
* Make a referral to social care (if required) Manchester’s contact details- **Phone**: 0161 234 5000, **Email:** mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk **Online, through**: [Sign-Video](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/signvideo)

### **Spring January**

* Continue applications/interviews.
* Arrange EHC transfer review date with the Education, Health, and Care Plan Team (14 weeks to transfer)
* Hold person centred review.
* Agree outcomes and choice of post 16 placement.
* Is EHC plan still required?
* Should a request for a personal budget be made?
* Plan drafted.
* Consultation with post 16 education/training provider/s
* Some young people may require best interests meeting.

### **Summer**

* Confirm offer by 31st May.
* Agree level of funding.
* Link visits/taster days.
* Information transferred to post 16 providers; support plan agreed.
* Home to college/training travel training
* Open bank account
* Application for bursary/benefits/travel support if eligible
* Enrolment

You can find out more about Manchester’s Education Strategy here-[Appendix - Draft Education Strategy.pdf (manchester.gov.uk)](https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/documents/s46316/Appendix%20-%20Draft%20Education%20Strategy.pdf)

## **Options for Young People**

**Apprenticeships:** These are paid jobs that incorporate training, leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Apprentices earn as they learn and gain practical skills in the workplace. Many lead to highly skilled careers. Young people with EHC plans can retain their plan when on an apprenticeship.

**Traineeships**: These are education and training programmes with work experience, focused on giving young people the skills and experience they need to help them compete for an apprenticeship or other jobs. Traineeships last a maximum of six months and include core components of work preparation training, English and maths (unless GCSE A\*-C standard has already been achieved) and a high-quality work experience placement. They are currently open to young people aged 16 to 24, including those with EHC plans. Young people with EHC plans can retain their plan when undertaking a traineeship.

**Internships**: These are structured study programmes for young people with an EHC plan, based primarily with an employer.

* Internships normally last for a year and include extended unpaid work placements of at least six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme.
* Students complete a personalised study programme which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if suitable, and English and maths to an appropriate level.
* Young people with EHC plans will retain their plan when undertaking a supported internship.

**T Level**

* This is a 2-year College course.
* Gives you a mix of learning in the classroom and a minimum 9-week placement with an employer. This means you will learn what a real career is like while you study which gives you the work experience.

# **Vocational Technical Qualifications (VTQs)**

* VTQs are practical qualifications designed to give you the skills and experience you need for a certain job. They might be for you if you have a strong interest in working in a particular industry.
* There are a few different types and levels of VTQs, including: BTEC diplomas: level 1 to 7 qualifications.

## **EHC plans - Key Points**

* The Local authority must not cease a plan solely because a young person is 19 or over.
* 19-year-olds need to qualify for an added test of whether they need extra time to complete educational or training outcomes specified in the plan compared to others of same age.

## **Additional Information and Support**

* [The Manchester College: Courses and Qualification for You](https://www.tmc.ac.uk/)
* [Supported internships - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-internships-for-young-people-with-learning-difficulties/supported-internships))
* [Home - Pure Innovations](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pureinnovations.co.uk%2F&data=05%7C02%7Csendiass%40manchester.gov.uk%7C7f7196ee3e4f4fb28be408dcb147c15f%7Cb0ce7d5e81cd47fb94f7276c626b7b09%7C0%7C0%7C638580169042001788%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=BR0L8SGniM1vElOQ%2Fm9zDqbaPgkbVf%2BX7nqca68VNrU%3D&reserved=0)
* [Access Creative College | The UK's Industry-led creative college](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.accesscreative.ac.uk%2F&data=05%7C02%7Csendiass%40manchester.gov.uk%7C7f7196ee3e4f4fb28be408dcb147c15f%7Cb0ce7d5e81cd47fb94f7276c626b7b09%7C0%7C0%7C638580169042012883%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=zcNxEVqhpotSsCVXuJKeT%2BS5niZT6Wr4jvAqKzPX4VE%3D&reserved=0)
* [Create a better future - Career Connect](https://careerconnect.org.uk/)
* [Pinc College](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpinccollege.co.uk%2F%23%3A~%3Atext%3DAn%2520inclusive%252C%2520supportive%2520art%2520college%2Cstudies%2520for%2520neurodivergent%2520young%2520people.&data=05%7C02%7Csendiass%40manchester.gov.uk%7C7f7196ee3e4f4fb28be408dcb147c15f%7Cb0ce7d5e81cd47fb94f7276c626b7b09%7C0%7C0%7C638580169042047600%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=cwm2o4ONnHK%2B7kI1RnfJnCXHBgsT%2B1AqGssPvw3BKu8%3D&reserved=0)
* [DISC – Digital Independent Specialist College -](https://disc.ac.uk/)

This is a list of some examples that are available for young people, you can also find more information on Manchester’s local offer[**Service Listings | Help & Support Manchester**](https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/results.page?qt=planning+for+adulthood&sorttype=relevance)

## **Education Act 1996 c. 56 Part I GENERAL Chapter III LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

### **General functions 15ZA** [**Education Act 1996**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/15ZA)

This version in force from: 6th August 2025

**(1)** A local authority in England must secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of—

(a) Persons in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, and

(b) Persons in their area who are aged 19 or over and for whom an EHC plan is maintained.

**(2)** A local authority may comply with subsection (1) by securing the provision of education or training outside as well as within their area.

**(3)** In deciding for the purposes of subsection (1) whether education or training is suitable to meet persons' reasonable needs, a local authority must (in particular) have regard to—

(a) The persons' ages, abilities, and aptitudes.

(b) Any learning difficulties or disabilities the persons may have.

(c) The quality of the education or training.

(d) The locations and times at which the education or training is provided.

(4) In performing the duty imposed by subsection (1) a local authority must—

(a) Act with a view to encouraging diversity in the education and training available to persons.

(b) Act with a view to increasing opportunities for persons to exercise choice.

(c) act with a view to enabling persons to whom [Part 1](http://login.westlaw.co.uk/maf/wluk/app/document?src=doc&linktype=ref&context=21&crumb-action=replace&docguid=I696E3DB0BF0F11DDA9E4C5B8EC4DCC32) of the [Education and Skills Act 2008](http://login.westlaw.co.uk/maf/wluk/app/document?src=doc&linktype=ref&context=21&crumb-action=replace&docguid=I1C4A7C30BF0811DD88DFA0A536C87AFA) applies to fulfil the duty imposed by [section 2](http://login.westlaw.co.uk/maf/wluk/app/document?src=doc&linktype=ref&context=21&crumb-action=replace&docguid=I696ED9F0BF0F11DDA9E4C5B8EC4DCC32) of that Act;

(d) Take account of education and training whose provision the authority think might reasonably be secured by other people

**(5)** A local authority must, in—

(a) Making any determination as to the provision of apprenticeship training that should be secured under subsection (1), or

(b) Securing the provision of any apprenticeship training under that subsection, Co-operate with the Chief Executive of Skills Funding.

**(6)** For the purposes of this section a person has a learning difficulty or disability if—

(a) The person has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of persons of the same age, or

(b) The person has a disability which either prevents or hinders the person from making use of facilities of a kind provided by institutions providing education or training for persons who are over compulsory school age.

**(7)** But a person is not to be taken to have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which the person is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which has at any time been spoken in the person's home.

**(8)** In this section - “Apprenticeship training” means training provided in connection with—

(aa) an approved English apprenticeship agreement (within the meaning given in section A1(3) of that Act)

(a) an apprenticeship agreement (within the meaning given in [section 32](http://login.westlaw.co.uk/maf/wluk/app/document?src=doc&linktype=ref&context=21&crumb-action=replace&docguid=I3C130120D65B11DEBE98CE20F9517D42) of the [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](http://login.westlaw.co.uk/maf/wluk/app/document?src=doc&linktype=ref&context=21&crumb-action=replace&docguid=ID4D4A540D65A11DEB5299F6D7F8B7BF7)),

(b) Any other contract of employment,

(c) any other kind of working in relation to which alternative English completion conditions apply under [section 1(5)](http://login.westlaw.co.uk/maf/wluk/app/document?src=doc&linktype=ref&context=21&crumb-action=replace&docguid=I3C0A0070D65B11DEBE98CE20F9517D42) of that Act (meaning of “completing an English apprenticeship”);

(d) An alternative English apprenticeship (within the meaning given in section A1(4) of that Act).

“Education “includes full-time and part-time education.

“Training “includes—

(a) Full-time and part-time training.

(b) Vocational, social, physical, and recreational training.

(c) Apprenticeship training.

**(9)** The duty in subsection (1) does not apply in relation to persons in a local authority's area who are subject to a detention order

|  |
| --- |
| **Contact Details for SENDIASS Manchester**Helpline Telephone number: 0161 209 8356. Please clearly leave your name, contact number and a brief message on the answerphone and a member of the team will contact you within 24 hours or the next working day. **Or**Email your query to us: **sendiass@manchester.gov.uk** leaving your name, child’s name and their date of birth.You can complete our website contact form: [**Contact Us (iasmanchester.org)**](https://www.iasmanchester.org/contact)Visit Manchester SENDIASS website [**About SENDIASS Manchester (iasmanchester.org)**](https://www.iasmanchester.org/)Manchester SENDIASS Podcasts [**Listen to our SEND Talk podcasts**](https://www.iasmanchester.org/podcasts)Manchester SENDIASS YouTube channel [**https://www.youtube.com/@SENDIASSManchester**](https://www.youtube.com/%40SENDIASSManchester)**QR code for the website QR code for Facebook page** |