All young people face major changes as they move from being teenagers to becoming adults and need to make important decisions about their future. This change can be even more complicated if you have special educational needs, a learning difficulty or disability. It is important that these young people receive the right support to achieve a smooth transition into adulthood.

A successful move can be achieved by providing the right information at the right time along with relevant support before, during and after the transition to a new place of study or work.

The SEND Code of Practice (0-25 years) states that ‘with high aspirations, and the right support, the vast majority of children and young people can go on to achieve successful long-term outcomes in adult life’

Local authorities and education providers must work with young people from Year 9 onwards to prepare them for adult life. There are four areas that need to be considered:

- higher education and/or employment – including exploring different employment options, such as support for becoming self-employed and help from supported employment agencies
- independent living – enabling people to have choice and control over their lives and the support they receive, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living
- participating in society – including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in, and contributing to, the local community
- being as healthy as possible in adult life

More information on the preparing for adulthood process please read the ‘Sunderland protocol’

The following information is for a child or young person who has an Education Health and Care Plan.

**When does the preparing for adulthood process start?**

If a young person has an EHC Plan, schools have to start the formal preparing for adulthood process from Year 9 (aged 13/14), which will be the planning for your child’s move to further education, employment or training. This means they will invite you, your child and any other professionals involved with your child to a Year 9 Preparing for Adulthood Review meeting.
Children are supported in advance of the review in order for them to fully understand and maximise the potential opportunity of this review so they are able to make an informed contribution. Preparation will explore what is important to the child now and for the future, how to support them best and to find out what their aspirations are.

From this meeting transition planning must be written into the revised EHC plan, including how any educational, health and social care needs will be met. This will include details about planning for the transition from school to further education, training or employment.

**Who can provide training or job advice and support?**

Connexions Sunderland offers confidential advice and support services for 13-19 year olds (and up to age 25 for young people with special needs).

For details of which Connexions office you should contact and for appointment details visit: www.connexions-tw.co.uk/connexions-in-sunderland

**What changes might there be to my child or young person’s benefits?**

Once your child or young person reaches the age of 16, there are changes that will happen to the benefits you or the young person receives. For more information on these potential changes, see the Benefits section of this booklet.

**Transport**

Together for Children Sunderland may offer assistance with Dedicated Transport Provision. The offer is available to students aged 16-25 who live within the Sunderland administrative area and are attending a full-time course of study, who either:

- have had an Education Health and Care Plan and transport was provided as necessary;
- has a medical condition that precludes the use of public transport. A supporting letter from the young person’s consultant must be provided

Following consultation, Together for Children introduced a contribution from parents/carers for the provision of dedicated transport where eligibility has been met. The contribution is set at £651 per year and can be paid in one full amount or in monthly installments, through Direct Debit/Standing Order.

For more information about transport for 16-25 year olds, Together for Children’s Transport Policy Statement, (see the Useful Links section).
For young people who do not meet the above criteria may be able to access concessionary fares. For more information on these visit one of the sites below:

www.nexus.org.uk/bus/tickets
www.nexus.org.uk/metro/tickets
www.nexus.org.uk/student-season-tickets
www.networkonetickets.co.uk

What happens about health and social care when my child turns 18?

For those young people who have an EHCP and who are remaining in education or training, the EHCP retains its statutory status and is reviewed as a minimum every 12 months. The plan should continue to evidence that educational progress continues to be made towards long term aspirations and the outcomes set out in the plan. The review continues to be a multi-agency review and where adult social care is involved the allocated worker must continue to provide information and attend the EHCP review when invited.

Once the young person leaves education the EHCP is no longer a statutory plan but where health or social care elements of the plan remain, the plan should continue as the young person’s Care and Support Plan under Care Act 2014 legislation.

Does my child’s Education, Health and Care Plan automatically continue until they are 25 years old?

No, not automatically. Your child has to continue in education or training until the age of 18 and the majority of young people with an EHC plan complete further education in line with their peers by the age of 19; however some young people need extra time to complete their learning because of their special educational needs.

The SEND Code of Practice says that this ‘does not mean that there is an automatic entitlement to continue support at age 19 or an expectation that those with an EHC Plan should all remain in education until age 25’. The length of time will vary according to each young person, and judgments on when to stop or maintain a plan will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The statutory duty to maintain an EHC Plan will cease once a child or young person leaves education.
Will an EHC Plan continue at University?

The simple answer is no. Studying at this level would be considered a positive outcome from an EHC plan, and a pathway to finding a good job. However, a young person studying at level 4 in a Further Education setting would not be entitled to an EHC plan.

There are separate systems in place to support disabled young people in higher education (HE), including Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs). These are non-repayable grants that assist with the additional costs incurred by disabled students. They apply to those studying higher education in a further education environment. DSAs fund a range of support, including assistance with the cost of:

- specialist equipment
- travel
- non-medical helpers (for example sign language interpreters)

For more information see the DSA finance guide (see the Useful Links section).

Can I get help at work?

If you are disabled or have a physical or mental health condition that makes it hard for you to do your job, you can:

- talk to your employer about changes they must make in your workplace
- apply for Access to Work if you need extra help

Your employer must make certain changes, known as ‘reasonable adjustments’ to make sure you are not substantially disadvantaged when doing your job. These could include changing your working hours or providing equipment to help you do your job.

If the help you need at work is not covered by your employer, you may be able to get help from Access to Work but you should talk to your employer about reasonable adjustments before you apply for Access to Work.

To get help from Access to Work you must:

- have a disability or health condition (physical or mental) that makes it hard for you to do parts of your job or get to and from work
- be 16 or over
- live in England, Scotland or Wales
You need to have a paid job, or be about to start or return to one. A paid job could include:

- self-employment
- an apprenticeship
- a work trial or work experience
- an internship

You cannot get a grant for voluntary work and your job must be based in England, Scotland and Wales.

You will be offered support based on your needs, which may include a grant to help cover the cost of practical support in the workplace.

An Access to Work grant can pay for:

- special equipment, adaptations or support worker services to help you do things like answer the phone or go to meetings
- help getting to and from work

You might not get a grant if you already get certain benefits. The money does not have to be paid back and will not affect your other benefits.

Gov.uk has more information about an Access to Work Grant (see the Useful Links section).