



**East Sussex Multi-Agency
Transition to Adulthood Protocol
2024**

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With thanks to all partners of the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board and East Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership who took part and contributed to the development of this protocol.

Foreword

This protocol sets out a commitment, from the partner agencies of the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESSAB) and the East Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership (ESSCP), that a young person's transition experience is a positive, coordinated, and supportive one.

Transition is the term used to describe the process, which is in place to support children, including looked after children, as they move from services they have received as a child into those that they need when they become an adult.

We are confident that with the right support at the right time young people will go on to achieve successful long-term outcomes in adult life.

The protocol will help to ensure that everyone involved in the transition of young people into adulthood is clear about the specific roles and responsibilities of all the key agencies so that we can work together in partnership with parents, carers, and personal advisors to support the young person at the centre of this process.

All agencies who are members of the ESSAB and the ESSCP have committed to ensuring that the transition experience, wherever that happens, is a positive and safe one for every young person.

Seona Douglas

East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board
Independent Chair

Chris Robson

East Sussex Safeguarding Children's
Partnership Chair

Why is the protocol needed?

Safeguarding vulnerable young people, who are making the transition into adulthood, was identified as a priority for the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESSAB) in 2021. This follows a number of recent [Safeguarding Adult Reviews](#) (SARs) which identified the need to ensure local arrangements are appropriately safeguarding young people who are at risk of harm.

Safeguarding vulnerable adolescents is also a priority for the East Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership (ESSCP). Two recent [Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews](#) (LCSPRs) identified the need to strengthen support for vulnerable school leavers, including those with an Education and Health Care Plan, and those young people at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation, who are moving into adulthood. Specific learning was identified regarding young people with care experience, the impact of care experience and the challenges with suitable housing, employment and access to all activities that support their general wellbeing as they move into adult health and social care services.

A system not a service

The protocol aims to ensure that all agencies in East Sussex, who are represented on the two partnerships, have a shared understanding and commitment to supporting vulnerable young people with a common language and focus on safeguarding risk, rather than solely on their eligibility for services. Particularly for looked after children who may not have a 'staying put' arrangement, their home will change, potentially GP, college, and the area that they know well.

We recognise the need for children's and adult services to understand and learn from each other to develop a more fluid system¹.

Children's and adults' safeguarding systems are governed by distinct practice, policy, and statutory frameworks. Some young people might require help to be safe and healthy, even if they do not have formally defined care and support needs. In particular, this protocol aims to ensure that the most vulnerable young people receive support – including preventative work – based on identified need.

This protocol recognises that there is already good practice and support on offer to young people. However, it can be difficult for parents/carers and young people to know what happens when they turn 18 and how any care and support, they currently receive will change. The second part of this protocol sets out what local transition pathways are in place.

¹ [Bridging the gap: Transitional Safeguarding and the role of social work with adults \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

What do we mean by transition?

Transition happens when we move from one stage of life to another. Transition can take many forms, including between schools, from children's services to adult services, from home to hospital, from education into work or from being a looked after child to leaving care.

Specifically, this protocol reflects on the process of transition from childhood to adulthood. For many young people this can be a challenging time. Alongside the many physical and emotional changes that are part of adolescence, growing up also involves changes in roles, relationships, expectations, and status within family, amongst friends and the wider community of home, school, and work.

Change can be particularly difficult for children and perhaps one of the biggest challenges of adolescent transitions is that they take place against a backdrop of multiple shifts and transformation.

Particularly for young people leaving care, it is not a choice to live independently and be responsible for their own home and bills. For young people leaving care there will also be changes in professionals and the team(s) they have been used to working with. There will also be differences in the way that they may have been used to receiving support, owing to the shift from children to adult services. All of this can be scary and daunting.'

*"Whilst turning 18 means that a child legally becomes an adult overnight (and this often has implications for the delivery and eligibility of local services and support), **the transition to adulthood is a process not an event** – and this process differs from one person to another".*



Some young people over 18 years old might require additional support to be safe and well during this phase of their lives, even though they might not have formally defined care and support needs. This includes where needs are considered by Adult Social Care when determining eligibility for support.



During adolescence, the nature of the risks faced by children, and the way that they experience these risks, can differ from earlier childhood – as do their needs. Specifically, children may be faced with a new set of complex arrangements and risks – ones not posed by families, but instead by peers, partners, and adults unconnected to their families in communities and online. Peer and social relationships become more central to children’s lives and their identity. Even more so than adults, adolescents tend to judge themselves on how others might view them.

It is important to recognise that transition is a process, not a series of discrete events and transition to adulthood may be achieved in many different ways and time frames. Transition to adulthood may take significantly longer for some young people and for some, 'markers' of adult status may continue to be achieved throughout life, not just between the ages of 13 to 25.

Children who have had adverse childhood experiences, mental health problems and those in, or leaving, care will most likely require additional support at key transitions to improve their outcomes and need support with recovery following adversity and abuse. Children should be supported to build upon their existing strengths and bolster their social, personal, and community-based resources and support networks.

We should note that this is also a time of transition for parents and carers as they too are required to navigate new systems, services, and professionals. They will be aware that the process of adulthood does not happen overnight, yet legally their child is now considered to be an adult. It can be a difficult shift for parents and carers who may have been used to a greater level of information sharing, or a more central role in decision making. This protocol acknowledges this transition and commits to support the whole family through this period of change.

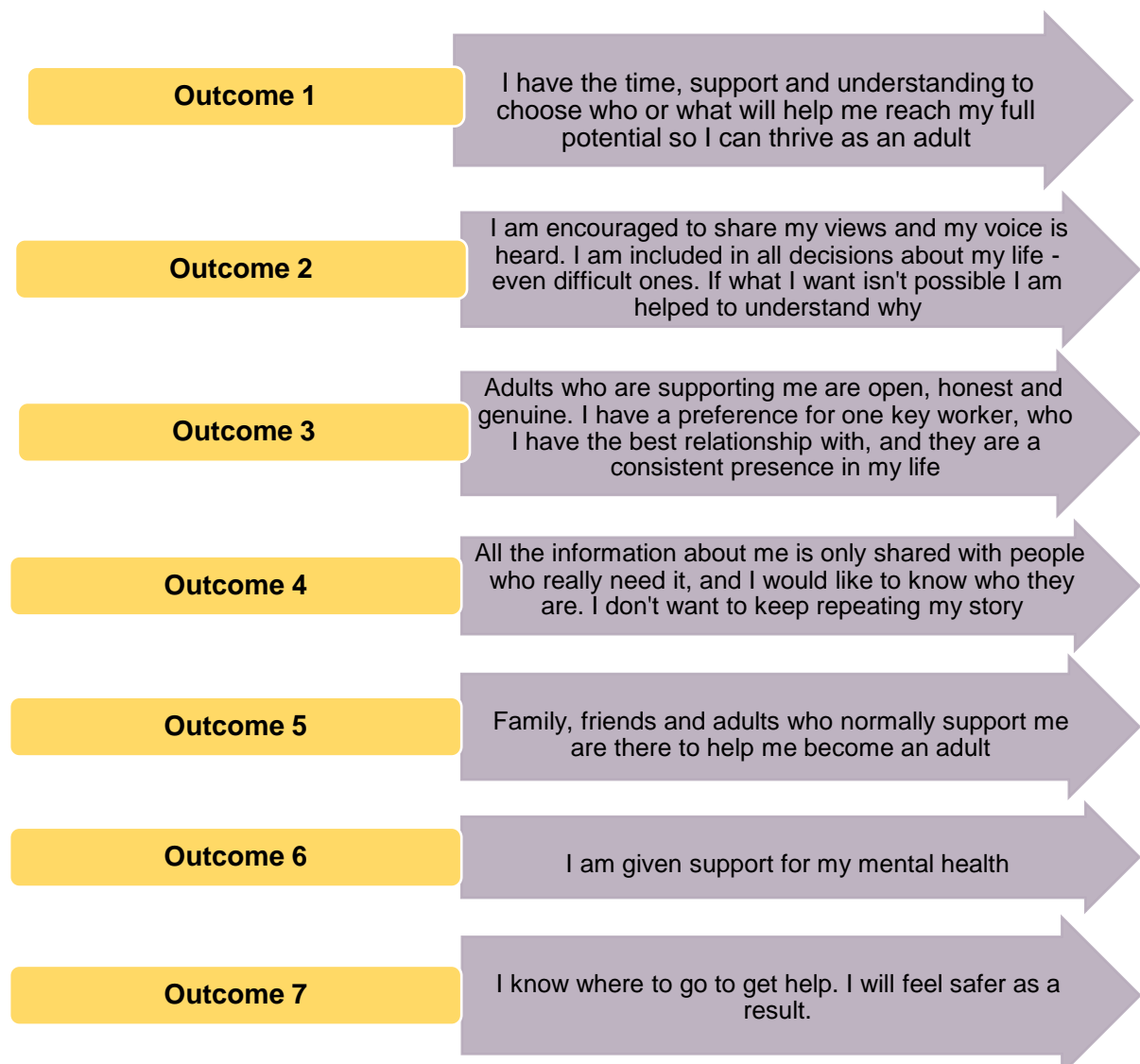
Our vision

Agencies represented on the ESSAB and ESSCP agree to:

“ensure that vulnerable young people are supported in their transition to adulthood, which enables them to make a difference in their world and reach their full potential. We will do this by working in collaboration with the young person as the expert in their own lives”

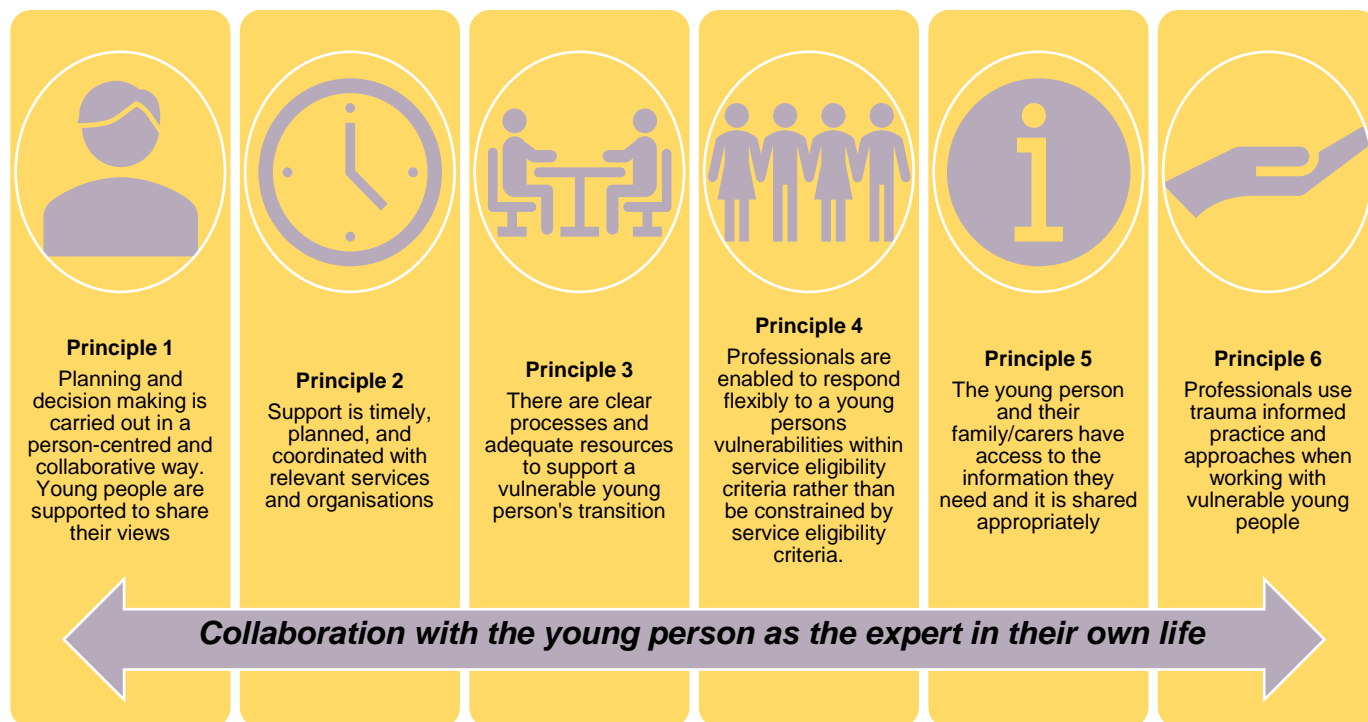
The outcomes listed below were generated using existing engagement feedback with young people in East Sussex. These were agreed during a dedicated workshop with young people who have recently, or who in the near future will, transition to adulthood.

What does a good transition look like?



Our commitment to work together

To ensure that young people are kept safe and meet their potential, the ESSAB and ESSCP have established a set of principles that will underpin the work of agencies involved in every transition:



How will success be measured?

The ESSAB and ESSCP will use existing safeguarding audit activity to monitor the effectiveness of the protocol and report on its effectiveness to partners through their annually published Safeguarding Report. This will include performance monitoring, auditing and the ESSCP section 11 self-assessment and ESSAB bi-annual self-assessment processes.

Where practitioners experience challenges with safeguarding decisions they can use the [Sussex Safeguarding Adults Escalation and Resolution Protocol](#) which provides a process for resolving disagreements between agencies or professionals in relation to adult safeguarding. The process provides for the escalation and resolution of disagreements where an agency or professional has a concern with regard to a decision made by other professionals or another agency in relation to adult safeguarding and mental capacity within adult safeguarding.

Transitional Safeguarding

Transitional Safeguarding is an “***approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which prepares young people for their adult lives***”². Adolescence and the transition to adulthood involves a whole range of changes within young people’s lives, making this a particularly challenging and vulnerable time.

Transitional safeguarding focuses on safeguarding young people from adolescence into adulthood, recognising that this transition is a journey not an event, and every young person will experience this journey differently. While children’s services’ systems of safeguarding and support usually end at 18, experiences of harm and trauma during childhood, youth and early adulthood may continue to affect people across the life course, with unmet needs requiring complex interventions later in life

A Transitional Safeguarding workshop was facilitated in June 2023 by the ESSAB and the ESSCP with the support of Steve Baguley, NWG -Network Education and Transition into Adulthood Lead .The NWG inform, educate, and prevent child exploitation and abuse throughout the UK. East Sussex agencies identified the following key considerations for services and practitioners who work with and support young people moving into adulthood:



- Be flexible to **allow relationships to be built** with young people in a safe supported way
- **Work in the interests of the young person** and have a degree of flexibility
- Deliver **joint adults and children's training**
- **Include frontline staff in the development** of any future services or service reconfiguration
- Promote and encourage frontline staff to professionally **challenge and escalate** cases which may sit outside thresholds for some services but where harm and trauma are evident .
- **Making safeguarding personal** – person centred, and outcomes focused. Responses which support young people to improve or resolve their circumstances in a way they understand and are actively involved in.
- *Making Safeguarding Personal, supported by the Care Act (2014), is a response which aims to develop outcomes focus to safeguarding work, and a range of responses to support people to improve or resolve their circumstances.*

² [Bridging the gap: Transitional Safeguarding and the role of social work with adults \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Glossary

Acronym	
ESSAB	East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board
ESSCP	East Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership
SAR	Safeguarding Adults Review
LCSPR	Local Children's Safeguarding Practice Review
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
AMHS	Adult Mental Health Services
ESCC	East Sussex County Council
VERU	Violence Exploitation Reduction Unit
ESHT	East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
SPFT	Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust
NHS ICB	Sussex NHS Integrated Care Board
EHCP	Education and Health Care Plan
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
ASCH	Adult Social Care and Health
YJS	Youth Justice Service
SAFER	Safeguarding Adolescents From Exploitation and Risk

Appendix 1

Local Transition Pathways

Health

All Age Continuing Care, Children's Continuing Care team (up to age 18)

NHS Sussex

Some children and young people (up to their 18th birthday) may have very complex health needs. These may be the result of congenital conditions, long-term or life-limiting or life-threatening conditions, disability, or the after-effects of serious illness or injury. A package of additional health support may be needed. This additional package of care is known as continuing care. It is arranged and funded solely by the NHS.

At age 17 the service refers the young person to the Adult Continuing Care team who will determine if an assessment (around age 17.5years) is required. If they are not eligible for an adult assessment, they will liaise with the Social Care Transitions team. At age 18 they no longer fund any care provision.



[Continuing Healthcare - Sussex Health and Care \(ics.nhs.uk\)](https://ics.nhs.uk)

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT)

SPFT are a specialist NHS organisation providing mental health, learning disability and neurodevelopmental services to people living in Southeast England including East Sussex.

They provide Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for young people aged 10-18yrs and Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS) for adults 18yrs+

There is a Safe and Effective Transfer of Care Policy for young people using SPFT services and a panel which meets in East Sussex to discuss cases transferring to AMHS.



[Safe and Effective Transfers of Care \(sussexpartnership.nhs.uk\)](https://sussexpartnership.nhs.uk)

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT)

ESHT have extensive health services including: two acute hospitals in Hastings and Eastbourne, three community hospitals in Bexhill, Rye, and Uckfield, over 100 community sites across East Sussex, and in people's own homes.

The Transitional Health team supports young people aged 13-25yrs (or until they have engaged successfully in adult health services for 6 months) who have ongoing health needs. Young people are supported with person centred care in a variety of environment including clinics, virtual contacts, at home or in schools. The care is holistic and not only focussed on the medical need.

The ESHT safeguarding team have a Specialist Nurse who has a lead in Transitional Safeguarding. This involves supporting individual staff and the organisation as a whole to consider and respond to transitional safeguarding needs through expert advice, training, supervision, and representation at relevant multi agency meetings.

The transition services within ESHT are currently discretionary.

Youth Justice

Probation Service

The Probation Service is a statutory Criminal Justice Service that supervises offenders released into the community. Young people move from the Youth Justice Service (YJS) to the Probation Service at age 17 years and 9 months. A Probation Officer is seconded to the youth offending service who holds transition cases to ensure a safe and supportive pathway between the services.

In East Sussex there is a targeted and supportive approach to adolescents aged 18 to 24 years and this is delivered through the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU). Probation Officers in this team work closely with the seconded Probation Officer in the Youth Justice Service (YJS) regarding any transition cases.

For all 18 – 24-year-olds under probation supervision the VERU team works holistically with the young person, making home visits and getting to know the family/network support around the young person- with a more flexible approach to enforcement and focusing more on compliance.

The criteria (2023) are that a young person must have received a conviction, be receiving probation supervision, and living within the Brighton and East Sussex area.

Youth Justice Service (YJS) East Sussex County Council

The YJS is a statutory service that supports children from 10-18 years old who have come into contact with the criminal justice service in East Sussex.

For young people aged 17yrs transferring to the Probation Service, the YJS manage and support this transition with the support of a dedicated seconded Probation Service role.

The current criteria for the YJS social work team are that a child is over 14 years has a court order or, is on remand for an offence or, has an out of court disposal and is discussed at the Safeguarding Adolescents From Exploitation and Risk (SAFER) panel or, is on the SAFER panel and has a significant criminal profile.



[Youth Justice Service | East Sussex County Council](#)

Looked After Children

Local Offer for Care Leavers – East Sussex County Council

The local offer for care leavers sets out the support which is offered to young people aged 16–25 as they prepare to make the transition from being looked after children.

A range of support is available to care leavers , including emotional health and wellbeing, education, training, and employment, accommodation, and finance



[Our local offer for care leavers | East Sussex County Council](#)

Substance Misuse

East Sussex Under 25's Substance Misuse Service – East Sussex County Council

The service offers: specialist treatment services to young people up to the age of 25 who are using alcohol, drugs, New Psychoactive Substances ('legal highs') and research chemicals. They also provide advice to their parents and carers.

The service is made up of social workers , nurses, substance misuse practitioners, a consultant psychiatrist and a duty worker or manager who is available daily.



[Drugs and alcohol services for children and young people | East Sussex County Council](#)

Adult Social Care and Health

Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) - East Sussex County Council

Adult Social Care work with adults aged 18 and over who live in East Sussex, such as those who:

- Want to stay living at home but are finding it difficult to cope
- Would like to get out and about, but are unable to do so due to a health condition or disability
- Need information on how to access more suitable accommodation
- Look after someone who could not cope without their help

The local authority must carry out a transition assessment of anyone for a young person, young carer, or the young person's carer when there is significant benefit to the young person or carer in doing so, and if the young person is likely to have needs for care or support after turning 18. The provisions in the Care Act are not only for those who are already receiving children's services, but for anyone who is likely to have needs for adult care and support after turning 18.

The Local Authority has a duty to provide prevention services when it believes that prevention services will:

1. Contribute towards the prevention or delay of the need for care and support.
2. Contribute towards the prevention or delay of any need for support of carers.
3. Reduce the needs for care and support.
4. Reduce the needs for support of carers.



[Leaflet: A guide to Adult Social Care and Health | East Sussex County Council](#)

[Who qualifies for our support? | East Sussex County Council](#)

Mental Health Transitions Team (being reviewed 2023) East Sussex County Council

The Mental Health transitions Team is a team within Adult Social Care which support young people as they move from children to adult services. The team support young people who are:

Aged 17 – 19 and who are open to Children's Services and / or CAMHS. They have eligible social care needs under the Care Act and their primary need arises from their mental health condition/s and / or substance use.

There are different referral routes into the service : via the monthly Multi-Agency Mental Health Transitions Forum, via the Through Care Panel, referrals from other professionals (outside ESCC) , young people who have been or are currently detained under the Mental Health Act.

The Transitions Service (being reviewed 2023) East Sussex County Council

The Transition Service provides a route through from Children's Disability Services to Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) for young people aged 16 to 25 with the most complex needs. Most of these young people will be those receiving a service from the Children's Disability Team, although some may come through to the service via other routes. For support from the Transition Service, a young person must:

1. Have a formal diagnosis of a severe and enduring learning disability (and may also have physical disabilities), and
2. Have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) and/or Statement of Special Educational Needs in place, and
3. Be, or will be, eligible for support from ASCH at age 18, and
4. Meet the [Continuum of Need](#) Level 4 (Assessment Framework Children Services 16-18 years old).

Advocacy

The Care Act places a duty on local authorities to provide an independent advocate to facilitate the involvement in the transition assessment where the person in question would experience substantial difficulty in understanding the necessary information or in communicating their views, wishes and feelings – and if there is nobody else appropriate to act on their behalf.

This duty applies for all young people or carers who meet the criteria, regardless of whether they lack mental capacity as defined under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.



[Independent advocacy | East Sussex County Council](#)

Carer's

Care for the Carers

The Young Carers Service offers information, support, and activities to young carers across East Sussex. The service caters for young people up to the age of 18. At 18, they are referred onto the Young Adult Carers service.

The Young Adult Carers service supports young people caring, unpaid, for family members, friends, or relatives. Support involves the provision of general information, advice, guidance, grant/funding applications and signposting via a Carers Hub service. Support includes monthly 2-hour groups, a private Facebook group, regular respite activities, day trips and a free counselling service to adult carers.



[Care for the Carers - Supporting carers in East Sussex \(cftc.org.uk\)](#)

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

East Sussex County Council - Local Offer

Preparing for Adulthood - Transition Planning Around Year 8/9

By the age of 13-14, someone from the young person's school will be responsible for co-ordinating a meeting to discuss plans for their future. This should involve the young person and have details of their hopes, dreams, and a plan of how they will be supported to achieve them.

Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans and planning for adulthood

If a child has an EHC plan, their planning for the future starts at age 13 (Year 9).

As well as the statutory requirement to review the EHC plan, it will also include planning for transition into adulthood. This allows enough time to start thinking and planning for future options.

At the Year 11 there is an EHC Plan review meeting and decisions about post-16 options will need to be made.

The Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) programme ensures that young people with SEND achieve paid employment, independent living and housing options, good health, friendships, relationships, and community inclusion as they move into adulthood:

Services for transition to adult life

The SEND-specific directory on 1Space provides services that may help with transition from the age 16+, into adulthood. Services include:

- Play
- Employment support
- Advice, guidance, and information
- Activities and events for young people
- Mental health and wellbeing support
- Youth groups



[Transition Planning | East Sussex Local Offer](#)

[East Sussex Local Offer Directory of Services | East Sussex Local Offer](#)

Vulnerable Learners

Vulnerable learners Protocol

The Vulnerable Learners Protocol was developed in partnership with schools, Further Education (FE) providers, Youth Employability Service (YES) and East Sussex County Council Children's Services teams. The protocol outlines the responsibilities and activities for all professionals and partners supporting vulnerable young people to ensure a successful transition into Post 16 education.

A vulnerable young person is one who may be at risk of poorer outcomes and therefore needs additional planning, support or monitoring in order to maximise their potential.



[Inclusion and SEND - Transition - Resources to support pupils](#)

Accommodation

Temporary accommodation with on-site support

Provides a supportive environment with personalised support to help you feel safe and healthy. The support you receive will also help you with your ability to live independently, so you can successfully move on to a home of your own.

Speak to your district or borough council housing team to find out what services are available in your local area.

About the accommodation - This accommodation is for people who meet the following criteria

Women at risk of domestic abuse- Clarion Housing Association provides safe refuge accommodation for women age 16 or over, with or without children, who are fleeing domestic abuse.

People with mental health issues -People aged 18–64 who have poor mental health and have been homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

Young mothers- Women aged 16–25 years who are pregnant or have a child.

Homeless people – People and families aged 18–64 who have been homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

Young people- Young people aged 16–17 and care leavers aged 16–24 who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.



[Your local housing office | East Sussex County Council](#)

Appendix 2

Local Resources

Online health and social care transitions workshop for parent carers of young people 16-25

Speakers include the East Sussex NHS Learning Disabilities & Autism team, the Transition Nurse specialists from ESHT, and the Transitions Adult Social Care team.

Learn about how your young person will transition into adult health and social care services, with the learning disabilities and social care transitions team.

Includes topics such as what will happen if your young person is admitted into hospital, how to navigate appointments and what support the social care transitions team can provide, including short breaks and respite.

[East Sussex Health and Social Care Transitions Workshop – YouTube](#)

East Sussex Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs)

SAR Charlie published May 2023 and the Thematic SAR published November 2022 both have learning around transitions.

[Safeguarding Adults Reviews - East Sussex SAB](#)

East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Practice Reviews (LSCPRs)

The Child AA LCSPR and Thematic LCSPR both include learning around transitions for vulnerable young people.

[Safeguarding Practice Reviews \(previously Serious Case Reviews\) - ESSCP](#)

NICE Guidelines Transition from Children's to Adult Services

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/QS140