

Joint Commissioning (Version 5 - October 2014)

Appendix 4 – LGA Case Study

# The council role in special education



# Foreword

The Children and Families Act 2014 brings in the biggest reform of the legal system for special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities for 30 years.

The changes will have a direct and significant impact on the lives of children, young people and their families across the country, giving them a greater say in the local services and the specific support they receive. Preparing for and managing young people's transition to adulthood is a significant feature of the reforms.

Local government has supported the changes and has a key role to play in making these reforms a success. From September 2014, councils, along with their health partners will be required to start to introduce the changes to the system across education, health and social care that are outlined in the Act to their local areas. Councils will have overall responsibility for children and young people with SEN and disabilities from birth up to the age of twenty-five.

Pathfinder areas covering 31 councils, have been testing out the new system since 2011. A pathfinder champion programme is in place to help teams in their neighbouring councils prepare for the changes. This support programme will run until March 2015.

The pathfinder champions also have a national role and other organisations including the Council for Disabled Children are also supporting councils to implement reforms.

To prepare for the change councils will need to know:

- how effective the arrangements in the local area are for identifying children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
- how the effectiveness of special educational, health and care provision for those with and without Education Health and Care plans will be assessed
- how the progress towards the outcomes identified for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will be assessed and reviewed.

I would like to thank the councils that agreed to feature as a case study in this report. Putting these reforms in place takes time, energy and determination. As the case studies show, the pathfinders have come a long way and learned much that can be shared with others. A lot of work has also been happening in councils that have not been part of the pathfinder programme. I hope you will find it useful to have these examples, which provide a brief guide to the reforms. The case studies are based on the SEN and disabilities pathfinder information packs published by the pathfinder support team. We are also very grateful to the pathfinder support team for all their help. You can download more detailed information via the following link: [www.sendpathfinder.co.uk/infopacks](http://www.sendpathfinder.co.uk/infopacks)

**Cllr David Simmonds**

Chairman, LGA Children and Young People Board

# Introduction

The Children and Families Act 2014 has not changed the definition of special educational need (SEN)<sup>1</sup>. But statements of SEN and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) are being replaced with a single education, health and care (EHC) plan for children and young people with complex needs. The EHC plan will place much more emphasis on individual outcomes and will set out the support children and young people will receive while they are in education or training to achieve those outcomes.

The reforms extend the rights that parents of children with SEN statements currently have (to express a preference for the school they wish their child to attend) to young people, and widen the institutions for which they can express a preference to include Academy schools, further education colleges and sixth form colleges, non-maintained special schools and independent special schools and independent specialist colleges approved for this purpose by the Secretary of State.

Children and young people with SEN and disabilities currently do less well than their peers at school and college on a range of measures, with poor employment outcomes. Supporting independence is better for individual children and young people, and it uses resources more effectively. The National Audit Office estimated in 2011 that supporting one person with a learning disability into employment could, in addition to improving their independence and self-esteem, reduce lifetime costs to the public purse and increase the person's income by between 55 and 95 per cent.

Councils and health bodies will be required to work together to plan and commission services jointly to secure a better integrated system. Meeting the needs of children and young people with SEN and disabilities will often require a range of different services, provided by different professionals, which cut across organisational boundaries. Councils will have overall responsibility for children and young people and a duty to review the special educational provision and social care provision in their areas for children and young people who have SEN or disabilities and the provision made for local children and young people who are educated out of the area.

For children and young people with less complex needs but who still require help, a new system called SEN support is being brought in to replace School Action and School Action Plus (and the equivalent in nurseries). It will also be available in colleges. The process will be similar but it will be less about counting the hours or resources given to children and young people and more about what they are achieving as a result. Schools will still be required to identify children who need additional support, involve parent carers and children and young people in planning how to meet these needs and call on specialists from outside the school if necessary.

From September 2014, no new assessments for SEN statements or LDAs will be available. In stages, over the next few years, children and young people with existing SEN statements and LDAs will transfer to EHC Plans. There will be agreed procedures for the changeover and parent carers and young people will have a say in these. Existing rights, for example rights of appeal, will continue during the transfer.

<sup>1</sup> The LGA has also published a guide to the new law: <http://tinyurl.com/getinontheact>

EHC Plans can continue to support young people up to the age of 25 if the council considers that the young person needs more time to complete their education or training, in comparison to the majority of others of the same age who do not have SEN. They will also have to have regard to whether the educational or training outcomes specified in an EHC plan have been achieved.

The Care Act 2014, which will be implemented from April 2015 will also introduce greater flexibilities for children's and adults' services to work together to provide better support young people moving from one service to the other.

For young offenders in custody, the legislation will not come into force until April 2015. There will be new duties on the young person's home local authority and on health service commissioners to arrange appropriate education and health provision. Consultation on new regulations is expected in the Autumn.

The new 0-25 SEN and disabilities Code of Practice provides statutory guidance from September 2014 and councils and health partners, early years providers, all schools, colleges, and others, including youth offending teams, must have regard to it when they decide what to do.

'Top tips' from the pathfinders are included in the information packs on the SEND Pathfinder website. The importance of getting buy-in from the top features strongly as a 'top-tip', including the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the council Chief Executive and Leader as well as the Lead Member for Children's Services. Pathfinders found it helpful to have SEN and disabilities reform steering group, with representation from across agencies and a shared vision to inform key commissioning plans and strategies.

## Schools and colleges

Schools have to set out on their website information about what they offer for pupils with SEN.

Schools should review the support currently given to pupils on School Action or School Action Plus in light of the changes during the next school year.

Schools will also have a new legal duty to make arrangements for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions. The aim is to ensure that all children with medical conditions are properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

Councils will have a legal duty to involve all types of school, Further Education (FE) and sixth form colleges, special post-16 institutions and other post-16 providers who will have a legal duty to co-operate with councils in developing their local offer of services. Colleges and other post-16 providers will have some important new responsibilities, including new duties to admit young people when named in their education health and care (EHC) plan, to use best endeavours for all young people with special educational needs, to co-operate with councils and to have regard to the new 0-25 code of practice.

## High needs funding

The new funding system introduced in 2013 makes councils responsible for commissioning and funding all additional high needs provision across early years, schools and post-16 education and training. Schools, academies, FE colleges and other providers share a similar funding system, and commissioning and funding decisions focus on what provision will best secure the desired outcomes for individual children and young people as well as the efficient use of resources.



## Engaging with children, young people and parent carers

Engagement and participation of children, young people and parent carers is central to the reforms and is the driver behind the other thematic areas. It is vital that children, young people, parents and carers, are seen as equal partners. At the outset of the pathfinder programme, it was made clear that they should be involved in discussions and decisions about their individual support and about local provision. This requirement continues to be at the forefront of the reforms and it underpins the legislation and the statutory guidance in the SEN and disabilities 0-25 code of practice. This approach continues to be viewed as a core thread and is very much at the heart of the reform programme.

Councils must work with young people with SEN and disabilities directly in preparing and reviewing the local offer, reviewing and planning SEN provision and in the joint commissioning of services. This must include the support young people need and want to help them prepare for adulthood.

Young people should be supported to participate in discussions about their aspirations, their needs, and the support

that they think will help them best. After compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16) the right to make decisions applies to them directly.

## Darlington: Real engagement with young people

The Darlington pathfinder set out to engage children and young people fully in meaningful ways. There was a strong commitment to making sure they shaped and directed the development of the pathfinder and that any pathways, documents and policies that emerged would enable them to participate in decisions that affected their lives fully.

One of the key partners has been Darlington Association on Disability (DAD), a user-led organisation committed to increasing choice and control for people with disabilities or special educational needs. DAD runs a young leaders group, supported by the pathfinder support officer, which has shared its views on the local offer. Young people have been fully involved in developing and piloting the new EHC plan. One example of their influence is how children and young people are involved in the 'making sense' meeting where the draft plan is discussed. The young person

participates in the discussion, can attend the meeting for a short or longer period of time and can choose how to be involved.

The EHC plan fully takes into account the needs and aspirations expressed by the child. For example, one 11-year-old boy wanted to travel to school in his wheelchair, with his friends, rather than by taxi. At the meeting a compromise was reached whereby his parent would receive a direct payment for taxi travel for bad-weather days; the rest of the time he could travel with his friends.

The use of person-centred tools, such as power point presentations, posters, meeting in places where the child feels comfortable and gathering ideas through crafts or play, has meant everyone's views can be fully explored and included. A young person sits on the steering group which is developing Darlington's key working model.

Feedback from young people with an EHC plan indicates that they felt involved and feel a sense of 'ownership' of their plan. Using person-centred approaches has meant re-focusing the document towards outcomes rather than outputs, and practitioners have received training on this approach.

For further information

**Rachel Kershaw**

Head of School and Pupil Support Services,  
Darlington Borough Council  
rachel.kershaw@darlington.gov.uk

---

## South East 7 Young people's engagement group

To ensure that young people's voices were heard in the SEN and disability reform process, the SE7 regional pathfinder commissioned a voluntary sector organisation, KIDS, to find ways of engaging children and young people.

The first element of this work was a broad regional consultation. This information was used to map where and how young people were already being consulted and to identify organisations willing to help create new opportunities for participation. Links were made with the pathfinder leads and local authority participation officers to 'piggy back' on planned family information and consultation events. A total of 157 children and young people took part in this wider consultation.

KIDS also set up a young people's engagement group, bringing together 13 young volunteers with special educational needs or disabilities from across the region. Their main priorities were to:

- produce a participation framework and charter as the foundation for how engagement with young people would work across the region (which sits alongside the parent carer participation framework)
- share young people's experiences of the reforms and feed this back to the SE7 steering group
- share good practice across all seven local authorities
- seek evidence of direct action taken as a result of young people's participation.

The engagement group began by making a short film about their hopes and aspirations for the SEND reforms. They have since been helping to develop the 'preparation for adulthood' section of the local offer framework, saying what information they would like and how they would like to receive it. The agenda at meetings is set by the

young people themselves, based on the key priorities of the reforms as they see them. Each member feeds back to young people in their own area and an electronic news bulletin is also used to share the findings.

The SE7 young people's engagement group film can be seen at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=atck5kEixGI&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atck5kEixGI&feature=youtu.be)

For further information

**Jean Haigh**

SE7 SEND Pathfinder Regional Lead  
[jean.haigh@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:jean.haigh@eastsussex.gov.uk)

---

## Gloucestershire Reaching out to local communities

Gloucestershire has been successful at engaging parents, including ethnic minority communities and families in remote rural areas. Gloucestershire Parent Carers is an active parents' forum, supported by a part-time coordinator funded by Gloucestershire County Council. The forum encourages parents to form local support groups based on geography, cultural background or special interest, which have been consulted throughout the SEN and disability reforms.

Every project board and steering committee meeting related to the reforms includes at least one parent representative. The council signed up to a 'parent carer charter' outlining the requirements for effective engagement, such as trying to give at least one month's notice of meetings. Parent representatives receive travel and childcare expenses to help them attend road shows, training and meetings.

The forum coordinator went out to local communities to gather their views, concerns and ideas. Training, displays or events relating to the SEND reforms were taken to other parents' meetings and community events such as festivals. The support groups were consulted through focus group meetings. The hardest-to-reach groups were fathers

(an active dads group has now been set up) and Travellers.

Engagement takes time and depends on building trusting relationships. Factors behind Gloucestershire's success include:

- getting to know the community and where ethnic minority groups live
- engaging the help of community groups and leaders to ensure that approaches are culturally appropriate
- meeting parents in settings where they are comfortable, with interpreters if needed (often other community members will help out)
- providing positive feedback on parents' contributions
- having allies within the council who champion parent carer participation.

As a result, parents feel there has been real co-production here. The forum's membership has doubled to 1,000 and is now more reflective of the range of different communities in Gloucestershire.

With thanks to Contact a Family for some of the information in this case study.

For further information

**Deborah Livingstone**

Gloucestershire Parent Carers  
[dlivingstone@carersgloucestershire.org.uk](mailto:dlivingstone@carersgloucestershire.org.uk)

---



## Local offer

From 1 September 2014, councils will be required to consult with local families and providers of services and publish a 'local offer'. The local offer will inform parent carers and young people with SEN or disabilities about services across education, health and social care and from birth to 25. It will cover what is expected to be provided in a local area, including what to expect from local early years providers, schools, colleges, health and social care. It will include information on how decisions are made, how to request a personal budget, how to access more specialist support and how to complain or appeal.

The local offer will also include any provision outside the local area that is likely to be used by local children and young people with SEN and disabled children and young people.

Local offers will be developed and revised over time and there will have to be systems put in place for comments to be made on the local offer, the response from the council and the action they intend to take. Regulations and the new SEN and disabilities Code of Practice provide guidance on content. Councils will of course be able to go beyond this, depending on local needs and consultation with children, young people and parents.



Nottinghamshire's Local Offer app

## Nottinghamshire A website shared with the family services directory

Nottinghamshire is locating its SEN and disabilities local offer on an externally-hosted site shared with the family services directory, in order to reduce duplication of information and benefit from an existing community presence. Locating it externally also marks the local offer as a collaborative cross-sector enterprise, not just a local authority responsibility.

The local offer partners have developed a user-friendly, searchable website designed to be accessible through smart phones, tablets and computers. The home page layout replicates the sort of 'apps' smart phone users are familiar with, clear and simple icons designed to appeal to children and young adults. Non-internet users can access the local offer information through the county council's call centre and a printed magazine, which is commissioned externally.

Initial consultation on the website was conducted by voluntary sector and parents' organisations, and this helped to determine how information would be grouped on the site. Draft designs were shared with young people and parents, and some of the icons were amended in light of their feedback. A staging site was then developed to determine how easy it would be to search and navigate.

The website incorporates Google Translate so the core content of the local offer can be translated into 50 languages. It has filters enabling users to search for information by, for example, age or postcode, and a 'rate and review' facility is being added.

Nottinghamshire's 'next steps' include:

- adding a provider template to make it easier for providers to give details of their services
- establishing mechanisms for moderating and responding to feedback, including using it to influence service commissioning

- continuing to organise consultation events on the local offer
- working with colleagues in adult social care to discuss how the resource could be extended for over-25 year olds.

Nottinghamshire County Council is also working with Nottingham City Council on 'mirroring' information across both local offers where services and facilities are available to residents of either local authority.

For further information

**Mark Evans**

Pathfinder Project Manager  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
mark.evans@nottscc.gov.uk

---

## Barking and Dagenham Engagement with key stakeholders

Although not a pathfinder area, a strong commitment at director level has driven the SEN and disability reform agenda at the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham ahead of the new legislation. The borough has been working to embed SEND across all service areas and cement the importance of cross-agency working. A consultant was appointed to lead on developing the local offer.

Barking and Dagenham established a SEND Transformation Board to oversee key projects including the local offer, assessments and plans, integrated commissioning, personal budgets, transitions, information systems and operational design. Dedicated project leads were established to take forward the integrated working and commissioning agenda with key stakeholders, including adult and community services and the clinical commissioning group. Two joint-funded posts were established with each of these partners to take forward the SEND work and create a blueprint for the future of integrated working and commissioning in the borough.

A parent-friendly version of the local offer was developed using a template based on the York pathfinder. Parents, children and young people were asked to comment on what the local offer should contain, how the information should be arranged, how they would like to access it and where service gaps existed. A draft local offer was then published online and stakeholders were asked to comment on the layout, content and accessibility. The council engaged with parent groups, schools, the voluntary sector, children and young people in this process.

Training is being offered to school staff on developing their local offer. Training in person-centred planning and EHC plans is being provided to a wide range of education and health professionals. The next step is to use the audit, stakeholders' views and adapted draft to develop an interactive website and a text version, work which will be overseen by a co-production group. Strong commitment from senior managers and councillors has been critical in driving progress on SEND reform across the borough.

A video about the work in Barking and Dagenham can be seen at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYshV85EBEY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYshV85EBEY)

For further information

**Jackie Ross**

SEN Consultant  
Barking and Dagenham  
jackie.ross@lbbd.gov.uk

---

## Hampshire

### Developing a local offer in partnership

Hampshire's local offer website is being delivered in partnership with Parent Voice, an information service for parents of disabled children, and the Hampshire Parent Carer Network. A parent advisory group worked on the early stages of the website and young people's involvement is now being developed.

Four specialist-led sub-groups, with wider stakeholder engagement, have looked in detail at each area (education, health, children's social care and preparing for adulthood). Parents felt that the main navigation should be written in clear and simple language, to help those who did not know what service or support they were looking for but knew what their need was (a user-led not service-led experience).

Providers submit information on their offer in a standard format having co-produced this with parents. A phased programme is being developed following on from a rigorous trial process. This will populate the local offer for Hampshire, focussing initially on statutory services, with an ongoing implementation programme.

Supporting schools has also been a key part of Hampshire's local offer development. Guidance for schools (as well as health and other agencies) was developed, setting out how they can provide clear and accessible information co-produced with parents and young people. This also supports schools to meet their requirements under the SEN information regulations.

There will be nominated 'local offer champions' within each sub-group area to promote the work to colleagues, ensure service co-operation underpins the principle of co-production and help ensure quality standards in terms of clarity of content and purpose.

Specific governance arrangements have been put in place. The local offer is 'owned'

by the Children's Trust with responsibility delegated to the Joint Child Health Commissioning Board. Developing the offer is a long-term process and the team is now looking at how feedback can be used to influence future service provision and joint commissioning arrangements. There will be a regular standing item on the local offer which will provide the link in to future commissioning of services to ensure they are responsive to local need across education, health and care.

For more information

#### **Tesni Mason**

Parent Partnership Officer  
Hampshire County Council  
tesni.mason@hants.gov.uk

---

## North Yorkshire

### Presenting data in an engaging format

North Yorkshire County Council has developed a user-friendly, interactive geographical map containing information on the local offer. The map has been designed to help young people, parents and professionals see what services are available in a local area. Users can zoom in on locations of interest, using a menu to filter the information. The site can be used to locate services such as educational settings, accessible sports clubs, supported employment and training.

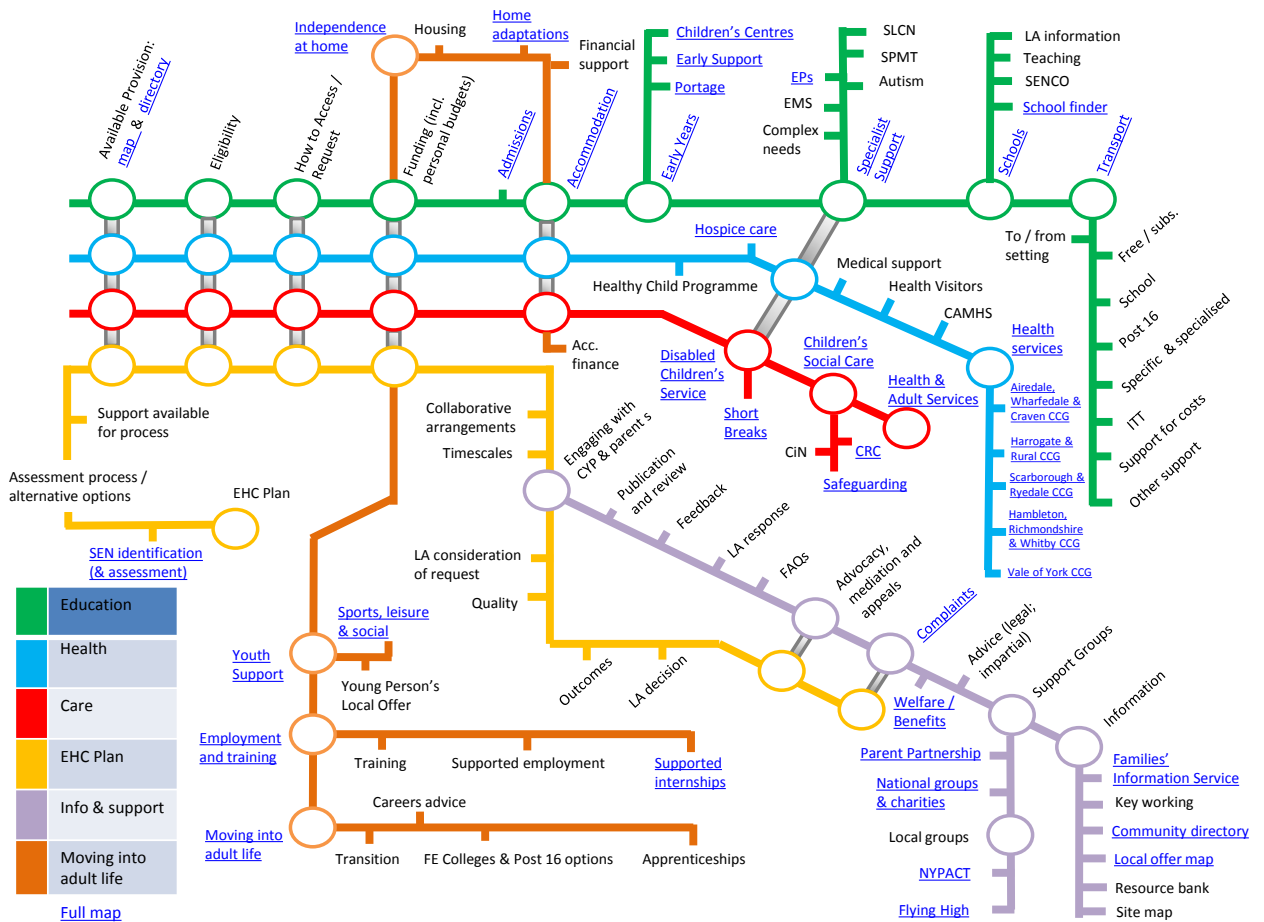
Linked to this, the council developed an interactive local offer site map designed in the style of a London Underground map. The simple and engaging design helps users to access and navigate information within the local offer. It provides an accessible overview of the different services and support available across education, health, social care, preparing for adulthood, EHC plans and more. Each strand is colour coded, which helps users navigate to different services, and there are hyperlinks to further information.

In developing its local offer North Yorkshire worked closely with all stakeholders, consulting regularly with the parent carer

forum and a disabled young people's group. Both had significant input into the content and design of the local offer. It has been a regular agenda item at network meetings for early years settings, schools and colleges, the parent carer forum, the young people's group and various staff groups across child, adult and health services. Parent representatives attend the project working groups and the overall SEND steering group. Young people are involved in developing their own version of the local offer.

Consultation events have been used to ensure that the local offer is co-produced and meets the needs of parents, children and young people. These have included an electronic parents' survey, and 'road show' events for parent carers at locations across the county to explain the SEND reforms and get feedback. A conference for parents took place in February 2014.

For further information  
**Michael Cotton**  
 SEND Implementation Officer  
 North Yorkshire County Council  
 michael.cotton@northyorks.gov.uk



North Yorkshire's Local Offer site map 2013

## Joint commissioning



The Children and Families Act 2014 requires councils and their health partners (meaning each Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) with responsibility for commissioning health services in the council area, and NHS England) to establish joint commissioning arrangements to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN and disability.

Joint commissioning offers all the partners the opportunity to work together to deliver more personalised and integrated support across education, health and social care, resulting in better outcomes for children and young people. It can also be a way of operating more effectively to make the best use of local resources.

Pathfinders have found that joint commissioning is challenging, but crucial to delivering integrated services that meet the needs of their children and young people with SEN. There is no single model of integration and joint commissioning between local authorities and their partner CCGs. Local partners have the flexibility to decide how they are going to make the system work in their area. It requires genuine co-production with all partners, backed by clear governance arrangements and a commitment to operating in a much more integrated way. Pathfinder learning has also demonstrated that the development of joint commissioning arrangements is often gradual and delivered in a phases and it needs to be absolutely clear who is accountable for what.

## Rochdale

### Shared ownership across health and local government

Joint leadership in delivering the SEN and disabilities agenda is driving transformation in Rochdale. From the start, two pathfinder leads were nominated, one from Rochdale Council (the head of service for SEND) and one from health (initially the children's lead in the primary care trust and, since April 2013, a new joint-funded post of associate director joint commissioning). Ahead of the new joint commissioning duty, this gave the work a firm footing and was crucial in getting buy-in from the council and health partners. Joint commissioning was embedded in all strategic plans relating to children and young people by all the partners.

A children's joint commissioning strategy was ratified through the health and wellbeing board, and from April 2014 a small team has been formed to progress the commissioning priorities. Rochdale has adopted a child/family journey approach to developing its integrated service, focusing on outcomes and functions the clinical commissioning group (CCG) and council want the service to deliver as a starting point, rather than simply re-organising existing provision. A service delivery model for the integrated team is being developed; the next stage is re-design and implementation.

Having an integrated team will give families:

- a single point of access to information and services
- signposting on the local offer
- person-centred integrated assessment and planning
- direct specialist intervention when needed
- a skilled, competent workforce supporting children and young people.

Rochdale's experience suggests it is important to identify a lead within the CCG to drive a partnership approach and support

engagement of the wider health sector. CCGs may not have much expertise of this group of young people, so developing a shared language and understanding is key to joint planning. In Rochdale, the GP clinical lead has championed this agenda with fellow clinical leads.

Service transformation is hard work and takes time, energy and commitment, so there is a need to have good support processes in place, realistic expectations and to celebrate success.

For further information

**Karen Kenton**

Children's Services, Rochdale Council  
karen.kenton@rochdale.gov.uk

---

## Wigan

### Integration and joint commissioning of services

Wigan has established structures that promote joint working and joint commissioning of services. Commissioning responsibility for children's services sits under an associate director for partnerships and safeguarding, a post jointly appointed by Wigan Council and the clinical commissioning group (CCG) which covers health promotion, children's health, social care, SEN and disability and safeguarding. The structure is designed to promote integrated, locality-based service delivery.

Commissioning responsibility for education, health and care sits with two co-located managers with shared strategy objectives. The deliverables in the children and young people's plan are jointly owned by these two managers and are reflected in the council's corporate strategy and the CCG operating framework.

This integrated structure has enabled Wigan to bring together a strong partnership around SEND reform, with a diverse range of stakeholders working together to support

parent carers, children and young people. Service integration is a shared objective across the partnership and has been delivered in early intervention and prevention services. Bridgewater NHS Trust now provides a 0-19 integrated health team in partnership with the Council's locality-based early intervention and prevention teams.

Another key element is the strategic alignment of funding streams. Council and CCG budgets are not pooled but are brought together by the integrated commissioning team to deliver strategic objectives through a range of commissioning activities. This can be at whole-system level, in terms of a newly commissioned service, or spot-purchases by individual families.

The outcomes of close multi-agency working in Wigan include:

- integrated personal budgets (bringing together three funding streams to support EHC plans)
- a multi-agency key working team to support families
- substantial service re-design (such as an integrated model for targeted and specialist community child health services which is now underway)
- joint investment in the development of new services, including a parent support and short breaks service
- children's continuing care packages commissioned jointly by the council and CCG.

Wigan's experience shows that multi-agency working and shared ownership of service delivery can promote more joined-up, streamlined, holistic and responsive services and support for families.

For further information

**Richard Foster**

SEND Pathfinder Project Coordinator,  
Wigan Council  
r.foster@wigan.gov.uk

---

## Southampton Developing the 'market' of joint provision

Southampton has a strong history of joint working. A jointly commissioned health and care service, Jigsaw, has been in place for around six years, enabling the city to pool local authority and clinical commissioning group (CCG) money for services for children with complex social needs and disabilities or learning difficulties. Southampton City Council and Southampton CCG jointly commission a range of other services including a community equipment service and short break services.

Being a SEN and disabilities pathfinder gave Southampton the opportunity to look at extending joint commissioning across education, health and care, pooling budgets and developing the 'market' of local provision. The city is now moving towards a fully commissioned, fully integrated 0-25 service that will deliver key principles including:

- children and their families are equal partners in developing and reviewing services
- families and professionals are a team – they listen, understand, plan and review together
- a reduction in duplication and its inherent waste and risk
- professionals are functionally, and where possible located and managed, within fully integrated multi-disciplinary teams with single processes and recording systems.

All stakeholders are fully involved and it has been important to gain buy-in from director level in the council and the CCG, including elected members. A shared, clear vision has also been essential.

Going forward, the integrated commissioning unit will set up a team to focus on market development and provider relationships. To support this work, the council and CCG have jointly published a 'market position statement'

and held a provider workshop to discuss requirements and get feedback. They are now looking to develop the market in:

- supporting families to use community resources as much as possible
- services for pre-school children
- services for children with complex health needs
- a greater emphasis on personalisation to give more choice and control to families.

For further information

**Becky Davis**

Development Coordinator  
Southampton City Council  
rebecca.davis@southampton.gov.uk

---

## EHC Plans co-ordinated assessments and personal budgets

For those with the most complex needs, a single birth up to age 25 education, health and care (EHC) plan will replace statements of special educational needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs). The EHC plan will place much more emphasis on personal goals and will clearly describe the support a child will receive across different services, including at school, to achieve these ambitions. The creation and delivery of these plans will be led by the council but schools, colleges and other educational settings must get involved in developing, delivering and reviewing these plans, working closely with parents.

From 1 September 2014 councils will be required to consider new requests for an assessment of SEN under the new legislation, and co-ordinate services around a child or young person. From then on, no new assessments for statements of SEN or Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) will be offered. Children and young people should be transferred to the new system in a phased way, prioritised at key transition points such as when they move from secondary school into further education or training.

All plans will have to include core information to enable a consistent approach to be taken to appeals. Subject to Parliamentary approval, the regulations will require that every EHC plan includes discretely labelled sections; and the new the SEND Code of Practice provides guidance on what to include in each section.

An EHC needs assessment will not always lead to an EHC plan. It may provide information which can be used by the school, college or other provider to meet the child or young person's needs without an EHC plan.

Personal budgets are an amount of money identified to deliver all or some of the provision set out in an EHC plan and should be seen as an integral part of the coordinated



assessment and EHC planning process. Pathfinder learning has shown that a personal budget is one of a number of ways to achieve increased personalisation of services for children and young people.

## Hartlepool

Hartlepool has broken down the 20-week assessment and planning timescale into a three-stage process. Stage one covers referral or request for assessment; stage two is assessment itself; and stage three covers the education, health and care plan being finalised and implemented. The borough has taken a multi-agency approach, working with parents, carers and other key stakeholders, including schools and colleges, to design the new assessment process and EHC plan.

Key features of Hartlepool's approach include:

- families do not have to repeat their story to multiple people
- a range of accessible, appropriate and easy-to-read information booklets has been developed
- parents are fully involved in the new system.

The assessment process involves representatives from education, health and social care, coordinated by the council's

special educational needs team to ensure that there is no overlap in the issues that the different professionals are looking at.

As a first step, the SEND panel, which meets every four weeks and includes representatives from education, health and social care, considers requests for assessment. If assessment is appropriate, a member of the SEN team visits the family to discuss the process in an informal meeting. An assessment planning meeting is then scheduled and information from this is written up in the child or young person's personal profile.

Six to eight weeks later, following further assessment by individual professionals, a support planning meeting takes place. This is another opportunity for the family and professionals to share the information they have gathered. At this point the professionals decide whether an EHC plan is needed, which in Hartlepool is known as a ONE Plan. The entire process is wholly transparent, with children, young people and families involved at all stages, and the feedback received from all parties as the pathfinder project has progressed has been very positive.

For further information contact

**Jeanette Dodd**

SEN Officer, Hartlepool Council  
jeanette.dodd@hartlepool.gov.uk



Hartlepool's ONE Plan

## Wolverhampton

### Building on existing resources

Wolverhampton, a non-pathfinder area, began preparing for the SEN and disability reforms at an early stage, prior to extra funding being available. As a result its approach has focused on using existing staff and resources to develop sustainable processes. Key issues have been the local offer, banded funding and developing robust coordinated assessment and EHC planning processes.

The first step in developing an EHC plan template was to build on existing experience and resources – principally the CAF (common assessment framework) model and Early Support single plan template, as well as EHC plans from the pathfinder areas. In co-production with parents, Wolverhampton pulled together the best elements from these to create its draft plan template.

Some changes were made to the draft plan following parent feedback sessions. For example, early plans were largely written in the first person, but families and practitioners wanted more clarity about who was ‘speaking’ in certain sections. Initial trials took place with 10 families, then a further 10 were involved in trials focusing on the transition stage. Parents Sarah and Mark Baker, who took part in the trial, said: “The process was smooth and easy and felt very personal to us as a family. We felt very involved and we are really pleased with the outcome.”

An important element of Wolverhampton’s approach is to collate family information before the formal assessment, led by key workers using a ‘team around the child’ approach. It has been clear through working with families that the process that sits behind the EHC plan is important, and essential to this is to build in cultural change based on the Early Support principles.

Guidance for staff is being developed on how to write outcomes and advice in a way that is effective and meaningful for everyone. A parent carer has been recruited and trained

as a part-time parent participation assistant, to support the creation of one-page profiles for every family. Involvement with the local clinical commissioning groups is progressing well, and parents and young people are closely involved in the work.

For further information

#### **Jill Wellings**

Head of Special Needs Early Years  
jill.wellings@wolverhampton.gov.uk

#### **Sandy Lisle**

SEN Manager  
Wolverhampton City Council  
sandy.lisle@wolverhampton.gov.uk

---

## Portsmouth

### A network of specialist assessment coordinators

A non-pathfinder area, Portsmouth’s approach to coordinated assessment builds on existing practice within the city and incorporates what is working well elsewhere, such as the integrated assessment model developed by the Southampton pathfinder.

This model involves training specialist ‘assessment coordinators’, pulled from a range of professional backgrounds, to lead assessments in a multi-agency team. A coordinator is appointed to work with a child or young person once the need for assessment is agreed. They meet with the family to plan the assessment, provide a single point of contact for everyone involved, review the information, commission professional assessments, organise a ‘team around the child’ meeting and write the education, health and care plan. This goes to the multi-agency resourcing panel, where a ‘plan coordinator’ is identified to monitor that child or young person’s plan.

All the assessment coordinators are already employed by the local authority or health and come from a pool of professionals including education psychologists, specialist health

visitors, social workers, portage home visitors, transition advisers and SEN case officers. Their skills and expertise are matched with the child's area of difficulty (for example, a child with physical disabilities may have a coordinator experienced in children's disability social work).

A stakeholder conference in February 2014 helped raise awareness of the work so far and secure continued buy-in from local strategic leaders, councillors and other stakeholders. A monthly electronic newsletter helps to keep everyone informed, and presentations have been given to audiences including the hospital trust, GPs, head teachers and school governors.

The implementation of the SEND reforms is one of the priorities written into the Portsmouth children's trust plan. The strategic board overseeing it is chaired by a parent representative and meets every six weeks. It reports to the children's trust board and is also accountable to the health and wellbeing board, clinical commissioning group, learning disabilities partnership board and parent carers' board, ensuring strong engagement at senior level across all the partners

For further information

**Dr Julia Katherine**

Child Support Services Commissioning  
Manager

Portsmouth City Council

[julia.katherine@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:julia.katherine@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

---



Courtesy of Portsmouth City Council design team

## Oldham

### Increasing parental choice and control

Oldham Council has been piloting personal budgets for families with EHC plans, with the aim of increasing choice and control for parents and young people. This work began with the development of a stand-alone system for social care. The idea was launched at an event for families and professionals hosted by In Control, a national charity working with Oldham. All families then accessing the direct payments scheme were invited to take part in the pilot, and 10 families volunteered.

The next stage was training for professionals from the council and health, including social workers, on the person-centred planning approach that would form the basis of the new integrated assessment process. Oldham then developed a resource allocation system (RAS), in collaboration with parents and professionals, to allocate a 'score' to levels of need in a consistent way at an individual case level. This would determine the level of resource individual families would be allocated for their personal budgets. The RAS was tested with the pilot families.

Professionals said the tool provided useful guidance and was helpful in their discussions with families. Parents could see that decisions were based on an open and transparent process and families were involved at all stages. Overall, families said the personal budgets were a positive step and the person-centred system had the potential to radically improve their lives. This feedback was heartening for the professionals, who could now see the benefits for families in gaining more control over their own lives.

The next stage is to develop personal budgets for education. A core group of educational settings are involved in developing an education RAS which will determine a fair level of funding. This work began by looking at how schools would cost the support they currently provide, which formed the basis of guidance on unit costing

of school support. Stage two has been to develop the education RAS, similar in style to the social care one, which was being tested early in 2014.

For further information

**Gary McBrien**

Head of the All Age Disability Service

Oldham Council

[gary.mcbrien@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:gary.mcbrien@oldham.gov.uk)

---



## City of York Early Years

York, a non-pathfinder, began preparing for the SEN and disability reforms at an early stage. As a Pathfinder for Early Support in 2005, the family centred approach has been fully embedded in Early Years (EY), and person centred planning has also been central to the annual reviews held across the age ranges. The city has been able to build on a strong foundation of parents being at the heart of planning and developing new approaches. Parents were involved in the development of the Local Offer, which was published in 2012.

York has been working closely with families in developing and piloting My Support Plans (non-statutory) and Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans for the last year. Rather than operate a dual system, with the agreement of parents, the Specialist EY Support Team has been using the new plans since October 2013. This was particularly the case for those requesting statutory assessment for the first time. All parents were offered support in completing the child and family section of the plan to ensure equal access by their key worker. The child's voice for very young and non-verbal children has been largely represented through photos and captions. This has brought the plan to life and kept it child focused.

A schedule of training is being provided for early years setting SENCOs through the existing 5 day basic training programme and termly SENCO network training by the Specialist EY Support Team and Early Learning Leaders. The training has been highly valued and has meant that all settings have a better understanding of the new system and have been able to pilot My Support Plans.

The team know the Early Years settings well, including playgroups that have no computer or office time, so high levels of support will continue as needed. The SEN grant is planned to provide some additional resources to support the Specialist EY Support Team during this period.

Feedback from parents involved in the process has been outstanding and they have valued the support given by the Specialist EY Support Team. Parents are confident that their coordinated support will continue to focus around family needs. One mother said: "It wasn't a stressful process- much better than I expected".

For further information

**Jessica Haslam**

City of York Council

[jessica.haslam@york.gov.uk](mailto:jessica.haslam@york.gov.uk)

## Greenwich Using IT to promote person-centred planning

Greenwich has been looking at the use of IT in the coordinated assessment and planning process, with two main strands to this work. First, the local authority supplied iPads to nine pilot families with the aim of understanding and improving their experience of interacting with services in the assessment and planning process. In the past, parents had expressed frustration with some aspects of this process – for example, having to repeatedly describe their child's condition to different people.

Feedback from the families suggests that:

- photo and video functions are very useful for sharing information with practitioners
- 'facetime' is convenient and empowering, especially for young people
- downloading specialist apps can be beneficial for young people
- families that were less confident in using IT did not get so many benefits from having the iPad and required more training.

The second strand of Greenwich's work involved developing an individual easy-build 'wiki' website that provides information on a young person and their family using pictures,

words, video and music. Contributions are made by professionals and family members to build up a person-centred picture presenting the individual's preferences, viewpoints and important information.

This work was led by a parent, Sam Goncalves, and the wiki has been successfully used to include her son Shane in annual reviews in a way that wasn't possible previously. Sam says that it is easy to ask new carers and teachers to look at the appropriate parts of the wiki to find out how to communicate with Shane, how he communicates and how to care for him correctly. The content is controlled and updated by the family and they choose who to give the password to.

Greenwich has commissioned a voluntary sector organisation to carry out research with a wider sample of families to see how useful it would be to roll out this project. All the learners at a local special school are developing their own websites for person-centred planning as part of a trial and impact study.

For further information

**Joan Lightfoot**

Head of Integrated Services  
for Disabled Children  
Royal Borough of Greenwich  
[joan.lightfoot@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:joan.lightfoot@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)



Greenwich's wiki pages

## Essex County Council

### Moving away from block contracts

Essex County Council and its health partners are moving away from block contracts for health and social care towards a mixed economy approach which uses alternative services and smaller providers alongside larger providers. The aim is to ensure that families' needs can be met more easily and flexibly. Expanding the pool of providers will result in a broader range of services, giving families more choice in how to spend their personal budget.

The initial focus has been on providers of short breaks, continuing care and communication aids. Providers are asked to complete an assessment and if successful they join an approved suppliers list. If unsuccessful, they are offered support to help them meet the criteria in the future.

Many providers have responded positively to this challenge and are changing their delivery models to suit the new system. For example, one former block-contracted short breaks provider has broadened its services to include outreach and personalisation and services in homes and communities alongside its original residential services.

The benefits of the mixed economy approach include:

- better quality services for families
- more cost effective and better value for money
- providers must meet a set of quality thresholds, which encourages them to improve service quality
- providers are supported to reassess and improve their services to better meet families' needs.

Essex, a non-pathfinder, is now looking at how to expand this to other SEN and disability services such as speech and language therapy. Its work has been co-produced with parents at every stage to ensure their

anxieties about change are understood, listened to and acted upon.

Essex County Council has produced a short film from its individual budgets pilot which follows a number of families, providing insight into how it has helped to increase flexibility and personalisation of support and improve outcomes. The film can be seen at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=moXxCh1zRQ0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moXxCh1zRQ0)

For further information

**Georgina Parkin**

Essex County Council

[georgina.parkin@essex.gov.uk](mailto:georgina.parkin@essex.gov.uk)

---

## Preparing for Adulthood

The Children and Families Act 2014 sets out substantial new rights and protections for young people that do not exist in the current system. These will require a new way of working, in particular councils and their partners will need to work together with young people to help them achieve successful long term outcomes, and move into adulthood with choice and control over their lives.

Preparing for adulthood is a common thread running through all elements of the reforms, including the local offer, joint commissioning, coordinated assessment and EHC plan, and personal budgets. It is an extended process, and should be started early so that asking young people with SEN and disabilities (and their families) what they want their life to be like should be an explicit element of conversations as the young person moves into and through post-16 education. Councils will be required to include in their local offer information about training opportunities, supported employment services, apprenticeships, traineeships, supported internships and support available from supported employment services to provide a smooth transition from education and training into employment. After compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16) the Children and Families Act 2014 applies directly to young people, rather than to their parents.

To support provision for this age group, the pathfinders have been working to bridge differences between children's social care and adults' services. As well as the legal changes in the Children and Families Act 2014, when the Care Act 2014 is implemented from April 2015, it will also introduce greater flexibilities for children's and adults' services to work together to provide better support young people moving from one service to the other.

## Manchester Supported internships and work experience

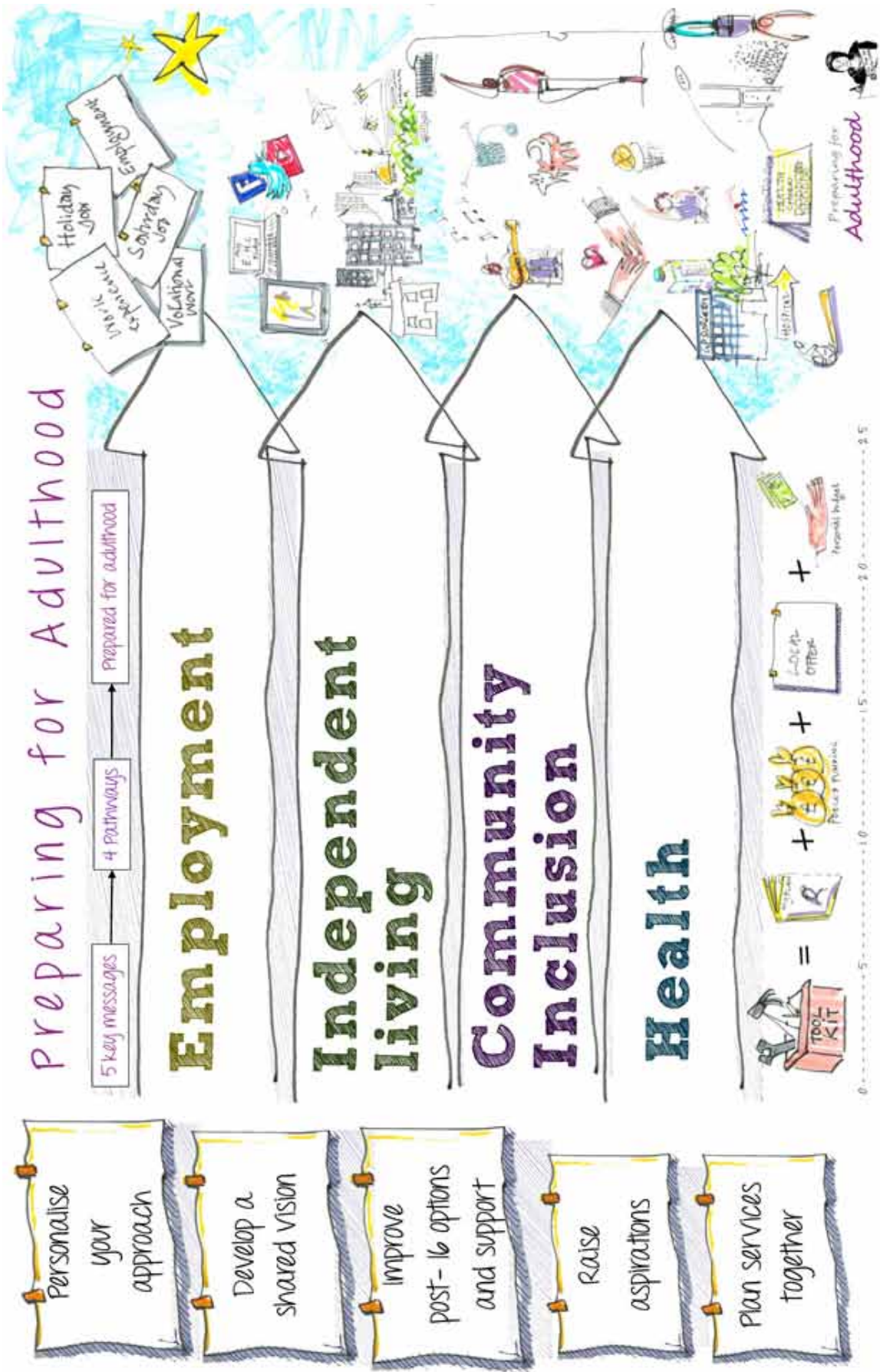
Manchester runs a number of supported internship programmes for 18-24 year olds with learning difficulties and/or other disabilities. Participants are based at the host employer's premises and undertake a work placement four days a week for one academic year, supported by classroom learning. The programmes are based on a partnership between the host employer, the city's largest further education college and a supported employment provider. The ultimate goal for each young person is paid employment.

As part of its pathfinder work Manchester set up two new pilot projects, one with a large special school and one with the Manchester adult education service STEP programme. Both are designed to help young people move towards independence. The school project funds an employment officer to support pupils at transition stage through work placements and tasters, community activities, life and independence skills. The aim is to move them towards employment or an internship.

The STEP programme supports young people unable to access a supported internship due to their support needs or difficulty sustaining a four-day course. Each learner can try out work tasters, placements, work experience and voluntary work on a flexible, individually tailored basis over one year.

Key to the success of the supported internship schemes is the support provided to students and parents, both practical (such as advice on benefits in employment) and emotional support, for example helping them to understand the value of the programme. Parents attend pre-enrolment briefing sessions, worksite visits and have access to the project team at any time.





- Personalise your approach
- Develop a shared vision
- Improve post-16 options and support
- Raise aspirations
- Plan services together

A video of the worksites has been produced to encourage their interest and support. One parent says: “Nathan is now on a supported internship at the town hall in the print room and we are so proud. It is a clerical role, he enjoys the work and has fun... I had a call after his first day to say how fantastically he had done.”

For further information

**Julie Hicklin**

Pathfinder Project Lead

Manchester City Council

[j.hicklin@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:j.hicklin@manchester.gov.uk)

---

## Hertfordshire Helping young people into paid employment

The Hertfordshire pathfinder has a focus on preparing for adulthood and helping young people achieve the best life outcomes. This involves strong partnership work with further education colleges to enhance continuity of care and support. The aims are:

- colleges and schools working together on holistically planned, coordinated transition
- enhanced continuity and pastoral support
- clear progression routes which meet the aspirations of individuals
- greater clarity for parents on programme content and progression pathways
- developing a five-day offer for the most vulnerable young people.

As an example, West Herts College leads a transition programme in partnership with two special schools for students with high complex needs. Each student has a personalised learning programme and attends college for three days a week and school for two days. There is a focus on work-related skills and independent living. All the students have successfully progressed on to other appropriate college courses.

Hertfordshire’s work is led by a task group, with representatives from each college, which is developing a common approach to implementing the SEND reforms. Leadership buy-in from college principals is critical, as is a dedicated lead in each college. Transition support workers (with three-way funding from the college, school and council), supported employment advisers and supported internships all help young people progress towards the best life outcomes.

Hertfordshire’s package of support ensures that students such as Chris have a gradual and managed integration into college settings. Chris has a complex communication disorder and Asperger’s syndrome, with a broad set of social, emotional, behaviour and language needs. He enjoys the outdoors, horticulture, animal care and arts.

Chris was referred to a college to see if it could meet his aspirations and needs. He attended taster days, meetings and got to know some of the staff. A bespoke programme was developed which includes working at a farm shop and an allotment project, linking with the college’s animal care course, art therapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and one-to-one sessions with functional skills tutors.

For further information

**Patricia Walker**

LDD Strategy and Commissioning Manager

Hertfordshire County Council

[patricia.walker@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:patricia.walker@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

---

## Sources of information, advice and support

Pathfinder champions will provide a minimum of two support days to each council in their region, sharing effective approaches from other areas, not just their own. Additional support days will be provided in some areas on a targeted basis. A list of pathfinder champions for 2014-15 is available on the pathfinder website:

[www.sendpathfinder.co.uk](http://www.sendpathfinder.co.uk)

### **Regional SEND reform hubs**

As well as offering direct support, pathfinder champions will provide councils with information and access to support from regional SEND reform hubs. These hubs will bring together a group of voluntary and community sector delivery partners, funded by the Department for Education (DfE). Each hub has a regional support plan setting out the free support available to help local areas prepare for implementation. This will take the form of events and expert advice. For further information about SEND reform hubs: [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/getting-involved/sen-and-disability-reform-support-organisations](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/getting-involved/sen-and-disability-reform-support-organisations)

### **Other useful resources**

The SEND reform hubs will be able to draw on further expert support from DfE grant-funded organisations. More information, including a quarterly e-bulletin, is available through the Council for Disabled Children, (CDC) the Department for Education's strategic reform partner: [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

The SEND Gateway is an online resource for all education professionals working with children and young people with SEND aged 0-25: [www.nasen.org.uk](http://www.nasen.org.uk)

### **Departmental advice and statutory guidance**

Department for Education and Department of Health advice for local authorities and health partners about implementing the 0 to 25 special needs system from September 2014: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/327957/SEND\\_implementation\\_update\\_-\\_June\\_update\\_version\\_15.1.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/327957/SEND_implementation_update_-_June_update_version_15.1.pdf)

High needs funding guidance: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/224728/2014-15\\_Revenue\\_Funding\\_Operational\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/224728/2014-15_Revenue_Funding_Operational_guidance.pdf)

Code of practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Children and Families Act 2014:

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted)





**Local Government Association**

Local Government House  
Smith Square  
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000  
Fax 020 7664 3030  
Email [info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk)  
[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

© Local Government Association, July 2014

For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio,  
please contact us on 020 7664 3000.  
We consider requests on an individual basis.