

Help for Parents of Children and Young People with Special Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

This article aims to help parents by providing information on Education, Health and Care Plans. You'll also find signposts to some of the national organisations that can offer help with the transition from school into further and higher education (including universities), training and employment.

Education, Health and Care Plans were introduced as part of The **Children and Families Bill Act 2014**

Education, Health and Care Plans:

- span from birth to aged 25
- give children, young people and their parents choice and control over decisions regarding their future and ensure that their needs are properly met
- ensure that all the services that support children and their families, especially local authorities and health authorities work closely together
- set out the support needed for each child or young person

Children, young people and their families are at the centre of the assessment and planning process. This is person-centred and has an emphasis on life beyond education. Each local authority is responsible for ensuring that assessments are effectively co-ordinated. Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) need to be completed in 20 weeks.

Education, Health and Care Plans may also provide:

- a **personal budget** which gives parents and young people more control and choice for health, education and social care needs
- a **local offer** from the local authority which provides clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the support and opportunities available locally for children, young people and their families. This can include education, health and family support services, leisure activities and support groups. Many of the opportunities on offer will also be available to young people without an EHCP. Information is often available on local council websites – search “SEND local offer.”

Once a young person is 16, they can request their own EHCP. Education is normally free for students aged 16-18, but young people with an EHCP receive free further education until the age of 25 if the course meets the outcomes in their EHC plan. It's therefore important to have the EHC plan in place. It not only helps with funding for

19-25 year olds but enables students to access a wide range of support with their learning.

Students with an EHCP may need to demonstrate that the courses they plan to do show progression, for example from level one to two and so on, in order to receive funding.

Further information can be found [here](#).

During the Coronavirus (Covid 19) crisis of 2020 the government have amended the Children and Families Bill Act 2014 to take into consideration the additional pressures on local authorities. More information can be found [here](#).

The Coronavirus crisis will mean that the way that your child's EHC is completed will change. Face to face meetings will often be replaced by telephone/video calls and online meetings.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act (2010) replaces the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in England, Wales and Scotland.

Employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for workers with disabilities or other health conditions under the Equality Act and DDA in Northern Ireland. The adjustments can include changing working hours or providing equipment to help the employee do their job effectively.

It is unlawful for employers to discriminate against people with disabilities in recruitment and selection and for their terms and conditions once in employment.

Further information on the Equality Act is available [here](#).

Further information on the DDA is available [here](#).

Supported Internships

Supported internships support young people with learning difficulties or disabilities into employment. The upper age is 24 for those with an EHCP and 19 for those without.

Supported internships are provided by further education colleges, 6th forms and independent specialist providers. Offering a combination of unpaid work experience with structured additional learning and support, including English and maths, students learn skills that will help lead to permanent work.

Students are also given a Job Coach who will help with job matching, provide in-work support and review progress.

Further information is available [here](#)

Organisations that offer advice and help with transition into work, training and further or higher education for those with special needs or disabilities.

During the Coronavirus crisis most organisations are moving to an online and or telephone service.

Schools and Colleges

Schools, both mainstream and SEND provide lots of help with transition into further education, training and work. Make contact with the named member of staff and find out what is on offer. Colleges often run specialist courses for students with learning difficulties or other additional needs, and also provide support for transition.

Jobcentres

Your local Jobcentre Plus office is a good place to start when looking for work for everyone over the age of 16. Staff can provide specialist help and information to people with disabilities. They will also be able to tell you about “[Disability Confident](#)” employers in your area, who are committed to employing disabled people. You’ll be guaranteed an interview if you meet the basic requirements for the job with a Disability Confident employer.

The work coach at the Jobcentre Plus can also refer you to a specialist work psychologist, or the coach may carry out an employment assessment. You’ll be asked questions about your skills and experience and the sort of work you would like to do.

Jobcentre Plus also run the [Access to Work](#) scheme, which pays for practical support in the workplace so that you can start working, stay in work or run your own business.

[Able Futures](#) provides support for those with mental health conditions who are on the Access to Work scheme.

If you aged 16+ you can get mental health support for up to nine months. If you choose, the employer doesn’t need to know about the support you receive. In order to be eligible, you’ll have mental health difficulties that impact on your work.

In addition Remploy offers an [Access to Work](#) Mental Health Support Service for Apprentices.

Jobcentre Plus freephone 0800 055 6688.

[Action on Hearing Loss](#) – support on many aspects of hearing loss including help with finding work in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Freephone 0808 808 0123 or textphone 0808 808 900.

[Contact for Families with Disabled Children](#) – provides a wide range of support for parents of disabled children and young people. Education specialist advisers run a phone line for advice and help with education including post 16 options. Freephone 0808 808 3555.

[Council for Disabled Children](#) – resources and help for young people and parents on a wide range of issues including education and transition.

[Disability Rights UK](#) - download the “Into Higher Education and “Into Apprenticeships” guides, which both have inspiring stories of young people with disabilities succeeding at university and in the world of work.

[Mental Health Foundation](#) – a range of resources for mental health including inspiring stories, some of which relate to mental health at school and university.

[National Autistic Society](#) – help with transition and support with finding work and going to college or university. Schemes offered include the “Autism at Work Programme” which helps employers to create accessible employment opportunities. Also available is the “Hospitality/HB Cares Programme” offering work experience in the hospitality industry for adults with autism aged 18+. Freephone 0808 800 4104.

[Natspec](#) – a network of specialist colleges that offer courses for students with a range of disabilities including physical and learning disabilities.

[Preparing for Adulthood](#) – this organisation offers support for young people with special needs and disabilities. Advice is given on how to find paid work and other aspects of life including good health, independent living, relationships and community inclusion. Part of this support includes the Supported Internships programme for young people aged 16-24 with an EHC.

These internships last for a minimum of six months and offer young people the opportunity to develop skills and learning on-the-job that will lead into paid employment.

[Mencap](#) – offers a wide range of services for those with a learning disability, including an employment team which provides help with finding work. Freephone 0808 808 1111.

[Princes Trust](#) – provides a range of programmes that offer practical and financial support to young people needing extra support to develop the skills and confidence they need to move into work, education or training. Freephone 0800 842 842.

www.reedinpartnership.co.uk – offers help (only in certain parts of England) for those facing barriers to work. This includes help and support with job search, CVs and

interview skills, training, apprenticeships and in-work support. Freephone 0800 015 5332.

www.remploy.co.uk – Remploy Employment Services have local branches and offices offering support and advice for disabled people looking for work. Help includes one to one support, group activities and mock interviews. Online support is also available, including the opportunity for live chat with an employment adviser, and help with CV writing and job search. Referral is via statutory organisations such as Jobcentre Plus. 0300 456 8110

[Royal National Institute of Blind People \(RNIB\)](http://www.rnib.org.uk) – information on benefits, education and employment, 0303 123 9999

[Scope](http://www.scope.org.uk) - national charity providing help with all aspects of disability, including help with finding work. Search for “employment”. Freephone 0800 800 3333

[UCAS](http://www.ucas.ac.uk) – lots of helpful information including the How-to guide for students with disabilities and details of the Disabled Students’ Allowances.

These are just some of the organisations that can help you – there may be more in your local area.

National Organisations Providing Careers Guidance

The [National Careers Service](http://www.nacscareers.gov.uk) offers general advice on careers, further education and training for those living in England. Freephone 0800 100 900

[Skills Development Scotland](http://www.skillsdevelopment.scot.nhs.uk) – delivers careers services in Scotland and also offers a useful website: [My Kids Career](http://www.mykidscareer.org.uk)

[Ni Direct](http://www.nidirect.org.uk) – has information on careers services in Northern Ireland. Freephone 0800 200 7820.

[Careers Wales](http://www.careers.wales.gov.uk) Freephone 0800 028 4844

There may also be local Careers Advisers in your area who can help – council websites often have information. Some schools also employ careers advisers.