

Introduction

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and other vulnerable learners with less obvious barriers, have the right to get the same things out of life as everyone else. To learn and work, be independent and healthy and fully participate in their community. They just need extra support and consideration to achieve these aims.

From the age of 14, having a Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) framework in place for them becomes really important. This strategy recognises that the different way services work can make transition into adult life difficult for young people, their families and people working with them. Different practices, access points and transition plans cause confusion and young people, and their families, can lose confidence in what is happening.

Four priorities

The Local Area partners will seek to support young people to achieve the best possible outcomes in adulthood by prioritising:

1. Employment

- Identify a range of pathways from statutory education into work matched to the range of needs of young people with SEND.
- Set up a Supported Employment Partnership that will identify and deliver supported work-based education and training that will help young people with SEND, and other vulnerable learners, to move into paid employment.
- Make sure that vulnerable learners who are leaving care or known to the Youth Offending Service
- have any learning needs identified, assessed, and supported.

2. Independence

- Making the plans for young people transferring from children to adult's social care clearer.
- Developing pathways and support for young people who will not be supported by adult social care.
- Develop programme of cross-borough opportunities for young people to develop key life skills, e.g., travel, money management, self-care, healthy living and independent living.

3. Friendships, relationships and community engagement

- Create wider access to more inclusive social and leisure activities, including after-school/college and holiday clubs, for young people whose needs are currently not being met.

4. Good health

- Ensure stronger links between CAMHS and Adult Mental Health Services to support young people through transition between services.
- Improve pathways and information for young people with complex health needs who are moving into the care of primary health care teams, like their local doctor.
- Address the gap in services for adults with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Pathways to employment

Employment, or volunteering, should be the aim for most young people with SEND, and other vulnerable learners. They should be encouraged to expect to reach these goals from an early age. They should be involved in planning the pathway and the support they need to get there. We know we must get better at offering clear routes into and through post-16 education into training and employment, or other opportunities. This means:

having specialist careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) and help.

- as they get older, they should know where to get the information and advice that will help them get the jobs they want, or maybe set up their own business.
- working with local stakeholders to build supported pathways to employment, developing supported internships, traineeships, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities.
- co-ordinating support from supported employment services and agencies, making sure young people have access to job coaches if they need them.
- making sure they know about all the financial support available to them and can get specialist advice on 'in work' benefits, Work Choice, Residential Training, the Work Programme, Access to Work and Student Finance England if they want go into higher education.

We'll achieve it by:

- supporting Lambeth schools and colleges to provide consistent, high-quality CEIAG to all young people with EHCPs, or who are identified as vulnerable learners, and making it available to any of them who are educated out of borough.
- setting up a Supported Employment Partnership within the borough and starting to develop a similar partnership with neighbouring south London boroughs, so that we are working with. Specialist providers and employers to create the right supported opportunities.
- being able to monitor the progress of young people for up to two years after they leave education.
- making sure all the information they need is accessible via the Local Offer website.

We'll know we've got it right when the percentage of young people with EHCPs and other vulnerable learners, are in sustainable paid employment or volunteering has increased by 2024.

Becoming independent

Promoting independence for children and young people with SEND, and their families, is central to the Lambeth SEND and Inclusion Strategy. The more independent they are, the more they can aspire to and plan for. To get them there, we aim to:

- make sure young people can develop all the life skills they need to support the highest level of independence they can.
- support young people, their families and people working with them, to be clear on the plans to get them there and the help they will get on the way.

We'll achieve it by:

- developing a programme of cross-borough opportunities, also available to any educated out of borough, to develop key life skills, including travel, money management, self-care and healthy, independent living.
- making the strategy and individual plans for young people transferring from children's to adult's social care clearer.
- developing pathways and support for those young people who will not be supported by adult social care.

We'll know we've succeeded if a higher proportion of young people, and their families, are reporting that they have started planning early enough, they understand the pathways ahead of them and they are happier with the level of independence they've achieved by the time they leave education.

A place in the community

Young people with SEND, and other vulnerable learners, should be able to live full and enjoyable adult lives, feeling accepted and valued, and having good friendships and relationships. This means having opportunities to meet new people and get involved in the full range of activities that any young person of their age would expect to be doing.

To enable them to achieve this we recognise the importance of:

- providing access to improve access to social and leisure activities that allow them to enjoy their independence.
- supporting those who may otherwise struggle to access information via the internet and social media, use the internet safely and protect themselves from cyber-bullying and exploitation.

We'll achieve it by:

- confirming what's currently available, identifying the gaps, commissioning what we can afford to, working with the community and private sector to fill more gaps and making sure everyone knows what is available.
- ensuring that confident and safe use of internet and social media is embedded into the life skills curriculum.

We'll know we're getting it right when young people and their families are reporting that they can easily, and safely, find things they want to do and higher numbers of them are accessing a wider range of activities.

Having a healthy life

Our aim is that young people with SEND, and other vulnerable learners, can be as healthy in their adult lives as possible. We know that this can be harder for some young people and their families, because the way health services work with children and adults can be very different. When they pass 18, some young people who had support from mental health or learning disability services, may no longer qualify for the same level of help. They need good information and advice to keep healthy as they move into adult life.

We need to make sure that:

- young people, and their families and people who work with them, are clear before they reach 18 who might help them with different health needs in adult life.
- planned and supported transitions take place as they reach 18.
- health professionals who will work with them as adults understand their needs and are able to properly support them.

We'll achieve it by:

- strengthening links between CAMHS and Adult Mental Health Services.
- providing clearer guidance and early information guidance and information about difference in services, criteria, thresholds, to professionals working with young people reaching the age of 18.
- making the pathway from more specialist community children's nursing teams to primary health care teams, including GPs, easier to understand.
- developing and planning clear pathways into community-based services for adults with ADHD and ASD
- giving easier access to better quality information on health services, for young people and young adults, which all organisations take responsibility for sharing.

We'll know we've succeeded when the numbers of adults with SEND accessing targeted and specialist health services after the age of 25 has reduced and higher numbers of young people, and their families, are reporting that they know how and where to get the support they need and are confident doing it.

Communication and the Local Offer

The Lambeth Local Offer website is being redeveloped, including dedicated information about preparing for adult life. We're going to make this better by talking to parents and young people to find out what they want to know and, which information is most important to them.

We will also be making sure we tell people what's available in other ways. This might include leaflets and posters. The new Youth Hubs and the Back on Track and Opportunity Lambeth teams will be able to help people use and understand all the information.

Summing up

We think that economic independence, having paid work, will allow most young people with SEND, and vulnerable learners, to look after themselves and rely less on public services. Doing this allows us to focus spending on the ones with higher needs, who will continue to need more support.

To achieve all this at a time of limited funding, we'll need to work in new ways, in close partnerships with other services, community organisations and the private sector. Most importantly though, to really make things better we need to keep listening to what the people who use our services think and act on what they say. To do this, we need to be implementing effective consultation and feedback processes.