



ISLINGTON

Transition for children with SEND

The council's [guidance on transition planning](#) recognises that all children may need support at some time to enjoy the new opportunities and meet the challenges they will face as they move through different stages of their life. Some children and young people, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are likely to need more support however, particularly at key transition times.

Our guidance is predicated on four over-arching principles:

- Effective planning to support children and young people and their families in managing change
- Engagement and participation of children and young people and their families in assessment, planning and review
- Ensuring information exchange – with children and young people and their parents as well as across services and between institutions
- Effective commissioning - so that the right provision and support is in place for the right children at the right time

[Islington Multi-Agency Progression to Adulthood protocol](#) sets out the role of each agency and processes for accessing support for those transitioning to adulthood.


- The following applies to children and young people with EHCPs across all phases:
- The child's parent (or the young person over the age of 16) has the right to request a particular school / college (including an independent school) be named in their EHC plan
- Where this happens, the local authority **must** comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHC plan unless:
 - it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or
 - the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources
- The local authority **must** consult the school or college concerned and consider their comments before deciding whether to name it in the child or young person's EHC plan
- Where a parent or young person does not make a request for a particular school or college, the local authority **must** specify mainstream provision in the EHC plan
- Mainstream education cannot be refused by a local authority on the grounds that it is not suitable.
- A local authority can rely on the exception of incompatibility with the efficient education of others only if it can show that there are no **reasonable steps** it could take to prevent that incompatibility.
- The SEND Code of Practice sets out in some detail with examples, what 'reasonable steps' might look like (para 9.91 to 9.94)



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Children with SEND Early Years to Primary School

- Children with SEND are supported across our Early Years provision by well trained staff, with advice and guidance from Area SENCOs, Educational Psychologists, CAHMS, Therapists and other support services
- There are also 36 specialist (additionally resourced) places across Early Years; early years providers can also apply for additional funding to put in place additional support for identified children
- Early years, the SEND Team and Health colleagues work closely together to identify those children who may have special educational needs that will require support over and above what is normally available, and therefore may need an Education Health and Care Plan to support them when they transfer to school through well established multi-agency systems
- Transition is carefully planned and managed between the Early Years provider and destination school, with support from the Area SENCO Team. This will normally include exchange of information, visits and joint planning that fully involves parents and carers
- For those children who may require an Education Health and Care Plan, every effort is made to ensure this is in place before they transition to school so that the school has a clear understanding of needs, outcomes and provision for that child as well as any Top-up funding assessed as necessary to support the delivery of the plan.
- The school will always be consulted before they are named in a plan, but as for all cases, the local authority must comply with parental preference unless there is concrete evidence that this would not be compatible with the efficient use of resource or the education of others.

- **Rapid increase in the number and complexity** of children with SEND in Early Years.
 - This has led to **more demand for specialist places** at transition, placing both immediate and longer term implications for the local offer. 25 additional places have been made available at The Bridge Special School (for children with Autism) from September 2021, while we work on longer-term solutions through the current SEND Review.
 - All schools are therefore seeing a **higher number** of children with EHCPs and SEND Support needs across key stage 1, and for a small number of schools, 10% or above of children in one class have complex needs.
 - We are looking again at SEND funding arrangements through the **SEND Review** to see how we might better 'front load' funding for predicted intake. In the meantime, schools can apply for exceptional needs funding in individual / unforeseen circumstances.
 - There are also some strongly held views among Headteachers that decision making regarding placement of children is **not transparent or fair**. We have therefore invited Headteachers to join moderating panels and will share school-level information more widely across all schools.
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Children with SEND Primary to Secondary School

- To support transition, the primary school should share information with the secondary school the child or young person is moving to. This is achieved in a number of ways including visits, through review meetings and/or at an annual SENCO conference organised by the LA.
- There are some examples of very good practice in across Islington schools, e.g. one secondary school has all children with SEND in attendance for a week before term starts to enable them to get the know the building, rules and the staff who will be supporting them.
- The school should agree with parents and pupils the information to be shared as part of this planning process.
- For children with an EHC plan:
 - As stated, the plan **must** be reviewed and amended by 15 February in the calendar year of the transfer
 - The SEND Team has an officer dedicated to Secondary transfer who guides parents through the process. Each secondary transfer cohort includes approximately 100 children. Parents are encouraged to identify more the one preference
 - Where the parent's preferred school is not named in the plan, the parent has the right of appeal to the independent First Tier (SEND) Tribunal.
 - Within the context of the requirements of the Code of Practice, the SEND Team keep oversight of parental choice to identify any school that may have a disproportionately high number of EHCP preferences. In such cases, and where the school may not be the closest to the home address, we will consider carefully whether naming the school would be compatible with the efficient use of resource or the efficient education of others, although the burden of proof on this is high.

- Different schools operate different practices in transition arrangements
- Despite the good transition practice, the majority of schools (Islington and out-borough) respond negatively to the initial consultation (which normally takes place in early January)
- Parents may not give consent to information sharing
- Children with an EHC Plan will receive confirmation of the school named in their plan by 15 February while all other children will receive their offer on 1 March
- The First Tier (SEND) Tribunal finds in favour of Local Authorities who do not name the parents' preferred school for only 8% of cases
- Again, some Islington secondary schools feel that that decision making regarding placement of children is not transparent or fair. For the 2021 exercise we will invite Secondary School SENCOs of other representative to join Officers when they consider the cohort, preferences and placement.
- Where a parent identifies an out-of-borough school, we must consult not only the school, but also the home local authority for that school – negotiations can sometimes be more challenging, therefore.
- Similarly, other Local Authorities must consult Islington before naming an Islington school for one of their residents. This must also be taken into account in our planning therefore.



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Young People with SEND – Transition to Adulthood

- The Code of Practice expects that high aspirations about **employment, independent living and community participation** should be developed from the earliest possible stage.
- It also expects schools to seek **partnerships** with employment services, businesses, housing agencies, disability organisations and arts and sports groups, to help children understand what is available to them as they get older, and what it is possible for them to achieve.
- Local authorities **must** ensure for those with SEND that the relevant services they provide co-operate in helping them to prepare for adulthood. This may include housing services, adult social care and economic regeneration. There are good examples of these relationships through our special schools and New River College (PRU), supported by wider Council services such as iWork, iSet (Islington Supported Employment Team), 100 hours of Work.
- For teenagers, preparation for adult life needs should become a more explicit element of their planning and support, focused on what they want to achieve and the best way to support them. Considering the right post-16 option is part of this planning.
- Local authorities have a range of other duties which are particularly relevant to this area, including:
 - to offer advice and information **directly to young people** over the age of 16
 - together with health services, to make joint commissioning arrangements about the education, health and care provision of children and young people to secure positive adult outcomes
 - to co-operate with FE colleges, sixth-form colleges, 16-19 academies and independent specialist colleges
 - to include in the Local Offer provision which will help children and young people prepare for adulthood and independent living
- Also, EHCPs cover Education, **Health and Care**, so that transition to adult health and where necessary, social care services is also a very important part of this planning.

Careers advice for children and young people

- Maintained schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) have a statutory duty (section 42A of the Education Act 1997) to ensure ALL pupils from Year 8 until Year 13 are provided with independent careers guidance. Academies, including 16-19 academies, and free schools are subject to this duty through their Funding Agreements.
- All young people should be helped to develop the skills and experience, and achieve the qualifications they need, to succeed in their careers, with the expectation that the vast majority of young people with SEND are capable of sustainable paid employment. All professionals working with them should share that presumption.
- One of the most effective ways to prepare young people with SEND for employment is considered to be through work-based learning that enables them to have first-hand experience of work, such as:
 - **Apprenticeships:** paid jobs that incorporate training, leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Young people with EHC plans can retain their plan when on an apprenticeship.
 - **Traineeships:** Education and training programmes with work experience, focused on giving young people the skills and experience they need to help them compete for an apprenticeship or other jobs.
 - **Supported internships:** Structured study programmes for young people with an EHC plan, based primarily at an employer. Internships normally last for a year and include extended unpaid work placements of at least six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Young people with EHC plans will retain their plan when undertaking a supported internship. Local examples include Project Search Whittington Hospital – in conjunction with Ambitious College (for young people with autism), Project Search Moorfields (for young people with learning difficulties and / or autism)

- Local authorities **must** ensure that the EHC plan review at Year 9, and every review thereafter, includes a focus on preparing for adulthood.
- Preparing for adulthood planning in the review of the EHC plan should include:
 - support to prepare for higher education and/or employment. This should include identifying appropriate post-16 pathways, training options such as supported internships, apprenticeships and traineeships, or support for setting up your own business. The review should also cover support in finding a job, and learning how to do a job (e.g. through work experience opportunities) and help in understanding any welfare benefits that might be available
 - support to prepare for independent living should also include discussing where the child or young person wants to live in the future, who they want to live with and what support they will need.
 - support in maintaining good health in adult life, including effective planning with health services of the transition from specialist paediatric services to adult health care.
 - support in participating in society, including understanding mobility and transport support, and how to find out about social and community activities, and in developing and maintaining friendships and relationships
- The review should identify the support the child or young person needs to achieve these aspirations and should also identify the components that should be included in their study programme to best prepare them for adult life.
- For young people moving from secondary school to a post-16 institution or apprenticeship, the review and amendments to the EHC plan **must** be completed by the 31 March in the calendar year of the transfer

Goals and aspirations (education, employment and training)

- Promoting adjusted apprenticeships, supported internships, traineeships and work placements
- Develop equitable FE and training options, pathways and processes
- Shaping employment options, pathways and processes, including engaging employers and promoting the benefits of employing a young person with additional needs

Independent living

- To create a system and processes that are easy to understand with regards to housing - Working with residents to review provision of easy read information on benefits, adaptations, repairs and utilities
- To effectively collate and analyse data to enable planning for the future, including a cross cutting Housing needs analysis

Health and wellbeing

- Develop and implement clear, agreed pathways between health settings and teams, including for transition from children's to adults services
- To actively promote access and reasonable adjustment within services
- Offering a variety of strategies to manage behaviour that challenges
- Improving early identification and better target interventions of young people with autism who are most at risk of developing mental health needs

Community inclusion

- Encouraging a range of local community activities that do not divide people by diagnosis
- Creating opportunities to raise disability awareness and acceptance amongst CYP
- To better understand and utilise opportunities within universal services
- To develop and implement a robust training framework about the basic needs of people with disabilities.
- Linked to accessible transport strategy/project
- Linked to adult day opportunities changes

PTA pilot and service transformation:

- Building on learning from pilot;
- Developing/shaping new transition offer including:
 - Social work team;
 - Shaping health pathways;
 - Opportunities to further strengthen employment

Data and commissioning:

Develop an integrated approach across CYP and Adult commissioning to strategic planning, commission and resource management for SEND, with actions driven by robust analysis and interpretation of shared data, performance and quality outcomes and feedback from children, young people and their families and young adults

Co-design approaches

- The government's refreshed the national strategy for improving the lives of autistic people and their families (published in July 21) has for the first time extended its scope to include children and young people
- The revised Strategy also takes account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with Autism, backed by research from the Policy Innovation and Evaluation Research Unit (LSE) ([autistic people's experiences during the pandemic](#)) and by the National Autistic Society and others ([Left Stranded](#)) which confirm the view that the pandemic has exacerbated challenges many autistic people already faced, such as loneliness, social isolation and anxiety, with those with higher support needs, autistic women and non-binary people particularly impacted.
- The strategy sets out changes across six areas, the following two of which may have particular relevance to the Scrutiny Committee in the context of this review:

Improving autistic children and young people's access to education and supporting positive transitions into adulthood:

- The SEND system should enable autistic children and young people to access the right support within and outside of school
- Schools should provide better support to autistic children and young people so they are able to reach their potential
- Improvements to the support autistic people get in their transitions into adulthood.

Supporting more autistic people into employment:

- The employment gap is closed as more autistic people who are able and want to work can do so.

Questions to ask

For parents/carers:

- How were you able to express your views and did you feel listened to?
- Where relevant, did your child have the opportunity to express their views? If so, how was this achieved?
- Was there the opportunity for a phased transition programme? If so, what did this look like?
- Did you/your child have the opportunity to meet key members of staff prior to the move?
- What information was provided about the transition process and the receiving school?
- Was there any further information you would have liked to have?

For schools:

- How do you engage parents/carers in expressing views about the transition of their children?
 - How do you engage young people, where relevant, in expressing their views?
 - How do you liaise with the current/next school and other professionals on planning the transition?
 - What information do you provide to parent/carers and their children? To the current/receiving school?
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