

Preparing for Adult Life (PfAL) – in-depth guide

This guide is for anyone working in education, health, and social care, and are working with children and young people with SEND. Some parents may also find this guide helpful.

It aims to support you to help these children and young people and their families to prepare for a fulfilling and happy adult life. It also aims to set out how you can best work together with other services, recognising that supporting young people to prepare for adult life is everyone's responsibility.

The guide will signpost you to useful resources and information about planning ahead, identifying needs, developing skills and abilities, and accessing advice to enable the young people you work with to plan a future where they are able to live as independently as they can.

The guide will also help clarify where Norfolk County Council's dedicated Preparing for Adult Life team can help.

Most of the resources you will need are available on:

- The Preparing for Adult Life section of the Norfolk SEND Local Offer web pages at www.norfolk.gov.uk/preparingforadulthood
- The [Preparing for Adulthood website](#) which gives a range of information on preparing for adult life including some excellent examples of person-centred planning tools.

The four PfAL outcomes

There are four key outcomes that young people are encouraged to work towards but every young person is different so these outcomes should be person-centred:

- [Good health](#)
- [Independent living](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Friends, relationships, and community](#)

Young people wherever possible should be at the centre of thinking about and planning for their future.

The Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice

This states that Norfolk County Council must make sure the transition from children's care and support to adults' care and support is:

- well-planned
- integrated with the annual reviews of a young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), if they have one
- reflects existing special educational and health provision in place to help the young person prepare for adult life.

[Find out more about the Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#)

When to start thinking about PfAL

As early as possible but from Year 9, when a young person is around 14 years old, is when formal preparations for adult life planning should begin if they have an EHCP.

[Find out more about when to start thinking about PfAL on the Local Offer.](#)

Who is involved in supporting PfAL?

A young person's school, college or education provider has legal responsibilities for providing information, advice, and guidance on future options for their education, training and employment, but a range of other services may also be involved.

Supporting a young person with SEND to prepare for their adult life is the responsibility of all people working with them, as well as the young person themselves and their families.

[Find out more about who is involved in supporting PfAL on the Local Offer.](#)

The Norfolk County Council Preparing for Adult Life (PfAL) service

This service is a partnership between Children's and Adults' Social Services. It primarily works with young people likely to require Adults' Social Services support after they turn 18.

The PfAL service's main role is to carry out transition [Care Act Assessments](#) and put in place [a Care Plan](#) if required. This planning usually starts when the young person is 17. However, the service can accept referrals from 14 and will endeavour to meet a young person to do a "PfAL Conversation" with the young person and family before the young person turns 17. This allows Adults' Social Services to meet and get to know a young person and the key people in their lives at an early stage, to

encourage the young person to think about adult life and how they want to address the four PfAL outcomes.

[Find out more about the PfAL Service on the Local Offer.](#)

Referral criteria for the PfAL service

Referrals can be made to the PfAL Service when:

- The young person is aged between 14 and 17 (or 13 if the referral follows a Year 9 EHCP review which took place when they were 13)
- The young person has a disability (learning disability, mental health needs, autism or physical disability) and is likely to need support from Adults' Social Services (under the Care Act 2014).

It is not a requirement for the young person to have a formal diagnosis of a disability.

Referrals for young people aged 18 and above should be made to the appropriate [Adults' Social Services team](#).

Young people who are in care or have moved beyond care can be referred to the PfAL service if they meet the criteria above. Most of these young people will be able to achieve the transition to adult life with support from the [Leaving Care Service](#) and others in their existing support network. This may include the provision of ongoing supported accommodation.

What does good PfAL planning look like?

[Good practice in PfAL planning](#) involves:

- Making a plan with the young person to identify activities and tasks to support them. It can be used to set goals, which should be regularly reviewed to ensure progression in support or reaching agreed goals
- People and services working together, sharing information, and being clear about who is doing what and when
- Assessments being carried out as early as possible, so young people and families know what support to expect
- Services being in place at the right time, so there is no unnecessary drift or delay
- Wherever possible, considering what resources a young person has available to them in their families and communities, or through voluntary organisations; to support their development and independence and reduce the need for reliance on statutory services

- Being person-centred: focusing on each individual young person, their strengths, needs, and aspirations through creative and flexible thinking, with a 'future focus' when planning interventions or support
- Using relevant information resources such as:
 - [The Norfolk SEND Local Offer web pages](#) which gives a range of information for services, young people and parents and carers
 - [Norfolk Community Directory](#) which gives information about providers, groups and organisations which can offer support
 - [Transition guides](#) which support moving from school to college, training or work
 - [The Help You Choose website](#) which is the main place for information on college, apprenticeships, and training
 - [The Just One Norfolk website](#) which has information for health-related matters for young people
- Where young people have [an EHCP](#), making sure this is the overarching plan used to ensure they receive the support they need. The EHCP should describe social care needs and provision under the Care Act 2014 when the young person is 18 or over.
- Using [guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\) about transition from Children's to Adults' Services](#) for those using health or social care services.
- Making sure the PfAL plan and support are developmentally appropriate (age and stage) and considering the young person's needs and early planning.
- Always considering appointing an independent advocate for a young person and ensuring family and carers are aware of what support will be available.

These key principles, together with the 'age and stage' tasks in the table below, are by no means exhaustive, and the needs of each individual young person may be more complex than the information provided in this brief guide.

How services should work together on specific processes and tasks

Age or stage	Process/task	Who should be involved?	Actions/objectives	What outcome do we want to achieve?
Year 9, Age 14	EHCP Annual Review meeting focusing on preparing for adult life	The young person and their parent/carer. SENCo, EHCP co-ordinator, health services, Children's Social Care, if applicable.	Identify aspirations, wishes, and needs including likely future Adults' Social Services needs or PfAL Service referral. Use of a person-centred planning tool is recommended.	EHCP updated reflect PfAL and the four PfAL outcomes referenced.
Age 14 plus, with primary health needs	Young people in receipt of children's NHS Continuing Care are identified and included on the referral and assessment pathway for adults' NHS Continuing Healthcare by the Continuing Healthcare Lead.	Continuing Care Lead, health services, education services, social worker, including the Continuing Healthcare Team in Adults' Social Care.	Start process for NHS Continuing Healthcare checklist, carrying out health and social care assessments to identify eligibility.	Funding agreed with health partners.

Age or stage	Process/task	Who should be involved?	Actions/objectives	What outcome do we want to achieve?
Age 14 to 17	Referral to PfAL Service if it is felt the young person is likely to require Adults' Social Services, with the young person and their family's consent. Referral screened by PfAL Service at weekly new referrals meeting.	School headteacher, Children's and Adolescents' Mental Health Services (CAMHS) , social worker, early help, Youth Offending Team (YOT), EHCP co-ordinator, other services. Parent/carer or young person could also self-refer.	Make PfAL aware of a young person and start screening for service eligibility.	Young person referred and allocated to PfAL Service. If accepted, for 14–16-year-olds, PfAL Conversation takes place and reviewed every year until Care Act assessment started. PfAL Service write a PfAL Conversation for young people under 17 open to the service.
Children in care age 15½	Looked After Child (LAC) Review and Pathway Plan Needs Assessment. The virtual schools for Sensory Support, Children in Care and Services to Home have transition planning embedded in their engagement with young people and parents. Designated teacher for LAC involved.	Young person, social worker and independent reviewing officer, school, carer, family, other services (health, YOT, etc) and PfAL Service, if appropriate.	Identify needs for future care and support including the four PfAL outcomes, and future focus on accommodation planning.	Pathway Plan Needs Assessment to inform Pathway Planning for age 16 to 21 plus.

Age or stage	Process/task	Who should be involved?	Actions/objectives	What outcome do we want to achieve?
Age 16 plus to 17	Continuing Healthcare Checklist (CHC) Screening Process for people who may not be receiving Continuing Care funding.	Young person, their parent/carer, NHS, other health partners, including Continuing Healthcare Checklist team in Adults' Social Care.	Start process for Continuing Healthcare checklist and assessments carried out to identify eligibility.	To have an 'Agreement in Principle' in place by age 17 to fund health needs post-18. This process may also help identify someone who could also start receiving Continuing Care funding up to age 18.
Age 16 plus	Care Act transition planning and on-going assessment/ guidance and connecting. NB Normally this is from age 17.	Young person, parent/carer, PfAL service, other services.	Ensure current needs are met in the four PfAL outcomes and future needs are identified and plans in place to support. NHS Continuing Healthcare Checklist in place and provision is planned. Health Assessments including Continuing Healthcare Checklist to take place in tandem.	Care Act Assessment and care planning completed. A joined-up, smooth and planned transition, with the young person at the centre, is in place. Consideration given to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 to 16 year olds when decisions are being taken about them.

Age or stage	Process/task	Who should be involved?	Actions/objectives	What outcome do we want to achieve?
Age 14 - 25	Ongoing EHCP Annual Reviews meetings are / should be focussed on preparing for adult life.	YP, Family, Education, PfAL Service, Health, Social Care, EHCP Co-ordinator, Guidance Adviser, Other services and services in Continuing Care/CHC	Review of EHCP, including the four PfAL outcomes and aspirations. Discussions around voluntary work employment and internships. Use of a person-centred planning tool is recommended.	EHCP reviewed, all involved informed and aware of aspirations and plans.
Age 14 - 25	Support for Mental Health issues	Find out who should be involved with support for mental health issues on the Just One Norfolk website.	Young person gets the right advice, guidance and support on mental health when they need it.	Mental Health advice, guidance and support is provided where required
Age 14 - 25	Onward post 16 education placements named in EHCP in timely manner according to SENCo.	EHCP co-ordinator, SENCo	EHCP updated with appropriate placement named and transport in place.	Young people with EHCPs have the right education provision.
Age 14 - 25	Information, advice and guidance provided by schools and colleges under their statutory responsibilities.	School/college	Young people supported to attend post-16 taster days.	Impartial information, advice and guidance is made available to all young people with SEND.
Age 14 - 25	TITAN service supports travel independence training for relevant young people.	TITAN travel team	Appropriate bespoke travel training plan put in place	TITAN offered to all appropriate young people.

Age or stage	Process/task	Who should be involved?	Actions/objectives	What outcome do we want to achieve?
Age 14 - 25	Young people with a learning disability are encouraged to attend 14 plus learning disability Annual Health Checks.	Health, all partners	Young people with a learning disability have all their health needs met	All young people with a learning disability have an annual health check.
Age 14 - 25	Young people are supported by community-based youth support services where appropriate.	All partners	Young people access relevant community-based support increasing friendships and local support	Community-based support offered to young people.
Age 16 - 25	Guidance advisers should consider the support required for anyone who may be NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) or SEND.	Guidance advisers	Young people are supported into employment, education or training with the right support.	Guidance advisers allocated to appropriate young people.

PfAL Partnership Agreement

Age or stage	Process/task	Who should be involved?	Actions/objectives	What outcome do we want to achieve?
Age 18	<p>Young person stops being in care and becomes a young person moving beyond care.</p> <p>Safeguarding is dealt with by PfAL/Adults' Social Service, if relevant, under the Care Act.</p>	Young person, Life Beyond Care Team, PfAL, Adults' Social Services locality teams, learning disabilities health teams.	Life Beyond Care team retains duties as described in the Leaving Care Local Offer, PfAL/Adults' Social Services continue to be involved if young person is eligible under the Care Act	<p>Pathway Plan supports young person into independence.</p> <p>Adults' Social Services provide care and support for eligible needs.</p> <p>For young people with a learning disability, the learning disability health team may be involved following PfAL Service or Adults' Social Services locality team referral.</p>

Age or stage	Process/task	Who should be involved?	Actions/objectives	What outcome do we want to achieve?
Age 18 plus	<p>If young person is eligible, transfer to Adults' Social Services locality team when appropriate.</p> <p>End of Children's Services support, case closes unless young person is a care leaver.</p> <p>Transfer to specialist adult health services (not CAMHS which is 14-25).</p> <p>There should be a clear exit plan for when the EHCP is ceased which should consider the ongoing support available from partner agencies.</p> <p>Consider employment schemes including those available from the DWP and any support through Access to Work or Norfolk Employment Services.</p>	<p>Young person, parent/carer, PfAL Service, health services, others (i.e. Safeguarding Adults' Team, Probation, etc)</p> <p>EHCP co-ordinators</p> <p>Job Centre Plus, all partners</p>	<p>Care and Support Plan in place to meet eligible needs.</p> <p>Personal budget/direct payments in place.</p> <p>Continuing Healthcare Checklist in place with funding agreed (may also include transfers in health care and / or accommodation providers).</p> <p>EHCP is reviewed.</p>	<p>Funding agreed.</p> <p>Care and Support Plan in place and reviews carried out</p> <p>Adult Continuing Healthcare confirmed at 17½ following a joint health and local authority assessment.</p> <p>Young person achieves sustainable employment</p>