**How to Prepare for Adulthood – SSENDIAS Session Summary**

**Date:** July 9, 2025
**Presenter:** Hazey Wareham, Young Person’s Involvement Officer, SSENDIAS

**About SSENDIAS**

* SSENDIAS stands for *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service*.
* It provides impartial, confidential advice and support to young people (0–25) with SEND, their families, and carers across education, health, and social care.
* The service is independent, legally based, and parent/young person-led, with no referrals needed from professionals.

**Services Offered**

* Impartial advice on SEND statutory processes: EHCP assessments, mediations, tribunals, exclusions, and reduced timetables.
* Advocacy and support for parents, carers, and young people, including training and one-to-one sessions.
* Drop-in information sessions and accessible online resources (website with guides, glossary, and FAQs).
* Support to improve communication between families and education providers, especially when relationships break down.

**Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Support**

* Guided by the four pillars:
	1. Education & Employment
	2. Independent Living
	3. Friends & Community
	4. Good Health
* Support with educational choices and transitions up to age 25.
* Help with EHCP annual reviews ensuring PfA outcomes are addressed.
* Encouragement and training for self-advocacy to empower young people’s voices.

**Hazey’s Role**

* Works closely with young to ensure their views and wishes are clearly heard and represented.
* Can support young people in meetings, tribunals, and appeals, tailoring advocacy to individual communication needs.
* Captures young people’s voices accurately and shares summaries back for agreement with families.
* Works citywide across schools, colleges, and community services, collaborating with professionals to create joined-up support.

**Key Challenges and Trends**

* Rise in social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs and emotional-based school avoidance (EBSA), especially post-COVID.
* The importance of relationships: Young people consistently highlight the value of trusted, supportive relationships with educators, peers, and staff as central to their success and happiness.

**Common Aspirations of Young People**

* To be happy and have meaningful relationships.
* To live independently and have their own place.
* To access education, training, or employment that fits their interests.
* To participate in community life and have friends.

**Referral and Contact Information**

* Young people and parents/carers can self-refer at any age; direct referrals from professionals are not accepted to maintain impartiality.
* Website: [Sheffield SENDIAS - Special educational needs and disability advice and support](https://sheffieldsendias.org.uk/)
* Contact details (phone, email) available on the website.
* Drop-in sessions and regular events for ongoing support.

**Final Advice from Hazey**

* It’s okay not to know exactly what you want to do right now — exploring interests and dreams is a normal part of the journey.
* Follow your interests and build relationships with like-minded people.
* Use available supports to understand your rights and options and prepare step-by-step.
* Preparation for adulthood is an ongoing process that extends beyond initial transitions.