How to Prepare for Adulthood – Preparation for Adulthood Social Care Team – Session Summary

Date: July 16, 2025

Speakers: Jonathan Mercer and Helen Archer, Preparation For Adulthood Social Care Team Managers

# About the Session

This session featured Jonathan Mercer and Helen Archer from Sheffield’s Preparation For Adulthood Social Care Team which sits within Adult Social Care. They explained how adult social care supports young people with SEND to prepare them for turning 18 and to check social care support is in place, and what families and professionals can do early on to prepare for a smooth transition.

# Who the Team Supports

- The team works with young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from \*\*age 18\*\*.  
- Support is based on eligibility under the \*\*Care Act 2014\*\* – not everyone with an EHCP will be eligible.  
- Eligibility is determined by whether someone has care and support needs that significantly impact their wellbeing and independence.

# What We Covered

- Importance of \*\*starting early\*\*: Good preparation begins in Year 9 even though social care involvement starts at 18.  
- \*\*Good transition planning\*\* includes aspiration-led outcomes and cross-agency working.  
- Role of Preparation For Adulthood Social Care Team: assessing needs, co-producing support plans, working in partnership with families and professionals.  
- Emphasis on a \*\*strengths-based approach\*\*, promoting independence, inclusion, and personal goals.

# Key Advice from Jonathan and Helen

- \*\*Start conversations early\*\* with young people about what a good adult life looks like.  
- Use EHCP annual reviews from Year 9 onwards to reflect aspirations, care needs, and preparations for independence.  
- Understand that adult social care has a \*\*different threshold and legal basis\*\* from children’s services.  
- Encourage families to focus on what the young person can do, and build skills for independence over time.

# Working Across Education, Health and Social Care

- Good preparation involves schools, colleges, GPs, therapists, and social care working together.  
- Communication and shared planning are essential for positive transitions.  
- Adult services want to build on the work already happening with families and education providers.

# How to Find Out More

- Adult social care involvement begins at 18, but preparation can start much earlier.  
- If you are unsure whether a young person may be eligible, speak to your school SENDCo or check the Local Offer.

Website: https://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer