

Approaching Adulthood Policy and Procedure 2025-2026

People Directorate:

Children's Social Care

Adult Social Care



Approaching Adulthood: Policy and Procedure

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Approaching Adulthood Policy and Procedure 2025-2026

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1. Introduction

Approaching adulthood is a time when young people and their families are thinking about their aspirations for the future. If children are likely to have eligible care and support needs, when they are 18, early joint planning will be needed to maximise the gains that can be achieved before and after transfer from Children's Services to Adult Services.

This policy looks at how services should work together to identify *early* those children and their families who may need support to prepare for adulthood and or services to support their long-term outcomes.

In reviewing and revising the approaching adulthood arrangements for children with additional needs and disabilities, Bracknell Forest Councils Children and Adults Social Care Departments want to take the opportunity to assert that this policy has been reviewed and written in the spirit of aspiration for young adults, to enhance the arrangements and to reflect the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes providing better opportunities for:

- Good Health;
- Employment;
- Independent living / housing;
- Friends, relationships and community inclusion.

This policy is aimed at everyone who works with and for children with additional needs and or disabled children/young adults aged 14 to 25, referred to as young people (YP for the purpose of this policy) - in local authorities, health services, schools, colleges, training providers, voluntary sector organisations and other support agencies. It aims to help local areas use the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) 2014 reforms to support disabled YP to move into adulthood with choice and control over their lives and promote good life outcomes. Whilst ensuring compliance with The Care Act 2014, The Mental Capacity Act, The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children Act 1989.

Bracknell Forest Council's People Directorate is responsible for providing information, advice, care and support to many YP with learning difficulties, disabilities or similar complex needs, both in their own local communities and in a variety of care and education settings. The Council will ensure that as these YP approach adulthood they will be enabled and supported to make their own choices in planning and developing their future. The Children's Social Care Services, the Special Educational Needs Team and Adult Social Care Services will work closely to achieve this during the YP's approach to adulthood.

Relevant YP will be supported to make best use of the resources and options available to them from the Council and its partner agencies, both in respect of lifestyle and financial choices. All agencies involved will work closely with the YP and their family to help them to develop their future support plan.

2. Policy, Law and Principles

Both the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 places duties on Local Authorities in regard to arrangements for YP with care and support needs preparing for adulthood. These two pieces of legislation now provide the context in which approaching adulthood practice occurs.

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The Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 capture the principles of personalisation, inclusion, participation and co-production in law. These laws place a duty on Local Authorities (LAs) to conduct approaching adulthood assessments for YP, children's carers and young carers where there is a likely need for care and support after the YP in question turns 18 and an assessment would be of 'significant benefit'.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides the legal framework for acting and making decisions on behalf of individuals who lack the mental capacity to make particular decisions for themselves. The Act's starting point is to confirm in legislation that it should be assumed that an adult (aged 16 or over) has full legal capacity to make decisions for themselves (the right to autonomy) unless it can be shown that they lack capacity to make a decision for themselves at the time the decision needs to be made. Therefore, in terms of a YP aged 16 involved in approaching adulthood decisions, if it is likely that they lack capacity for a specific decision according to the MCA Code of practice, the MCA needs to be followed for decision making with the YP.

This policy for the support of young people with significant learning difficulties or disabilities approaching adulthood has been developed jointly by Children's Social care and Adults Social care, in consultation with Adviser, the Health Service, YP, their parents and carers, and other key partners, all of whom are fully committed to the principles set out below;

- The process will be clear and transparent to all those involved including YP, parents, carers and practitioners.
- YP and their circle of support will always be involved fully in support planning.
- The support of each YP approaching adulthood will often be managed by two lead practitioners, one from Children's Services and one from Adult services. In many cases these will come from the Children's Social Care or Special Educational Needs Team and from Adult Social Care, Health & Housing. However, the practitioner leads may in some cases come from partner organisations, especially so if Children's Social Care are not involved, for example the young person's current school SENCO or Adviza. Wherever possible the views of the young person and circle of support regarding the identification of the lead practitioner will be taken into account.
- The lead practitioners will ensure that support planning is undertaken with the young person's best interests as paramount and will be responsible for ensuring that all the agencies involved are properly engaged in the planning process.
- The planning and commissioning of adult social care services (and associated further education, employment, health and housing services) will be informed by an analysis of the needs of the cohort of young people aged 14 and above who are receiving support from Children's Social Care and Education and who will need support from the Adult Health and Social Care Services within five years.
- Overall service strategy and individual case management will be underpinned by well informed financial planning based on a clear analysis of needs.
- There will be proactive and clear systems that help the services to manage and monitor approaching adulthood planning and outcomes across agencies at both an operational and strategic level.

The guidance requires us to identify and meet the needs of children who are in receipt of children's services as well as those who are not receiving children's services but are nevertheless likely to have care and support needs as adults. The LA should establish mechanisms to identify young people as early as possible in order to plan for or prevent the development of care and support needs and thereby fulfil their duty relating to 'significant benefit' and the timing of assessments. Much of the identification comes from the SEN team, social care, schools or partner agencies. The Local Offer should also provide clear sign posting for parents and young people who may want to refer themselves. This policy will be available on the local offer post 16 page.

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Comprehensive identification of such children requires good partner agency interaction and information sharing, starting as early as 14 years old, at the quarterly panel.

This policy aims to set out the arrangements for those YP in receipt of children's services as they approach adulthood and those who are not open to Children's Services and therefore more difficult to identify.

Examples of groups that are more difficult to identify are set out in the Care Act 2014 statutory guidance as follows:

- Those with degenerative/life limiting conditions.
- Those whose needs have been largely met by their educational institution, but who, once they leave, will require their needs to be met in some other way (e.g., those with autism).
- Those detained in the youth justice system who will move to adult custodial services.
- Young carers whose parents have needs below the local authority's eligibility threshold but who may nevertheless require advice or support to fulfil their potential (e.g., a child with deaf parents who is undertaking communication support).
- Young people and young carers receiving child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) who may also require care and support as adults even if they did not receive children's services from their local authority.

The Children and Families Act 2014 has added new duties to the Children Act 1989 to assess young carers and establish whether they are 'children in need' and to assess parent carers of disabled children and consider what support they may need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. This should lead to more comprehensive identification of young carers and parent carers on which to plan transitions.

The term preparing for adulthood is often used by practitioners to describe the period from Year 9 (14 years old) to when a child becomes an adult at age 18 and as they develop through young adulthood to 25. The phrase "young people approaching adulthood" is now commonly used, when referring to this period in a person's life.

3. Strategic Leads

To ensure the smooth operation of this procedure the Head of Specialist Services in Children's Social Care, and the Head of Service (Learning Disabilities and Autism) in Adult Social Care, will act as the strategic leads. They will ensure there is an effective Approaching Adulthood Panel and meet regularly as partner strategic leads, with a particular focus on the oversight of young people with additional complexities, those who are out of area as they approach adulthood and those whose arrangements/needs indicate that they may exceed that of a 'usual' indicative budget.

Policy and Procedure will also be periodically reviewed within the Preparing for Adulthood Strategic Group. The Operational Preparing for Adulthood panel will report to the Strategic Panel, generally quarterly.

4. The Operational Approaching Adulthood Panel

This Operational Panel will be chaired by the Assistant Team Manager for Learning Disabilities and Autism (Preparing for adulthood ASC lead). Members of this panel from key agencies are responsible for identifying those children who need to be discussed at the operational panel. The panel is responsible for coordinating the identification and monitoring of those children and young people who will require or may require continuing services when they enter adulthood.

The Panel meets once a quarter. A list of all children aged 14 years or more who are subject to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who are approaching their Year 9 Review is provided for the Panel by the Special Educational Needs Team.

Additionally, it is the requirement of members of the operational panel to bring to this list other children who would benefit from strengthening pathways to Adult Social Care or for whom we have a duty to assess, but who may not be identified by the Special Educational Needs Team, for example:

- Children Looked After.
- Young people with specific needs placed in educational establishments out of borough.
- Those mentioned in section 2 (on page 7).

Partner agencies early identification of young people who do not have EHCP's but are likely to be in need of care and support as an adult can effectively begin with:

- Monitoring education progress and development of life skills.
- Thinking '**whole family**'.
- Building relationships with young people and their families.
- Building relationships with other professionals.
- Monitoring of emotional health and well-being.
- Recognising YP who have services that are of high cost, which indicates that their needs are above those that are likely to be available universally or within targeted provision.

The Panel is tasked with ensuring that the needs of a young person are identified prior to a young person reaching adulthood and identifying the appropriate lead practitioners to work closely with the young person and liaise with each other so as to ensure a smooth transfer. For further information please see the Approaching Adulthood Panel's Terms of Reference (Appendix 2).

The operational panel is required to:

- Actively identify YP and undertake a primary need discussion in respect of all YP who may be in need between the ages of 14 and 16.
- Ensure by the age of 16 years a YP should have an identified key team.
- Ensure once YP have turned 17 years they have a lead professional identified from both the Children's workforce and from Adult Services.
- Post 17 years specific arrangements must be in place for joint working and assessment of future need.

It has been recognised that the panel has largely worked well in regard to those transferring from Children's Specialist Support Team to Adult Services. A need to strengthen the transfer from mainstream Children's Social Care/Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to Adult Services, has been identified. It is acknowledged that this is multi-faceted. Young people with mental health needs who are 17 and approaching the age of 18 are now discussed in detail and recommendations are made based on the available evidence. The Preparing for Adulthood Team meet regularly with CAMHS and CMHT to review those YP identified.

The chairs of the operational group report into the strategic group and should refer any child to the strategic group that they feel would benefit from an additional oversight

– the strategic group would expect to be routinely notified of YP who are:

- In receipt of services from CAMHS, Education or Children's Social Care that are high cost.
- YP who are placed out of area and likely to need adult services.
- YP approaching adulthood who are deemed to be at significant risk of exploitation.
- Any professional barriers to approaching adulthood planning such as having complex needs but not having a diagnosed learning disability or ASD.
- Safeguarding issues that may extend into adulthood.
(See Appendix 2).

5. Transfer from Youth Justice

The **Youth to adult transitions framework** states that:

The point of transfer from youth to adult justice services is a critical time for a young person and for the justice professionals who must work to ensure that a young person's welfare is properly safeguarded and that any risks they pose to the public are minimised.

This particular group of YP is specifically identified in the Care Act 2014 statutory guidance because these YP receive services that traditionally lie in the criminal justice system, but under the Care Act local authorities will be responsible for meeting their care and support needs as adults.

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) are tasked with identifying any YP who meet this criterion and referring them to the operational panel. A decision on whether or not a young person has eligible care and support needs can only come after a young person is identified and an assessment has been made. If a young person with care and support needs is going to transfer to a prison in another area as an adult or is going to be released but plans to move to another area on their release, the Bracknell YJS where they are currently resident should establish their likely destination and make contact with the relevant local authority to involve them in the planning.

6. The Approaching Adulthood Strategic Group

The Approaching Adulthood Strategic Group comprises of key strategic partners including Health, Education, Children and Adults Social Care.

This group will meet quarterly 2 weeks after the operational panel.

The purpose of the group is to consider in more detail those YP who are referred to the group from the operational panel and or Children's Social Care or Educational Finance Teams (see section 4).

Strategic planning and leadership at all levels, together with strong governance and clear responsibilities, are required to shift practice to make it both effective and compliant. Senior managers in social care will need to make decisions about workforce requirements and the deployment of resources, along with information systems that best support this, taking into account at all times the views of people who receive services in order to meet the requirements of the Care Act 2014.

The Strategic Group will also monitor and review this Approaching Adulthood Policy and Procedure at least every three years.
(See Appendix 3).

7. Eligibility for Services

7.1 Children's Social Care Services

Empowering futures: Bracknell Forest children's social care's commitment to children with SEND was jointly developed by Bracknell Forest Council, children and young people with SEND, Bracknell Parent Carer Forum and professional partners. It includes views from children, young people, families, and professionals regarding what they consider to be the most important priorities for children's social care. The overarching aim is to ensure whichever team a child with SEND receives a social work service from, it is ambitious, effective and inclusive and meets the needs and statutory duties we have for children and their families. The document provides detailed information about the range of social care services: https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/bracknell/services/files/empowering_futures_send_v4.pdf

Why Children's Social Care may become involved with a child and their family

- A family is caring for a child with a disability or complex illnesses.
- There are concerns about a child's safety or needs.
- You or someone else is worried that a child or young person is at risk of committing offences or may be being exploited by adults.
- A child has been harmed or is at risk of significant harm.
- You are a child or young person who is or has been looked after by the Local Authority.
- A family is under considerable stress.
- You wish to adopt or foster a child.
- You are an adopted adult who wants to trace your birth family.
- You wish to privately foster a child.
- You have a Young Carer in your family arrangement and there are worries about their safety.
- You are a care leaver.

7.2 Adult Social Care Services

The eligibility decision for any adult with care and support needs involves the consideration of the following three criteria;

- ***Do the needs arise from a physical or mental impairment or illness?***
- ***Do these needs mean that the adult is unable to achieve two or more of the listed outcomes?***
- ***Is there consequently a significant impact on the adult's wellbeing?***

The Considered Needs

- Managing and maintaining nutrition.
- Maintaining personal hygiene.
- Managing toilet needs.
- Being appropriately clothed.
- Being able to make use of the adults home safely.
- Maintaining a habitable home environment.
- Developing and maintaining family or other personal relationship.
- Accessing and engaging in work, training education or volunteering.
- Making use of necessary facilities or services in the local community, including public transport and recreational services.
- Carrying out any caring responsibilities that adult has for a child

Adult Social Care Assessments will focus on the following:

- Identifying the person's needs.

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- Identifying how these needs impact on their wellbeing – to be eligible for Adult Social Care the needs must have a significant impact in two or more of the areas identified above.
- Identifying if providing time limited support may reduce the need for on-going care and support.
- Identifying the outcomes that the person wishes to achieve in their day-to-day life.

We have developed the Approaching Adulthood Pathway Guide to help young people and their carers have a clearer understanding of the eligibility for Adult social care provisions. The Pathway guide can be found here:

https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/bracknell/services/files/pfa_pathway_guide_v5.pdf

8. Disabled Care Leavers

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is intended to improve and lengthen the process for all looked after YP, and to also help meet the needs of YP who are disabled, looked after and approaching adulthood.

The approaching adulthood planning process must take account of the developmental process that is occurring for all young people with disabilities as they move towards adulthood. This process must place the young people at the centre of decisions to ensure that any plans made genuinely reflect the individuals' wishes and best interests. It is essential to provide the young people and their parents and carers with good information throughout, both about the stages in the process and the range of options for the future.

For care leavers who have a disability and whose needs have been considered by the Panel since age 14, a plan will already have been developed and monitored at the young person's annual EHCP reviews and/or Children's Social Care reviews.

However, for young people with a disability who are also looked after by the Local Authority the plan that is completed for all young people with disabilities may not address all the relevant areas of concern. Where a young person is looked after their accommodation and post 16 support needs will be different, and plans to assess and meet them must be made in a separate pathway plan. This pathway plan will be completed in partnership with the YP and carers by their allocated social worker from Children's Social Care and must be completed 3 months after the young person's 16th birthday. The needs assessment must be completed **before** the young person reaches 16 years and 3 months.

In the case of a young person with disabilities who has been a Child Looked After and qualifies for after care, it is the Pathway Plan that is the statutory plan which meets the requirement under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 and it is this plan that is dominant. The EHC Plan may compliment the pathway plan but may not be substituted for a pathway plan.

8.1 Personal Advisers for Care Leavers with Disabilities

The Personal Adviser role requires engaging with and building relationships with YP. It is important that as much flexibility be built into arrangements as possible so as to be responsive to the needs and wishes of individual young people. The Personal Adviser role is separate from that of the allocated Social Worker and will be carried out by a member of the Leaving Care Service in most cases. From the first Child Looked After (CLA) review held after the young person reaches 15 ½ years old, the Personal Advisers will be invited to attend, as set out in the Council's Leaving Care Policy and Procedure.

When carrying out the role of Personal Adviser the person appointed must not be the budget holder in respect of the child for whom they act as personal adviser. The personal adviser must be able to advocate on behalf of the child, challenge the local authority where

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necessary and be free to review the pathway plan to ensure it meets the child's after care needs in full. If the personal adviser is not free to be in a position to undertake their role in this way, then an alternative person needs to be appointed who is sufficiently independent to act as the personal adviser.

Arrangements will vary from case to case according to assessed need. In some cases the role will be more of a coordinating and support role rather than a direct role, for instance where the young person is funded in an external placement providing a comprehensive service. However, the Personal Adviser service must be in place for all cases and the young person's needs carefully monitored.

If a young person is eligible for support from Adult Social Care the allocated practitioner will be the responsible Local Authority case holder and work in partnership with the Personal Advisers.

Also involved in the development and review of pathway plans will be the Adviser, parents, carers, staff from school or college, health practitioners and anyone else that the local authority or the young person feels appropriate. This should always include at least one person who is able to meet a young person's communication needs and have a clear understanding of their needs and wishes.

8.2 Support After 18 Years of Age

Post 18 the pathway plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Personal Adviser where this has been agreed as part of the pathway and plans.

Care leavers with disabilities will participate fully in planning and be involved in making choices and developing their lives as adults in the same way as non-disabled care leavers. The Council will always consider how best to ensure that this happens, particularly in the case of care leavers who have communication difficulties. Where appropriate, care leavers with disabilities should be enabled to gain access to advocacy services.

It is important to note that at age 18 all care leavers cease to be eligible for income maintenance support from Children's Services. In all circumstances care leavers must be supported to claim all benefits to which they are entitled, including sources not available to non-disabled care leavers. Support for the education, training and employment of care leavers with disabilities post 18 under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 may also apply. This will depend on the actions already set out in the plan and the availability of different benefits.

The move from children's services to support from adult services should be as seamless as possible in all circumstances and decisions regarding funding will not delay the implementation of support plans.

9. Carers

The Local Authority acknowledges the importance of the carers role. All carers will be offered an assessment which will focus on **preventing, reducing or delaying need**.

Practitioners will need to make available a range of interventions, information or advice that will help carers to:

- Care effectively and safely.

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- Make use of IT and assistive technology.
- Make choices about their own lives, for example managing care and paid employment.
- Find support and services available in their area.
- Access the advice, information and support they need including information and advice on welfare benefits and other financial information, and about entitlement to carers' assessments.

Both Children's and Adult Services have a published eligibility criteria for access to services, and adopts a Whole Family Approach.

At any stage in the process a Family Group Conference can be used to assist communication and plans during transfer.

Feedback from parents told us that sharing this paragraph and explaining the bullet points within the first visit would be really helpful.

9.1 Young Carers

The Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 places a statutory responsibility on local authorities to assess young carers before they turn 18. Where a young carer is caring for a child rather than an adult (e.g. sibling) when they approach 18, they will be eligible for assessment and support under section 1(2) of the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995.

All young carers should be offered a transition assessment whether they, or the people they care for, receive services or not.

Young carers should be as identified as early as possible in the same way as any other young person who is likely to have care and support needs as an adult. This will ensure the assessment and plan are of benefit to the carer, maximising choice and wellbeing of that person.

The timing of the transition assessment is critical and it should be undertaken when it is of most benefit to the young carer.

For example:

- The stage reached at school (such as selecting options for exam subjects).
- Whether they wish to enter higher/further education.
- Options for employment/apprenticeship.
- The levels and kinds of care they are providing and to whom.
- The levels and kinds of care they are willing or not to continue or begin to provide plans to move out of the parental/family home.
- The length of time it will take to conduct an assessment and to develop a support plan (in light of the need to make sure that plans are in good time for the actual transition)
- Planned medical treatment.
- Relevant family circumstances.

The requirements that apply to transition assessments are the same as for other Care Act assessments. However, the transition assessment for a young carer can be used to pose the difficult questions of: Do you wish to continue caring, and if you do, what needs to happen? What might have to change for you to continue? It will also have to indicate whether the young carer is likely to be eligible for adult social care support. A young carers transition assessment should be aspirational and reflect the future ambitions of the young carer as a person in their own right.

For this reason a young carers assessment should be appropriate for someone of that age so that it is inclusive, accessible and promotes equality of opportunity. This may mean that the approach to undertaking a transition assessment and format may differ from how an adult assessment is undertaken.

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All young carers will be presented to the Approaching Adulthood Panel in a timely manner prior to their 18th birthday, where it will be determined who is best placed to conduct a transitions assessment. This should be a collaborative approach between Early Help and Adult Social Care.

For further information:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/transition-from-childhood-to-adulthood/young-carer-transition-in-practice/identification.asp>

10. Involving Young People, Their Family and Their Carers

It is a fundamental principle of planning that the young person is at the centre of the process, holding their own personal budget where achievable and as far as possible leading the development of their own person centred support plan to prepare for their future. All practitioners will make every effort to ensure that young people and their circle of support are fully involved in the planning process. The process will be fully transparent and the young person and their circle of support will be made aware of all the relevant options and resources available such as advocacy, direct payments, personal budgets, day services/support, health care and voluntary sector resources so that they can make appropriate choices for the future.

All person centred support plans and recommendations will always take the particular needs of the individual concerned and their circle of support fully into account. In addition, the carers will be offered assessments.

All adult social care support is subject to a financial assessment.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides the legal framework for acting and making decisions on behalf of individuals who lack the mental capacity to make decisions for themselves aged 16 and over and this will be the framework that is used for many decisions where appropriate. However, where there are financial arrangements to plan for with the YP and they lack mental capacity for these, formal legal powers should be considered in advance of their 16th birthday to support them with their ongoing financial arrangements after this. The two main ways to arrange this are applying for Deputyship or Appointeeship for the YP.

11. Safeguarding

Everyone has the right to refuse an assessment, however Bracknell Forest Council must undertake an assessment if it suspects that a young person is at risk of abuse or neglect.

Professionals carrying out tasks in line with this procedure must remain mindful of their responsibilities to adhere to the policies and procedures of the council in respect of Safeguarding:

Adult Services <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/Safeguarding-vulnerable-adults.pdf>

Children's Services - <http://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/>

12. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and Liberty Protection Safeguards

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The term 'deprivation of liberty' comes from Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which provides that everyone, of whatever age, has the right to liberty. For those aged over 18 the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) which come under the MCA 2005, apply in hospital and care home settings. Where a child or young person receives care and support which gives rise to a deprivation of their liberty, the local authority must use a different process to the DoLS to seek judicial approval and oversight of any safeguard which would deprive the liberty of a child in its care. For this policy and procedure, it is important to identify if a deprivation of liberty applies or is in place for a child who is approaching adulthood and that this must be considered as part of the arrangements for their approaching adulthood plans in order that the appropriate legal framework is applied to their situation at the appropriate age.

For further detail on this complex area see:

[nfjo_briefing_DoL_final_20220203.pdf](#) (nuffieldfjo.org.uk)

The Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) are the new legal framework intended to replace the existing system of DoLS in the near future and they will provide protection for people aged 16 and above who are, or who need to be, deprived of their liberty in order to enable their care or treatment and who lack the mental capacity to consent to their arrangements. LPS authorisations can apply to 16- and 17-year-olds in any setting, such as: - their own family home - social care settings, including children's homes, short breaks and youth club provision - education settings, including day and residential schools and colleges - hospitals, including inpatient mental health units. If the young person has an education health and care plan (EHCP), the Responsible Body would be the local authority responsible for maintaining the EHCP. If the young person does not have an EHCP but is being provided with accommodation in accordance with the Children Act 1989, the Responsible Body would be the local authority responsible for providing that accommodation. If the young person does not have an EHCP but is subject to a care order or interim care order under the Children Act 1989, the local authority that is responsible under the order for the care of the person would be the Responsible Body. For this policy and procedure, the LPS will apply from the age of 16 and where appropriate should be considered as part of the arrangements for approaching adulthood plans.

13. Advocacy

The Care Act 2014 focuses on the opportunity for people to be offered advocacy support. Advocacy should be offered to carers and people requesting support in the following ways:

- Carrying out needs assessment.
- Carrying out a carers assessment.
- Preparing care and support plans.
- Preparing support plans (carers).
- Revising care and support plans.
- Revising support plans (carers).
- Carrying out a child in need assessment.
- Carrying out child's carers assessment.
- Carrying out young carers assessment.
- Where a safeguarding alert has been raised.

13.1 Lead Practitioners Are Also Advocates

The lead practitioners will in particular:

- Promote the young person's independence as far as possible through involving them in the decision making, always making a presumption in favour of the young person's

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capacity to make decisions and develop their own plan;

- Take into consideration the views and feeling of family members and work towards early and positive resolution of particular concerns they may have with regard to plans for the young person's future support and development:
- Take into consideration the views of carers and other important people in the young person's life.

14. Education Health and Care Plans

EHCPs must at least be reviewed annually by the Local Authority and can be in place until the age of 25 if deemed necessary.

The annual review of the EHCP held in Year 9 (age 14) should involve the young person, their parents or carers and the agencies that may play a major role in the young person's life during the post-school years. Depending on the young person's circumstances, the inclusion of representatives from the SEN Team, Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Health (including specialist therapists), Housing, Adviza and Educational Psychology will need to be considered for each young person. The review **must** involve the Adviza Service, as the service is responsible for ensuring the young person receives advice and guidance on how to move confidently into adulthood by creating an Approaching Adulthood Plan. The Approaching Adulthood Plan that is drawn up for the year 9 review will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis until the young person leaves education.

The review is triggered by the SEN Team, but if the young person attends a school or college then the SEN Coordinator of that establishment is usually tasked with arranging the review meeting, circulating reports in advance and preparing a report following the meeting. The local authority is then responsible for concluding the review by writing to the young person and the educational establishment with their final decision to either cease/ maintain/ or amend the EHCP.

EHCPs for Post 16 learners are designed specifically to 'empower' the young person, to directly support their social inclusion aspirations, striving to place the individual at the centre of decision-making, treating family members as partners. This person-centred approach focuses on discovering the young person's gifts, skills and capacities, and on listening for what is really important to the person. It is based on the values of human rights, independence, choice and social inclusion, and is designed to enable the young person to achieve their educational outcomes, designed to help them meet their aspirations, and transfer positively into adulthood.

15. Transfer of Responsibility from Age 18

From the young person's 18th birthday responsibility for assessment planning with the young person - if assessed as eligible for support from Adult Social Care will be appropriately transferred to the relevant team within this service e.g., the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT), the Adult Community Team (ACT) including Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP), The Autism Team or the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities (CTPLD). From this point all assessed resource implications and costs will be met by funding streams appropriate to adults, including Community Care, NHS funds and any other welfare benefits for which the individual may be eligible.

Where the individual concerned requires medical care over a long period as a result of disability, accident or illness, and the intensity and depth of care required is such that additional NHS funding is required to meet their needs, they may be eligible for Continuing Health Care funding.

Every young person with a package of Continuing Health Care who is approaching adulthood should have a multi-agency plan for an active transition process to adult or universal health services or to a more appropriate specialised or NHS Continuing Healthcare pathway. Once a young person reaches the age of 18, they are no longer eligible for Continuing Care for children, but may be eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare, which is subject to legislation and specific guidance. Future entitlement to adult NHS Continuing Healthcare should be clarified as early as possible in the transition planning process, especially if the young person's needs are likely to remain at a similar level until adulthood, and this should be accomplished by undertaking an initial screening for NHS continuing healthcare at a suitable point when aged 16-17.

The Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities (CTPLD) social care practitioners will work with young people approaching adulthood. The remit of these workers is to monitor and support the process of young people with a learning disability. The workers may also monitor young people up to the age of 25 years old who may be in full time education and on leaving this education establishment require support from the CTPLD.

16. Diversity

All support services provided by the Council under the terms of this policy will take into account all factors of ethnicity, religion, language, culture and disability in seeking to achieve the best possible outcome for any young person.

This Policy is subject to the Council's procedure for Equality Impact Assessment, and it has been reviewed in accordance with that.

APPENDIX 1: Key Actions for Approaching Adulthood

The key actions for the person centred support planning process are described below:

Date	Key Actions
<p>From 14th Birthday (in all cases by the end of School Year 9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of all children aged 14 years or more who are subject to an ECHP and who are approaching their Year 9 Review is provided for the Panel by the Special Educational Needs Team. Their names are added to Panel Database. • Other children who may be eligible for adulthood support should be referred and added onto the Panel Database. Partners will be prompted before each panel to consider 'hidden' need and include such children for discussion. • First Approaching Adulthood Plan completed at annual Year 9 Review and lead practitioner assigned within Services for Children or the children's work force. • Panel will ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) All relevant agencies are involved, and the pattern of agency involvement is reviewed annually (or more frequently if required); ii) Strategic funding issues are identified for young people with particularly complex needs; iii) Relevant referrals made to the strategic approaching adulthood group;
<p>From 14 - 16 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Approaching Adulthood need is reviewed at the annual review of the EHCP/ statement of special educational needs. • Child Looked After (CLA) with disabilities needs an assessment before age 16. • Personal Adviser allocated to attend CLA review from 15.5 years
<p>From 16th Birthday</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead team / practitioners will be identified from each appropriate service at (or before) the young person's 16th birthday. • EHCP is reviewed and updated annually with the agreement of the young person and their family/carers. This review will also ensure that the correct group of agencies are involved. • Pathway Plan completed for Child Looked After within 3 months of 16th birthday. • Eligibility for support from Adult Social Care, Health & Housing assessed

	<p>following the child's 17th birthday, no later than 2 months passed. Earlier where need indicates this may be necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility for welfare benefits will be reviewed at least annually by the lead practitioners. Parents told us this is an area they really value applied consistently. • Provide the young person and their parents/carers with relevant information on the transfer process.
<p>From 17th Birthday onward or before if appropriate for that YP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Social Care Plan presented to panel

APPENDIX 2: Bracknell Forest Council Multi Agency Operational Panel Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Panel is to co-ordinate the support for young people as they approach adulthood where they are subject to an EHCP or have been identified for other reasons i.e., mental health and emotional wellbeing as needing an assessment in regard to adult related needs. This panel considers children with complex needs as well as those with disabilities and is intended to support early identification of those who may be in need of adult social care services.

The Operational Approaching Adulthood Panel meets Quarterly and the dates and agenda for this meeting are sent out well in advance.

Operational Chair

Assistant Community Services Manager

Strategic Leads

Head of Specialist Services, Children Social Care
Learning Disability and Autism Head of Service, Adult Social Care

Membership

- Relevant representatives from, Children, Young People & Learning – to include CSST, Family Safeguarding team, Leaving Care and YOS
- Approaching Adulthood Team
- Community Mental Health Team (CMHT)
- CAMHS representative
- SEN representative
- Bracknell Forest Council CHC Lead, Children's and Adult's Services
- A Representative from Kennel Lane Special School
- A Representative from a Local College
- Frimley ICB CHC

Procedure

- The Panel will meet once every quarter.
- The agenda and papers will be circulated at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting.
- The decisions of the Panel will be formally minuted and circulated to members.
- The Panel will present its terms of reference to the Strategic Group on an annual basis for review.

Functions

The Panel will take responsibility for the functions listed below:

Regarding the group:

- To identify and monitor the needs of children aged 14 or over subject to a EHCP.
- To ensure that a database of those children is established and maintained.
- To seek to improve inter-agency co-operation and support the development of relevant protocols and working arrangements.
- Consider outcomes to inform future practice.
- To make referrals to the strategic group
- To high light early any high-cost placements

Regarding individual young people:

- Identify lead practitioners and lead agencies to co-ordinate the practitioner arrangements for each young person, and communication requirements.
- Identify any other practitioners who need to be involved (e.g. advocacy)
- Consider these arrangements annually for each young person.
- Discuss young people referred by agencies involved where the advice of the panel is sought.
- To ensure that services meet the whole needs of each young person taking into account ethnic origin, culture, religion, sexuality, gender and language, as well as social and emotional needs.
- To establish mechanisms to ensure that young people with disabilities and their families have a voice and that their views are communicated appropriately. This is where referrals to advocacy services will support the individual and families/carers to ensure the assessment process is fully understood and that individuals' options are given full consideration.

APPENDIX 3: Strategic Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Strategic Approaching Adulthood Group is a new addition to our arrangements following a review in November 2015.

The purpose of the Panel is to support the work of the operational group to achieve better outcomes for young people as they approach adulthood where they are subject to a EHCP or have been identified for other reasons i.e. mental health and emotional wellbeing as needing an assessment in regard to adult related needs.

This group will ensure: -

Leadership and commitment to Approaching Adulthood planning.

Governance of process and attendance

Strategic overview

Joined up and bespoke person centred planning for those young people with complex needs.

Strategic Leads

Head of Service - Specialist Services Family Safeguarding, Children's Social Care Head of Service, (Learning Disabilities), Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

Membership

- Head of Service Leaving Care and YOS
- Head of Service Over 11s/LAC
- Team Manager SEN
- Management rep from CAMHS
- Management rep from CMHT
- Operational chair - Team managers, Children Social care CSST
- Operational chair - Team Manager, Adults Services CTPLD
- Team Manager Looked After Children

Procedure

- The Panel will meet once every quarter; approximately 2 weeks after the operational panel.
- Agendas and papers will be circulated at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting.
- The decisions of the Panel will be formally minute and circulated to members.

Functions

The group will take responsibility for the functions listed below:

- To ensure there are effective arrangements in place to identify and monitor the needs of children aged 14 or over who are likely to require adult support.
- To seek to improve inter-agency co-operation and support the development of relevant protocols and working arrangements.
- Consider outcomes to inform future practice.
- To ensure there is early communication to enable strategic planning, around best value and financial forecasting.
- To ensure representation from all departments have an identified person to lead on transitions across all services. This person will ensure this policy is widely available, read and adhered to by all practitioners and will ensure the messages contained with regard to early planning and involving young people are communicated on a regular basis to all involved.

APPENDIX 4: Addendum to Approaching Adulthood Policy – Participation responsibilities

Membership

The professionals attending the panel must be in a position, within their agency which affords them a degree of oversight with regards to the caseload of relevant YP that the panel discusses. This generally requires the attendee to be a Senior Practitioner or above within the designated service.

Commitment

The panel covers a large number of YP . The quality of the information that is provided to the panel regarding a YP's primary needs and current situations is critical to effective transition to adulthood arrangements.

It is requested that to promote consistency and case progress, that the same worker attends at least 2 consecutive panels (although ideally, attendees should be somebody who can attend every panel). Team Managers are asked to identify attendees who can provide this level of consistency. Attendees are expected, as part of their commitment, to read the pre-panel documentation and allocation lists and to come prepared to the panel meetings. Meaning they are able to give some detail about YP relevant to their service area.

Coming Prepared

Attendees must come to panel prepared. What this means in a practical sense is:

- Attendees must have an update for each YP on the Panel Discussion List allocated to their service. It is crucial that Panel Attendees take responsibility for each of their cases *even when* they are not the primary/sole agency involved. For example, if a YP has School, CAMHS and CSC involved in their lives, the panel would expect to have updates from *each* of those 3 agencies with regards to updates on the **presenting needs and primary need** of that YP.
- Attendees must ensure that any tasks or requests for information from their designated service, made at the previous panel, have an outcome update. Even if the previous panel attendees was another colleague, it is the responsibility of the current panel attendee to provide an update.

Thank you for your contribution to this panel

Panel Chair