



**Committee and Date**  
**People Overview**  
**8 February 2023**

Item

Public



## Preparing for Adulthood (PFA)

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### 1. Synopsis

This report provides an overview of developments in Shropshire Council PfA Team:

- Pilot Projects Update
- Early Intervention
- Future Planning

It provides examples of successfully supporting children as they begin adulthood.

## 2. Executive Summary

### Pilot Projects

In 2021 we carried out a pilot project with two distinct areas to explore transitions. The first looked at young people transitioning into adult social care in the disabled children's team. During the pilot specific workers were ring fenced to work only with young people aged 14+. These workers developed a specialism in preparation for adult hood and develop strong working relationships with adult social care preparing for adulthood team. We found that the two teams working closely together promoted earlier thinking about a young person's preparation for adulthood, more options were explored, and outcomes improved.

Historically in Shropshire we have had a pattern of young people using a small number of services in an 'off-the-peg' style. For example, a young person attends Severndale School, progress to either Derwen college or Condoval college followed by a full-time placement in an adult day opportunity. By the disabled children's team and preparing for adult hood team working closely, sharing information and forward planning with young people and their families, a much greater range of opportunities become available. Young people and families are given time to consider options, think about what best meets their needs and how this will impact on the young person's ability to achieve their goals. This has resulted in young people and families accessing a more diverse range of services. This allows each young person to have a support plan which is bespoke to their own needs. This way of working also promotes long-term goal setting. We are not thinking of the young person until they are 18, or until they are 25. We are thinking about the impact of the support we provide in terms of the young person's full life opportunities. When we work together to think about the impact of support provided during the young person's teenage years on their adult outcomes, we make different choices.

An example of success during this pilot was T. T experienced a breakdown in his placement and options were being explored. Due to the complexity of his needs, placements outside Shropshire with a likely outcome. However, through working together we were able to think about the bigger picture for T in his preparation for adulthood. We identified the benefits for T of remaining within Shropshire, including stability of family contact, education and social activities within his community. As these benefits were so compelling, the team pulled together to develop a bespoke option for T within his community. The impact of this means that at 18, T will not have to leave a familiar location to return to Shropshire, leaving behind friend's activities and education placements. He can now plan his future in an area in which he is familiar and embedded within his community.

Due to the findings of this pilot, an additional manager was put in place in the disabled children's team who leads for preparation for adult hood and the implementation of the mental capacity act. This supports the implementation of the PFA ethos across all support delivered in the disabled children's team as well as embedding the mental capacity act. By introducing the legal framework of MCA to families whilst their children are still young, we give young people and families the best opportunity to understand the responsibility for decision-making once a young person reaches 16. We are able to support and plan with young people to give them the best possible opportunity to take control of decision-making in their lives as they approach adulthood.

The second element of the pilot looked at young people in mental health crisis being supported by children social care. These young people were generally supported in children social care teams other than the disabled children's team. The outcome of this pilot was the implementation of a full-time senior social worker position in the preparation for adulthood team. This post is in on-going development, focusing on identifying young people either in or approaching mental health crisis and supporting the young person, family and team around the young person to prevent any further escalation.

### **Ongoing developments in the PFA MH Senior role:**

- Ensuring early conversations occur between adult social care and children's services to avoid cliff edge crisis at 18 years. Adult social care mental health lead will be a visual presence within children's teams, ensuring identification and planning begins at the earliest opportunity.
  
- Provision of weekly consultations through 'Let's Talk Young People's Mental Health'. The PFA mental health social worker makes them self-available to any practitioner within children's services who has concerns about a young person's mental health. They are able to:
  - Share knowledge and/or local resources and networks.
  - Help workers understand the various models and approaches that support younger adults who have a range of needs as a result of their mental health, life choices and trauma
  - Encourage a strength-based practice focus on building resilience
  - Develop aspirations and enable young people to develop plans for the future.

During a recent consultation, a children's social worker came to discuss a 9-year-old young person presenting with complex behaviour including attempts to harm other people. Children's mental health services (BeeU) had not accepted a referral as the issues were thought to be behavioural rather than a mental health presentation. The senior PFA worker took a strengths-based approach, focusing on improving the young person's quality-of-life, as a focus on behaviour that challenges can sometimes increase the issue.

A plan was put in place to increase the young person's access to activities of their choice, activities to improve self-esteem and activities that support building positive relationships. A meeting was scheduled with the young person school to consider the availability of pastoral support whilst in education. The possibility of autism and/or ADHD were discussed and appropriate referral methods shared. The self-referral process for BEAM we shared to allow the young person access to mental health drop-in sessions if required. The consultation session with the PFA mental health worker was able to prevent the situation becoming 'stuck' when a referral is not accepted by BeeU.

Proactive strategies were put in place to support the young person to adopt more positive coping strategies.

- Continued development and improving links with housing, recognising the needs of young people experiencing MH. Recent changes through consultation have offered Children Social Workers access to the adult housing forum. This improves planning for the young person as the worker is fully informed of what options are available and may suit their needs.

- Exploration of community support available, promoting the needs of those young people expressing mental health needs who are often rejected by services due to risk.
- Strengthening the partnership between social care and BEE U CAMHS, through clearly mapped information sharing protocols, enabling direct discussions for those young people with presenting mental needs.
- Raising awareness of the Mental Capacity Act and DOLS.
- Supporting CETRs within ICB monitoring.
- Strengthening good working relations with health; developing an autism pathway and providing a clearer picture of need for those with Autism and how this can be met within Shropshire.
- Current active involvement with an Autism Pilot, devised to recognise the needs of those with Autism and how Shropshire Council can support young people to improve communication, and practitioners understanding of the assessment process through an Autistic lens, improving outcomes.
- Adult social care has a newly appointed Autism development lead post who we will work closely with to create a secure pathway autistic young adults.
- Supervision guidance available within the MHSW team to those who are allocated young people at 18yrs, and those in tier 4 hospital. Supporting reduction in care provision.

### **PFA MH: Changing outcomes**

Young people who have been supported through Preparing for Adulthood offer positive case examples to the benefits of coordinating alongside the young person at this vital stage, instigating change and reducing risk from a strengths-based approach. We can evidence at multi-disciplinary level what can be achieved when services work together and the pitfalls when services find themselves silo working. PFA offers the individual joined up perspectives and promotes multi-disciplinary working to achieve improved outcomes.

Feedback from one young care leaver supported through PFA MH:

What do you think is most important for young people like you for transition support?

- Getting into housing that we have chosen. I never had any say where I lived before now and it feels good to choose.
- Having the basic things you need when moving on like bedding, towels etc and someone actually helping with what we need as I don't know, I have never lived on my own before.
- Knowing who to contact when we need help or advice and trusting that they will support us
- Having a positive experience with a worker

- Knowing that when you leave, there are other people there now who I can go to

### **Feedback to the Student SW from care leaver:**

#### **How did you feel when we first met?**

“I had no idea where to go for help or support. I had no information and I don’t feel like I was prepared for life after care. It really affected my mental health and I felt worthless. I thought, if they don’t care about then why would anyone else? I was abandoned”

#### **What has been important to you while working with Transitions?**

“That we have regular meetings and you will take time to visit or check in. I feel listened to and that it matters what I want to do now. I didn’t like social workers but I have changed my view and I feel like I can trust you lot now”

#### **What would have been different if you had had no transition support?**

“I think I would of ended up homeless or in a hostel as nobody seemed to know where I could live. I would of carried on taking overdoses and might have been dead by now to be honest. I was in a bad place and I didn’t know how to get out of it. That has all changed now.”

#### **What is different between me and your PA?**

“ I like my PA but I feel like they do more of the money and admin stuff but you have done more practical stuff. Nobody had ever let me choose where I live before and you took me to show me different houses and made sure that I got the essentials bought from my PA. You helped me when I was sleeping rough and got other people to help me like education and my key worker. I know how to do things for myself now and feel more confident asking for help”

### **Early Intervention**

To further aid our ability to intervene early, the preparing for adulthood lead attends a range of information sharing meetings to identify young people who may benefit from support for adult social care in the future. This includes children’s complex case panel and the dynamic support register. These are multidisciplinary groups that identify young people with complex needs, allowing adult social care to forecast for the future. This includes planning for specific young people’s needs, but also more generally supporting the development of services that meet their needs in their communities. The learning from all areas of exploring early intervention will inform how the model in social care will evolve in future, given the opportunities that have opened up within a people’s directorate.

Preparing for adulthood mental health lead post is closely aligned with Stepping Stones, attending fortnightly forum meetings, guiding both young people and adults to support services to divert at earliest opportunity and reduce risk of crisis.

Preparing for adulthood mental health lead works alongside BEE U and MPFT, attending joint transition meetings to highlight the needs of young people, both in terms of health input and social care to identify the earliest stage, to reduce level of need within adult services.

## **Co-location**

As the preparing for adulthood team comes together as a team in 2023, we are looking at approaches to co-location to support better joined up working. This includes sharing space with children's services at Shirehall as well as exploring options with colleagues in education and other services used by young people.

## **PfA Community Hubs**

We are in the process of making a bid to the NDTi impact project for some funded support to develop PfA community hubs. This project will be co-produced with PACC, to ensure those using services will be instrumental in their development.

The purpose of the community hubs will be to give young people and families the opportunity at the earliest point to navigate the complex range of support available. The intention is the hubs are led by third sector organisations that are embedded within young people's communities, promoting young people's opportunities in their local areas. The hubs will give young people and their families the opportunity to learn about the process of preparation for adult hood, the legal framework supporting them, universal targeted and specialist services available to them and promote peer support.

## **Meaningful Activity**

The majority of young people who receive support from the PfA team have (or have had) an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan). We are aware in Shropshire that the quality of EHCP's requires improvement, and the PfA team are committed to ensuring their contribution is meaningful and ensures young people social care need is thought about in terms of their future aspirations. We also acknowledge as young people move on from their EHCP, their need for structured goal planning does not end. We strive to support young people to develop bespoke support plans that use the team's knowledge of Shropshire to explore all options. The focus of these plans varies from person to person, but promoting independence, social activity, meaningful activity (which may include employment) and remaining healthy need to be consistent for all young people.

## **Community and Leisure**

We have been working with colleagues in Shropshire Council culture leisure and tourism department to improve opportunities for young people. We have been successful in training colleagues from venues such as theatres, libraries and museums. The training was delivered collaboratively between Shropshire joint training and third sector organisation ignition. The first element of the training developed the knowledge of colleagues in supporting people with special educational needs and disabilities, and the second element focused on implementing this knowledge to make buildings and services more appealing and accessible.

As an outcome of this training all Shropshire Council culture leisure and tourism venues are looking at SEND specific events and opportunities for young people in Shropshire.

We are also working together to bid for nationally available funding to develop an online portal where opportunities for young people to gain work experience, voluntary and paid employment could be made available. This would match opportunities within the local council with young people in Shropshire, promoting young people's ability to develop skills and contribute to their communities.

## **Healthy Lives**

In February 2022 PACC were commissioned to deliver a healthy lives programme for young people aged 14 to 25 years old with special educational needs. The project worked with 14 day opportunity providers to engage young people in activities that would have a positive impact on their future health. Using day service buildings also supported the preparing for adulthood objective, as young people had the opportunity to experience services they may choose to use as they transition into their adulthood. The project offered 33 different activities across the county with 56 young people taking advantage of the sessions. Through project evaluation, it was found that young people benefited in a range of areas including making new friends, try new activities, being more active and having a sense of achievement.

Discussions are now taking place as to how we can ensure young people continue to have access to activities that promote their health. We appreciate that young people having "healthy lives" is not simple to achieve. Unless young people are given the environment in which they can have experiences that promote being part of the community, understanding health in its widest sense and knowing what opportunities there are for them, we cannot expect healthy outcomes for young people with SEND.

## **Success in Preparing for Adulthood – a young people's stories**

P is a young person with Autism who came into the care of the local authority during his teenage years. He had experienced a wide range of traumatic experiences that led to him putting his own safety at risk. Initially, this young person required 2:1 staffing 24 hours a day to ensure he didn't put his own life at risk. Through working in a person-centred way with this young person, focusing on their aspirations for the future and using a model of positive risk-taking, P now receives 11 hours funded care support per week. They access mainstream education, live in their own home and engage in leisure activities of their choice. They no longer engage in activities that risk their health and well-being. Over the four years PFA team have been supporting this young person, the cost of their care has reduced from £5530 per week to £228.20 per week.

G is a young person who has successfully moved from education and living with their family into employment and their own house. G was supported by the PFA team, in partnership with the SEND team to transition from specialist school to college. During their time at college, they expressed an interest in supported living. We worked collaboratively with the college to develop independent living skills and explore relationships with peers. G was supported to access short-breaks, during which they had experience of sharing living space with other young people and gained an understanding of who they would like to share their home with. We worked closely with G and their family to match them with a group of 3 other young people and on finishing college, they moved into their new home. G

now has paid employment in their local area, attends a local day service and is a regular user of their local sport facilities. G enjoys inviting friends and family to their home for meals and film nights.

### **Focus of future development:**

- **Quality of life – community engagement, being active and healthy**  
We know young people with SEND have lower outcomes than their mainstream peers, especially in relation to health and employment. As social care, we know we have a pivotal part to play in improving young people's outcomes and are committed to this goal.
- **Link with EHCP's – social care contribution and onward learning**  
we are committed to improving our contribution to EHCP's from the earliest possible point. We are working to ensure that each young person supported by the PFA team at the point of leaving education, transitions out of education with a robust and meaningful plan that supports the ongoing learning and development.
- **Quality information and connecting people**  
We are committed to the development of PFA community hubs, working with colleagues across the sector to allow young people and families to successfully navigate their preparation for adult hood.
- **Employment**  
We wish to see more young people with SEND in employment in Shropshire. We have begun working with partner agencies, including day services and supported living providers, to ensure young people are given the experiences and opportunities to build skills that are transferable into employment. We are also making bids for external funding to support the development of an online portal that would link up work experience, voluntary work and paid employment opportunities within the council, with young people looking for opportunities in Shropshire. This will be an ambitious piece of work but we are committed to making opportunities available for young people to promote success in employment.

## **3. Recommendations**

That the People Overview Committee:

- Notes the work of the Preparing for Adulthood team in supporting young people
- Gives recommendations regarding the focus of future development for the PFA team – does cabinet find we are focused on the correct areas of development?

# **Report**



## 4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

The term 'preparation for adulthood' applies to all young people with an EHCP from age 14. However, the majority of young people with an EHCP will not require support from adult social care, as their needs will be met in a variety of other ways. This report focuses on young people who have, or are likely to have eligible needs under The Care Act once they reach the age of eighteen. All young people with a EHCP will have been receiving support from colleagues in Education. Some of these young people may also have been receiving support from other system partners.

A focus on early intervention with young people gives the best opportunity of successful transition into adulthood. Providing accurate information and support in a timely manner prevents escalation of needs, promotes independence and supports families to plan for the future. By identifying those in most need, we can target resources to support young people to remain supported in their transition to adulthood, contributing to their communities and achieving their potential.

## 5. Financial Implications

## 6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. Energy and fuel consumption – no effect
- 6.2. Renewable energy generation – no effect
- 6.3. Carbon offsetting or mitigation – no effect
- 6.4. Climate change adaptation – no effect

## 7. Background

- HM Government Care Act 2014
- Department for Health and Social Care Care and support statutory guidance
- Special Educational needs & Disability (SEND) Code of Practice Preparing for Adulthood

## 8. Additional Information

<b>PFA Team</b>	<b>PFA Lead – 34 hours PFA MH Senior– 1 x full-time post PFA Social Worker – 5 x full-time posts</b>
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	<b>PFA Social Care Practitioner – 2.8 full-time posts</b>
Number of Young people open to PFA team	201
Number of young people open to PFA team with an EHCP	82
Young people open to PFA team whose EHCP has ceased	83
Young people open to PFA team who live with family	135
Young people open to PFA team living in Shared Lives Support	4
Young people open to PFA team living in supported living	32
Young people open to PFA team living in residential in Shropshire (not linked to education)	4
Young people open to PFA team living in residential outside of Shropshire (not linked to education)	3
Young people open to PFA team living in residential linked to education	11

## 9. Conclusions

The PFA pathway is essential to assist young people and their families on what for some can be a challenging stage. Coproduction enables representatives of all parties to contribute and shape this. It is important conversations start at an early stage and enables young people to develop their aspirations and to be able to be excited about their opportunities.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

**Local Member:**

All Members

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1 Legal framework – transition from children’s to adult services**

**Care Act 2014**

Sections 58-66 of the Care Act 2014 state that a child, young carer or an adult caring for a child is likely to have needs when they, or the child they care for, turns 18, the local authority must assess them if it considers there is ‘significant benefit’ to the individual in doing so. This is regardless of whether the child or individual currently receives any services.

The Department for Health and Social Care’s Care and support statutory guidance states that:

“Transition assessments should take place at the right time for the young person or carer and at a point when the local authority can be reasonably confident about what the young person’s or carer’s needs for care or support will look like after the young person in question turns 18. There is no set age when young people reach this point; every young person and their family are different, and as such, transition assessments should take place when it is most appropriate for them.”

The guidance further states:

“Local authorities must carry out a transition assessment of anyone in the 3 groups when there is significant benefit to the young person or carer in doing so, and if they are likely to have needs for care or support after turning 18. The provisions in the Care Act relating to transition to adult care and support are not only for those who are already receiving children’s services, but for anyone who is likely to have needs for adult care and support after turning 18.”

**Children and Families Act 2014**

Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 sets out a range of duties towards young people preparing for adulthood. These include the provision of information, advice and support, working together to achieve outcomes and strategic joint commissioning through the Local Offer as set out in Chapter 8 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015. At the annual review of the EHC plan in Year 9, and at each subsequent review, local authorities must

include a focus on preparing for adulthood and transition planning must be incorporated in the EHC plan and set out clear outcomes to prepare young people for adulthood. Planning should include:

- Support to prepare for higher education and/or employment;
- Support to prepare for independent living – this should include ascertaining where the child or young person would like to live (it may be that they do not wish to move into independent living) and local housing options should be explained;
- Support in maintaining good health – including effective planning for transition of health services;
- Support in participating in society – including mobility and transport and developing and maintaining relationships and friendships.

Reviews should identify what support the child or young person requires to achieve the outcomes and aspirations specified in their EHC plan and to prepare them for adult life.

### **Care leavers**

Care leavers have a range of support available to them as set out in legislation such as Children Act 1989 and its associated statutory guidance such as *Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations, Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers statutory guidance*, Children Leaving Care Act 2000, Children Social Work Act 2017

Depending on the circumstances and the time young people spent in care, the law describes four different groups of care leaver:

- Eligible child
- Relevant child
- Former relevant care leaver
- Qualifying care leaver

The young person is an eligible child if:

- they are aged 16 or 17, and
- they are currently in care, and
- they have been in care for a period of 13 weeks (or episodes which add up to 13 weeks) since their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and at least one day whilst they were 16 or 17 years old.

They are a relevant child if:

- They are no longer in care, but they have been eligible, and
- They are 16 or 17 years old

They are a former relevant child if:

- They are aged 18 or above, and
- Immediately before they reached 18 they were an eligible or relevant care leaver, or
- At age 21, or before age 25, they either continue to be on an agreed course of education and/or training or wish to receive support to start a new course.

At age 21, or before age 25 they can also ask for advice and guidance from the Leaving Care Team, even if it is not connected with a course of education or training. They may be

going through a difficult time in their personal life or want some practical support with something

They are a qualifying care leaver if:

- They are aged at least 16 but under 21, and
  - They were looked after by the council prior to the making of a special guardianship order, or
  - If at any time after they reached the age of 16, they were looked after for a period of less than 13 weeks and have not returned home.
  - At age 16 or 17 they were an eligible child but were living with a parent for more than six months before you reached age 18 (unless they were there under a care order).
-