

# **Transitioning from Treehouse School**

**A guide for parents and carers**

## “Every new beginning starts with a good-bye”

Whilst we have taken great pride in having the opportunity of educating your young person, sadly the time comes for all our learners to move on from Treehouse School. We have put together this guide to help you explore the options available for your son or daughter after they leave Treehouse School.

We hope this information will help you understand the process we are going to follow as we transition your son or daughter into their next stage in life. We know this can be a very anxious time and we have a team of people here to support you every step of the way.

Warmest wishes,

Tracey Capstick

**Head of School**

**TreeHouse School**

**Ambitious about Autism**

## Summary of this guide

We start to think about your son or daughter's transition a year or more before they are due to leave school so there is plenty of time to explore all the available options. At the heart of transition planning is understanding the views and aspirations of the young person concerned.

Some young people wish to continue in education and training. It may be necessary for their education, health and care plans (EHC plan) to continue so they secure the right level of support. The options for young people who want to continue in education and training are:

- Attend College
- Supported internship (combining a work placement with study)
- Traineeship (an education and training programme with work experience)
- Apprenticeship (paid jobs that incorporate training)

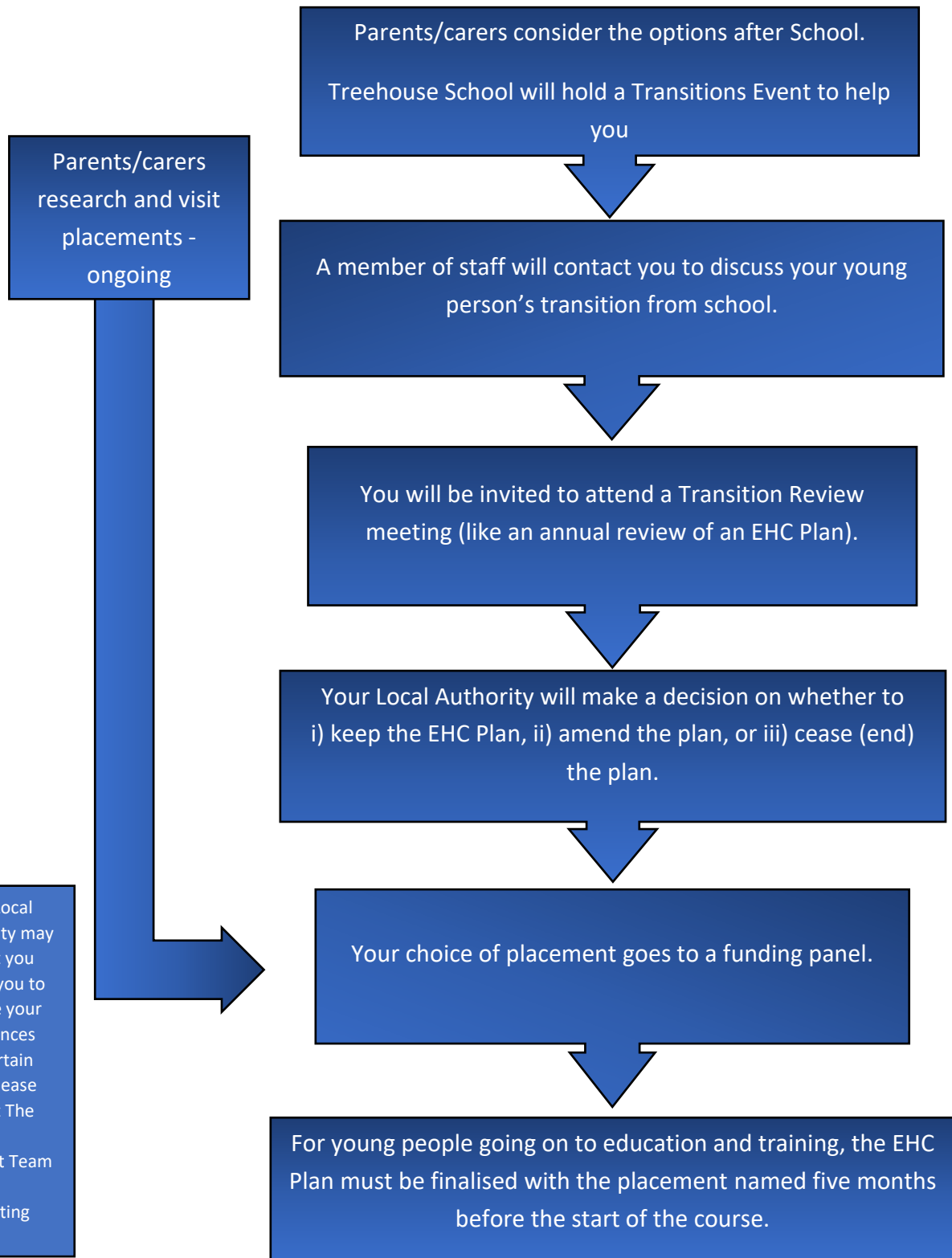
For other young people it may be the case that their time in education has come to an end. They may go on to access adult social care either in a day placement or residential setting.

Your son or daughter is always at the centre of decision making. Where they cannot make their own decision, we must all focus on what is in their best interests.

As your son or daughter transitions from Treehouse School, our Learner and Family Support Team will provide you with support every step of the way. They can help you look at the various options, set up taster days at new provisions and will make sure new staff understand how best to support your son or daughter. The School works as a team to ensure this next stage in your young person's life goes as smoothly as possible.

We ask that you start planning for this transition from school as early as possible to allow plenty of time for this valuable work to be done.

## The Transition Process



## Early planning is important

We start to think about your son or daughter's transition a year or more before they are due to leave school so there is plenty of time to explore all the available options. At the heart of transition planning is understanding the views and aspirations of the young person concerned. We put person-centred planning at the very heart of all our work in transitioning from School. We recognise that some young people do not have the mental capacity to make a big decision about what they want to do next. Where this is the case, we will work collectively to consider what is in that young person's best interests, and as parents/carers your views are central to this process.

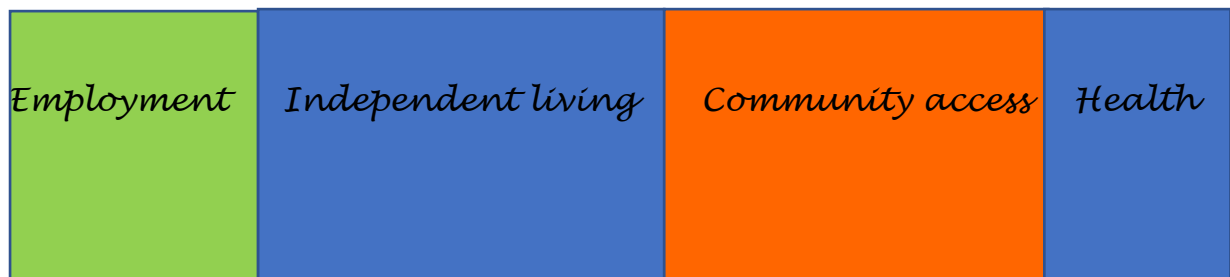
Our Learner and Family Support Team (LFS Team) here at Treehouse School play a key role in supporting your son or daughter with their transition. The team will contact you early in the process. They will discuss the options available, help you with your search and provide you with all the relevant advice you need. The team will support you access the provision you are seeking after School and will guide you through the application process and negotiations with your local authority. They will liaise closely with the professionals at School who work with your young person and will organise taster visits and settling in sessions. The LFS Team will make sure the new placement has all the information needed so new staff understand how best to support your son or daughter.

The transition process kicks off with a 'transition' review (like an annual review) of your young person's education, health and care plan (EHC plan). The LFS Team will be in touch with you to arrange the review meeting to which all the professionals working with your son or daughter are invited. This will include your local authority and social worker (if you have one) or someone from social services, and a representative of the relevant health body. Even if your local authority does not attend this meeting, the LFS Team will ensure the relevant people are aware of your plans. It is a good idea to come prepared to the transition review meeting. Ideally

you and your young person will already have ideas about what options to explore. You may even have firmed up your choices.

## Preparing for Adulthood

In the last few years we have been working with your young person to help prepare them for adulthood. There are four pillars of preparing for adulthood which are:



An important part of our 'Ambitious Approach' is centred around improving the quality of life of autistic young people while they are in education - and ensuring this quality of life continues into adulthood. To that end we have been supporting your young person to achieve these pillars of adulthood so that they can have the best quality of life possible. When we are supporting young people transition from School, we work towards achieving these four pillars, taking into account what your son or daughter enjoys doing, what support they need and what additional education or training they may require. We have also recently started exploring the long-term goals of **all** our learners and their families, so that we can target our curriculum towards reaching these goals. Again, we look at these pillars of adulthood to help frame each learner's goals.

## Thinking about the basics

### View, wishes and feelings

Your son or daughter is always at the centre of decision making – this is called person centred planning. Where they cannot make their own decision, we must

focus on what is in their best interests. The starting point, whether a young person has capacity or not, is to listen to what they want, what they enjoy doing, what they dislike, and what aspirations they have for the future. Consider what their strengths and interests are and take account of things they find more challenging. What support would they need to maintain or improve their quality of life bearing in mind the four pillars of adulthood above. For all our young people we need to capture their views, wishes and feelings. For some young people we will give careful consideration as to what communication tools they can use to most effectively enable their participation in the transition process.

### **What will happen to my son or daughter's education, health and care plan?**

Education, Health and Care plans (EHC plan) can remain in place until a young person reaches the age of 25. Whether it will continue until that time, depends on what your young person wishes to do after leaving Treehouse School. If they are going to continue in education or training, it is highly likely the plan will need to stay in place. An EHC plan is a legally binding document, written and maintained by your local authority. It is the authority who will need to agree to the plan being amended to name a new educational placement. Often the authority will need to see that the young person is going to continue to make progress and that they have the potential to achieve the outcomes in Section E of the EHC plan. It may be necessary to review the outcomes and set ones that are more challenging so as to enable a young person to stretch and progress further. The LFS Team can give you further advice about any evidence you might need to provide to the local authority if you are seeking a new education or training placement. An EHC plan can remain in place whether the education or training is full or part time. Training is broadly interpreted and can include courses in further education or other educational institutions, a supported internship, traineeship or apprenticeship. Where a young person is continuing in education and training the law requires that your local authority send you a final EHC plan at least four months before the course starts. This means the authority must get the plan to you by the end of March in the year that your son or daughter is transitioning.

There is no *automatic* right for an EHC plan to remain in place until a young person is 25; it entirely depends upon what they are planning to do. A local authority will cease (end) an EHC plan when a young person leaves education and training, or if a plan is no longer necessary, where for example they move into higher education or social care. Before deciding to end an EHC plan, the local authority must consult with you and consider whether the young person still has special educational needs and whether they need more time to achieve the education and training outcomes in their EHC plan.

If an EHC plan is amended or ceased and your son or daughter disagrees with this decision, they have a right to seek mediation and/or a right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) (the SEND Tribunal). You can bring an appeal on their behalf if they do not have the mental capacity to do so. Even if they do have capacity, you are able to support them and speak on their behalf if they wish. Where a local authority ceases an EHC plan, while the appeal is ongoing, your local authority must keep the provision in the plan in place.

## Options after Treehouse School

A good starting point is to look at your local authority's 'local offer' (google the name of your local authority and local offer). The webpages should provide a range of information on services and placements/provision for people with special educational needs and disabilities. The LFS Team are also on hand to give you the benefit of their experience and can help guide you in your research.

## Education

Colleges and other Further Education (FE) institutions provide education or training for those over compulsory school age. Specialist colleges may be run by charities or



can be independent. For most types of college the local authority will be required to name your choice (or your son or daughter's) which may include paying any fees unless the authority can show that it is unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs of the young person, or that the attendance of your young person would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources. If the local authority uses one of these reasons, it may offer an alternative college. A local authority can only name a college or institution that is appropriate. To be appropriate it will need to be able to meet all of your young person's special educational needs and provision. If the local authority takes the view that your young person has already met the outcomes in their EHC plan, they may refuse to fund any further time at college and may decide to cease the plan altogether. This means your son or daughter would not be able to go onto further study unless the local authority changes its mind or until you have the decision overturned at mediation or the SEND Tribunal.

To continue in education, you and your son or daughter will want to look for other suitable educational opportunities. We have provided some links below to help with your search. The LFS Team will also be able to help you. As part of your search, you will need to contact colleges to see whether they have a place available and find out whether they can accommodate your son or daughter's special educational and provision set out within their EHC plan.

### **Key questions to ask an education provider**

- Q. How does the college support the four pillars of preparing for adulthood?
- Q. How is the college timetable made up and how is it individualised for learners?
- Q. How do learners access provision such as speech and language therapy? Is this included on site and is it included in the college costs or is it a separate cost?
- Q. What levels of support are there and what expertise do staff have, especially around behaviour support, medication and health needs?
- Q. Do they offer qualifications, and will they be meaningful to your young person?

Q. How will the college course support the learner to have a good life in the future? How will the college support with any future moves into independent living and community access?

You can offer to send the prospective placement your son or daughter's latest EHC plan, professional assessments and annual review paperwork.

### Key actions

- ✓ Visit Further Education Colleges on their open days.
- ✓ Get and look through a copy of the prospectus and any inspection reports of your preferred settings.
- ✓ Find out what the process is of securing an offer of placement.
- ✓ Make sure you have copies of your son or daughter's latest EHC plan, professional reports and annual review reports. You can take these when you visit any colleges.
- ✓ If your local authority proposes an alternative setting, go and visit so you can compare your choice with theirs.
- ✓ Talk to the LFS Team so they know you are interested in a particular college/s.

## Supported Internships

Supported internships are a structured study programme based primarily at an employer. They are available to young people aged 16 to 24 who have an EHC plan, and who want to move to employment and need extra support to do so. They provide a stepping-stone to support young people achieve paid employment by providing them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. Supported internships last for a minimum of six months and are unpaid. They focus on supporting the young person move into employment at the end of the internship. To compliment learning in the workplace, young people also complete a personalised

study programme which includes the chance to study relevant qualifications, if appropriate, and Maths and English.

Young people on supported internships tend to need more support than a trainee or apprentice (see below) and will be offered workplace support from a job coach, as well as support for their personalised study programme. The job coach provides in-work support for the young person. The idea is that this support is reduced as the young person gains more experience and confidence. The supported internship will usually be organised through a post-16 or FE institution such as a college. The FE institution will have partnerships with local employers who are willing to take on supported interns. Once they have an employment placement, the young person will spend the majority of their time at the employer.

Any internship study programme typically includes employability skills, and where the young person has not achieved GCSEs at level 4, further study in Maths and English. Young people who have profound or complex learning difficulties can be excluded from this academic requirement where appropriate. The young person's EHC plan should name the FE institution in Section I (placement). Supported internships are funded by a combination of funds from the Education & Skills Funding Agency and the local authority. In addition, there is a Department for Work and Pensions [Access to Work Fund](#) which can cover the cost of job coaches, specialist equipment or the cost of travel where the young person cannot use public transport.

### **Key questions to ask about a supported internship**

Q. What are the employment skills my young person will be taught. Are there opportunities to try a number of different departments/rotations?

Q. If your young person has therapies such as speech and language therapy in the plan, how will these be provided? Who will provide them?

Q. How long is the supported internship?

Q. What help can you provide in finding employment after the internship has ended?  
Has the provider successfully found employment for previous interns?

Q. What academic programme can my young person study while on the internship.  
Where is this taught?

Q. Who is the educational provider partnering in the internship? Are there any other  
organisations involved?

Q. Ask about the cohort of other interns. How many have specialist educational  
needs? Do any of them have similar needs to your son or daughter? Does the  
provider have experience of young people with similar profiles to your young person?

### Key actions

- ✓ Arrange to meet/speak with the provider and the job coach.
- ✓ Find out about the application process.
- ✓ Make sure you have copies of your son or daughter's latest EHC plan, professional reports and annual review reports.
- ✓ If your local authority proposes an alternative internship, go and visit so you can compare your choice with theirs.
- ✓ Talk to the LFS Team so they know you are interested in a particular supported internship.

## Traineeships

A traineeship is an education and training programme with work experience that is designed to help young people aged 16 to 24 who do not yet have the appropriate skills or experience to secure an apprenticeship or employment. A traineeship can help them to become 'work ready' and may be a stepping-stone before seeing an apprenticeship. Traineeships are unpaid and last for a maximum of 6 months. They

are open to young people aged 16 to 24, including those with EHC plans. For a young person with an EHC plan, the training provider should be named in Section I (Placement). To help you find a traineeship you can visit the Governments [‘Find a Traineeship’](#) webpages. You can also get advice from the [National Careers Service](#).

Traineeships are for young people who have not yet achieved qualifications above GCSEs/Level 2. A young person does not need to have any qualifications to begin a traineeship, but if they have not already achieved a Level 4 or above in GCSE English and maths, they will need to work towards these or towards a functional skills qualification at Level 2 as part of their training. Traineeships are funded by the Education & Skills Funding Agency. As above, the Department for Work and Pensions [Access to Work](#) fund can cover the additional support a young person may need for a traineeship.

### **Key questions to ask about traineeship**

Q. How long is the traineeship? Can it be extended?

Q. What have other trainees done after they completed the traineeship?

Q. If your young person has therapies such as speech and language therapy in the plan, how will these be provided? Who will provide them?

Q. What academic programme can my young person study while on the traineeship?

Q. Ask about the cohort of other trainees. How many have specialist educational needs? Do any of them have similar needs to your son or daughter? Does the employer have experience of young people with similar profiles to your young person?

### **Key actions**

- ✓ Arrange to meet/speak with the provider/employer.
- ✓ Find out about the application process.
- ✓ Make sure you have copies of your son or daughter’s latest EHC plan,

- ✓ Talk to the LFS Team so they know you are interested in a particular trainee scheme.

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are paid jobs that incorporate training, leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Apprentices are paid as they learn and gain practical skills in the workplace. Young people can apply either for a particular role (through the government website) or contact a training provider to find out what roles they offer locally. You should discuss with any training provider the needs of your young person in order to identify potentially appropriate placements together. You can find apprenticeships on the Government's ['Find an Apprenticeship'](#) webpages.

Young people with EHC plans can retain their plan when completing apprenticeships provided it is a Level 3 apprenticeship or below. **A Level 4 apprenticeship is classed as Higher Education (HE) and under the law an EHC plan does not cover students in HE.**

A training provider should look at the EHC plan to properly understand your son or daughter's needs. The EHC plan must specify the support they will need on the apprenticeship – this might be additional support with particular tasks, particular equipment, a mentoring or buddy system, or a requirement for instructions to be given in a particular way. Where a young person has an EHC plan, the training provider should be named in Section I (Placement).

### Key questions to ask about an apprenticeship

- Q. How long is the apprenticeship? Can it be extended?
- Q. What have other apprentices done after they completed their training?
- Q. Is there a course of study that accompanies the apprenticeship, if so where is this delivered?

Q. Has the employer had any experience of training other apprentices with special educational needs?

### Key actions

- ✓ Arrange to meet/speak with the employer.
- ✓ Find out about the application process.
- ✓ Make sure you have copies of your son or daughter's latest EHC plan.
- ✓ Talk to the LFS Team so they know you are interested in a particular apprenticeship.

## Social care

Occasionally it may be the case that our learners at Treehouse may have completed their time in education and are ready to transition to adult social care. This is commonly delivered by attending a social care day placement. There are a wide variety of placements and they cater for different disabilities and age ranges. A good starting point, when looking for a suitable provision is by searching through your local offer and contacting your social worker/social services. It is important to visit any potential provider to see if this would be suitable for your son or daughter.

It may also be the case that some of our learners transition into residential care. To access a placement, your social services department will need to be on-board as they are likely to pick up the costs. There may be a number of reasons why a residential placement is now appropriate for your son or daughter and you will need to explain these to social services. The LFS Team will be happy to talk to you about the process. They can help you in your search for an appropriate placement. Here are some things you might want to think about when contemplating a social care placement whether a day service, respite care or residential placement:

### Approach/ethos

What is the aim of this provision? What expertise does it have with young people with autism? How does it view the challenges that autism can bring? What does a 'person-centred' approach mean to them? How do they work with other professionals in health and social care e.g. Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists? Will they facilitate referrals to these services?

### **Daily set-up**

What days/hours is it open? How many days a week can the young person's funding buy? What happens at lunch times and at the start and end of the day? Can they accommodate the particular needs of your son or daughter at these times? How are the rooms/classes/activities organised? Is there a quiet space or sensory room? Ask for an overview of the other service users. Do any have similar needs and disabilities as your son or daughter?

### **Staffing expertise and training**

What training do staff have around autism, behaviour support, mediation and personal care? What levels of staffing can be provided e.g. 1:1/2:1 or is it group support? Can they change staffing levels to 2:1 if needed? How consistent is the staff team? Is there a regular turnover of staff? Is there a key worker system in place? Who supervises staff and who is the safeguarding lead?

### **Activities and opportunities**

What activities are currently offered or what would they offer to meet an individual's preferences (you should describe what your son or daughter likes doing). What community activities are on offer and how often do they take place? Consider if the activities will support your son or daughter to continue developing, support inclusion into the community, make friends and build positive relationships, and develop independent living skills.

### **Involving the young person and getting feedback**



How will they make sure your son or daughter's choices are considered through the day? How will you get feedback on what is happening? How often do reviews take place and how are they organised? Who will be your regular contact and how often are they available?

### Key actions

- ✓ Find out if your son or daughter has a named social worker and what team they are based in e.g. children's, adults or transition social care teams.
- ✓ If your young person has not had an adult care assessment, then request an assessment to be carried out by social services.
- ✓ If your young person had a child in need plan and has not been transitioned into adult social care, then request that they be transitioned into adult social care. There are specialist social workers who take responsibility for the transitioning process.
- ✓ Inform social care that your son or daughter will need a long transition from school into social care, and this must be planned with all the services, including school.

## How to contact our Learner and Family Support Team

Jo Salsbury, Team Manager

[jsalsbury@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:jsalsbury@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk) 07753 510108

Lois White, Tree House Transitions Officer

[lwhite@treehouseschool.org.uk](mailto:lwhite@treehouseschool.org.uk) 020 8815 5146



## More information

Preparing for Adulthood is a government-funded organisation which has a lot of information about options for young people with SEND:

<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/>

John Catt's 'Which school for special needs' is a directory of independent special schools - [www.specialneedsguide.co.uk](http://www.specialneedsguide.co.uk)

National Association of Specialist Education Colleges online directory  
[www.natspec.org.uk](http://www.natspec.org.uk)

Search by local authority on the list of Section 41 special schools and colleges maintained by the Department for Education

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-special-schools-and-colleges](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-special-schools-and-colleges)

For information on supported internships can be found at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/620920/Supported\\_Internship\\_Guidance\\_updated\\_with\\_EFA\\_funding\\_advice\\_May\\_2017\\_2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/620920/Supported_Internship_Guidance_updated_with_EFA_funding_advice_May_2017_2.pdf)

For information on the Access to Work Funds

<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

For information on Apprenticeships

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch/>

For information on Traineeships

<https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

## If you need further advice on EHC plans

IPSEA (Independent Provider of Special Educational Advice) provides free legally based advice. You can book an appointment online via [www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)

SOS!SEN – an independent charity providing advice nationwide on special educational needs and disabilities. [www.sossen.org.uk](http://www.sossen.org.uk)

All local areas have a free Independent and Advice Support Service (SENDIAS). To find your local service visit [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

## Where to get further help

Contact (formerly Contact a Family) provides advice to families of disabled children and young people [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk)

Disability Law Service provides advice and support on welfare benefits, community care and employment <https://dls.org.uk/free-advice/>

Council for Disabled Children provides information on health, education and social care for disabled children and young people [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

Carers UK [www.carersuk.org.uk](http://www.carersuk.org.uk) provides advice and support for carers

Advice on finding work and supported internships  
<http://www.autism.org.uk/products/core-nas-publications/finding-work-digital-workbook.aspx>

Advice helpline and employment services <https://www.scope.org.uk/services/>

National Careers Service <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/home>

Information on personal budgets <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/personal-budgetsthe-right-social-care-support>

For mental health issues [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

For housing support, Shelter – [www.england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_help](http://www.england.shelter.org.uk/get_help)

### Online forums

National Autistic Society <https://community.autism.org.uk/?Redirected=true>

Talk about Autism is offered by Ambitious About Autism and is the UK's largest online autism community <https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/talk-about-autism>