Ambitious about Autism

Employability within annual reviews (EHC plans)

Resource part of the Careers Education Framework Ambitious about Autism

Purpose of this document

The following document supports educational professionals to ensure that 'employability' and a young person's careers education experience is included within annual review meetings and all educational, health and care planning.

This resource is a part of the Ambitious about Autism Careers Education Framework, an online guide for careers leaders on how to create effective careers education programmes for autistic young people. It pertains to the importance of stakeholder engagement.

The importance of careers education as part of 'preparing for adulthood' (PFA)

What is PFA?

The **Code of Practice** says that: 'Being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life transforming for children and young people with SEND. This support needs to start early and should centre on the child or young person's own aspirations, interests and needs. All professionals working with them should share high aspirations and have a good understanding of what support is effective in enabling children and young people to achieve their ambitions.'

Why is it important?

Planning for the future, experiencing life changes and gaining skills and knowledge for independence are all important in any young person's life.

Preparing for adulthood means preparing for[1]:

Further or higher education and/ or (supported) employment: This includes exploring different employment options, such as support for becoming self-employed and help from supported employment agencies. Positive employment will vary with different cohorts of autistic young people. This can range from work experience and volunteering to a paid full-time job.

Independent living: This means young people having choice, control and freedom over their lives and the support they have, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living.

Participating in society: including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in, and contributing to, the local community.

Being as healthy as possible in adult life.

Careers education: essential to preparation for adulthood.

A robust careers education programme ensures that autistic young people can identify their aspirations and develop skills that will support them in moving to adulthood. Autistic young people can begin to self-advocate, and this is essential when it comes to preparing for annual review meetings and any Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

[1] Summarised by **Year-9-Annual-Review- Guide.pdf (ndti.org.uk)**

What is an EHC plan?

An EHC plan is a legally binding document, written by a local authority. As the name suggests, it is a plan that sets out the needs and support for a child or young person with special educational needs/ disability. There is currently no set format for an EHC plan, but it must include the following sections.

Section A

The views, interests and aspirations of the child or young person and their parents

Section B

A description of the child or young person's special educational needs (SEN)

Section C

Health care needs that relate to their SEN

Section D

Social care needs that relate to their SEN

Section E

The outcomes sought because of the provision (see below) being delivered for the child or young person

Section F

The special educational provision required to meet their SEN

Section G

Any health care provision reasonably required by the learning difficulties or disabilities that result in the child or young person having SEN

Section H

Any social care provision required from social services under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 or Care Act reasonably required by the learning difficulties or disabilities that result in the child or young person having SEN

Section I

The name of the school or other institution to be attended by the child or young person, and the type of that institution (or just the type, if no specific institution is named)

Section J

Details of any direct payment made

Section K

Copies of all the advice and information obtained to inform the EHC needs assessment. (Documents pertaining to careers advice or education such as vocational profiles can be shared separately.)

Year 9 annual reviews

Purpose of an annual review

The local authority that maintains the EHC plan is legally required to review it annually. This is to find out about the progress the young person has made towards the outcomes in the EHC plan, update any outcomes, and consider any other amendments required, for example, if there has been any change in a young person's needs or provision. After the review meeting, the local authority must decide within four weeks whether they intend to amend the plan, end it or keep it as it is. This enables the plan to be kept relevant and up-to-date.

Involving the young person in their annual review

To facilitate planning for a young person's adulthood, schools, colleges and authorities should ensure each young person is supported to fully participate in this planning. This means helping a young person prepare for the review of their EHC plan so that any proposed changes and updates reflect their views, wishes and feelings, and to support their participation in the review meeting itself.

How to write a good' preparing for adulthood' outcome[2]

Planning and outcomes:

- There must be a focus on preparing for adulthood.
- The discussions must centre on the young person.
- The young person's aspirations, and what they want to achieve, must be explored.
- The revised EHC plan must include outcomes that are ambitious and stretching, and which will prepare the young person for adulthood.
- Outcomes should be ambitious and show how they will enable young people to make progress towards their aspirations.
- Young people should have the support they need to fully participate in this planning and decision-making.

The Year 9 review should also identify:

- the support the young person needs to achieve their aspirations
- what will need to be in their study programme from age 16 so that they can prepare for adult life
- how the young person wants their support to be delivered and the support they need to make more decisions for themselves.

[2] The following information is identified in the NDTI **Year-9-Annual-Review-Guide.pdf (ndti.org.uk)**

Aspiration	Outcome(s)	Steps
I want to get a paid job when I leave education.	• By December 2024, I will have a vocational profile that clearly sets out what I'm interested in and good at, what type of employers need my abilities and what support I need to get a paid job, when I leave education. • By July 2025, I will have had four meaningful work experiences in the community, based on my vocational aspirations so that I understand different types of job roles.	• Identify who will support the development of a vocational profile (school/college, job coach, careers adviser). • Identify support for work experience. • Set up work experience. • Do work experience. • Review Education, Health and Care targets (and provision). • She/he will work with the teacher, job coach, careers adviser for one hour a week to complete a vocational profile using photographs, symbols and video to communicate motivations, interests, skills and support needs (based on strategies suggested by speech and language therapist). • She/he will engage for an hour a week (in chunks of time that are manageable) to work on vocational profile (strategies advised by educational psychologist, speech and language therapist and occupational therapist). • She/he will visit various workplaces out of school/college time and be supported to think about what it would be like to work in such an environment (e.g. shops, cafés, leisure centre, library), supported by a personal assistant, paid for through personal budget and supported by social worker.

Additional questions to help prompt 'employability-focused' discussion during the annual review:

This is when your collaborative approach to careers education is most important. A careers leader or advisor can work with the SENCO or appropriate member of staff to ascertain the following.

	Response	Next steps
Does the young person want to work?		
Is there a current vocational profile and where is it kept?		
What can be done to develop these prospects further?		
What support is in place to make sure that paid work is possible?		
What is the local arrangement for follow on support once paid work is achieved?		
Who needs to be involved in keeping the plans on track?		
Any issues need an urgent referral/ action?		

Importance of careers advice

A one-to-one session with a careers advisor is an integral part of all good career education programmes. It is important that all conversations with young people are recorded and linked. Always get the young person's permission to share this information. Within the Ambitious about Autism Careers Education Framework, you will find two templates that careers advisors can use during sessions with autistic young people. These are best suited for cohort 2: autistic young people accessing mainstream provision. For Cohort 1, autistic young people accessing specialised provision,

> **Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school or college staff) or external.**

a Vocational Profile can be completed. This could happen over a period of information, advice and guidance sessions, and can be brought to the annual review by the young person themselves and added as an appendix.

What happens after an annual review?

Local authority duties to cease, maintain or amend a plan.

Within four weeks of an annual review meeting taking place, the local authority has a legal duty to let the parent/young person and the educational setting know what decision it has reached. It can make one of only three decisions:

- cease the plan
- maintain the plan (i.e. not make any changes to it)
- amend the plan.

Where the lcal authority is planning to amend the EHC plan, it must notify the parent/young person of this decision and what the proposed amendments are, within four weeks of the annual review meeting. The final EHC plan must be issued as soon as practicable and within eight weeks of notifying the parent/young person of the proposed amendments

What to do if local authority does not amend – what outcomes do you work to?

It is not unusual for a local authority to fail to amend or update an EHC plan following an annual review meeting. This is frustrating for parents/carers, young people and their educational settings. Where a setting has updated the outcomes in an EHC plan, but these are not amended in an EHC plan, our advice is to work towards these amended outcomes so as not to hold the young person back from progressing in their education.

If the local authority has not decided after the annual review meeting within four weeks, you can complain to them, as they have failed in their statutory duty. You could also get legal advice about whether to seek a judicial review. If the local authority has made a decision you are unhappy with following the annual review meeting, they should have advised you of your right to seek mediation or appeal to the first tier tribunal (special educational needs and disability).

Annual reviews in subsequent years

Becoming more specific as a young person's aspirations are more focused

As a young person matures and moves closer to adulthood, their 'preparing for adulthood' outcomes may become more targeted and specific to help them reach their goals. For example, a curriculum may be differentiated specifically to support the development of skills a young person needs to achieve their outcomes and aspirations. An example of this is where a young person is seeking to move on to a supported internship in hospitality and needs the skills to be able to record information electronically, manage money or answer questions confidently. These skills can be embedded into a curriculum and may form outcomes in the EHC plan.

A good careers education programme should always be person-centered but should also acknowledge that it is advisable for a young person to have as many opportunities as possible, e.g. meeting new employers and understanding a variety of job sectors. A young person's aspirations will become more focused, and thus at each annual review an update should always be given by the person in charge of the career education programme at the school/college.

On next page you will find outcome prompts that may help you to include preparing for adulthood outcomes within an EHC plan. All elements should be a part of an effective careers programme.

	Secondary Y7-Y11 | Key stages 3 & 4 | 11–16-year-olds	Post-16 In schools and post-16 providers | 16–19-year-olds	Post-19 19–25-year-olds
Cohort 1 **Autistic young people accessing specialised provision**	• tailored curriculum – careers and employability (e.g. introduce autistic role models, develop transferable employability skills) • beginning a Vocational Profile • work experience opportunities in the educational setting • work tasters and workplace encounters.	• creating external work experience opportunities based on Vocational Profile • beginning transition conversation • understanding pathways, e.g. supported internships/vocational qualifications.	• understanding local support services, e.g. job centres.
Cohort 2 **Autistic young people accessing mainstream provision**	• tailored curriculum – careers and employability (e.g. introduce autistic role models, develop transferable employability skills) • meaningful encounters with employers, in and out of the workplace • one-to-one information, advice and guidance (careers advice) • taking part in enterprise activities • taking part in work experience (in the community).	• beginning a part-time job (weekends) • understanding pathways, e.g. higher education/apprenticeships • understanding additional support: Disabled Students' Allowance/assistive technology.	• understanding local support services, e.g. job centres.
Cohort 1 **+** **Cohort 2**	• preparation for transition to new settings.	• understanding the local ffer and additional local authority support services • CV writing • mock interviews.	• completing outcomes in EHC plan • understanding benefits • understanding additional employment support, e.g. access to work.

You will find further resources on how to enhance your careers education in our online framework, along with visual examples of our pupil learner journeys from our educational settings, detailing all the opportunities that autistic young people will access at Ambitious about Autism.

Transitions reviews

What is a transition review?

At certain stages throughout their time in education, children and young people will transition into different key stages or educational settings. These periods are known as 'transfer reviews', e.g. when a young person moves from primary to secondary education. Where a young person is in this transfer stage, the preceding annual review is usually known as a transition review. These must be held well enough in advance of the time of the transition to enable the following:

- To understand the views, wishes and aspirations of the young person (and their parents/carers, where relevant).
- To provide an opportunity for a new placement to be found, where this is relevant. This will likely require research, visits, taster days and even interviews or assessments.
- Once an onward destination has been found, your local authority will need to 'consult' with that placement. This is to confirm that the proposed placement can meet the young person's special educational needs.
- The funding for the onward placement will need to be agreed by your local authority and the placement finalised. For young people in compulsory education, this must be completed by 15 February in the year the young person is transitioning. For learners moving to post-16 options, this must be by the end of March in the transfer year. If your local authority misses this deadline, it can cause a delay in your young person moving on to a new setting. Where this occurs, it is important to act by complaining to your local authority and/or seeking legal advice.

Careers education and the options on transition

Through effective careers advice and guidance sessions, an autistic young person will be supported to identify their 'next steps destination', as explored above. For further information, our Pathways posters, part of the Ambitious about Autism Careers Education Framework, can help guide this process, with information on available next steps (employability focused) for autistic young people.

Local authority duties

Local authorities have a statutory duty to create a 'local offer' website, which should contain accessible and up-to-date information about your local provision.

Additional related documents:

1. SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
2. Quick guides | (IPSEA) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice
3. Preparing for Adulthood: All Tools and Resources - NDTi

This document has been created by the Ambitious about Autism Employability team and our Learner and Family Services team. If you are working with families that would like additional support, they may benefit from joining our **Talk about Autism platform** and communicate with other parents/carers of autistic young people.

We are Ambitious about Autism

Ambitious about Autism is the national charity standing with autistic children and young people.

We believe every autistic child and young person has the right to be themselves and realise their ambitions.

We started as one school and have become a movement for change. We champion rights, campaign for change and create opportunities.

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