

TRANSITIONS AND PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

Plymouth Children's Services



I. INTRODUCTION

'[A Bright Future 2021 – 2026](#)' outlines how local partners planned to support the best outcomes for all children. The vision focused upon three areas, to stay happy and healthy, to be safe and to aspire and achieve. This project is developed within this vision and takes on a wider system responsibility for the development work needed in Children's, Adults and Health services to enable an effective joined up system.

The delivery of the Transitions: Preparation for Adulthood project is a fundamental project in the One Children's Service Programme, with the intention to help children and families at the earliest sign of need, and to provide support, ranging from advice through to specialist intervention. This commitment has been formalised into one of the 10 priorities outlined in the One Children's Service 3-Year Plan: 'Preparing all children and young people well for adulthood and ambitious employment.' It aims to, in collaboration with all key city partners, build on the existing Transitions offer to develop a network of services, processes and interactions that are able to understand, predict the need and respond together to help children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity.

CURRENT SERVICE OFFER

Universal Offer

There is a preparing for adulthood section of the SEND local offer on the Plymouth Online Directory: [Preparing for adulthood - Plymouth Online Directory](#) whilst it contains some useful information, it is focused on families of children with SEND and does not overtly address transitions and preparation for adulthood.

An integrated early help approach in Plymouth is provided through the universal and community network of support, using the Early Help Assessment Tool and a Team around the Family approach. To date this has been offered in many but not all services across the city to support families and children, and again, does not have a specific focus on transitions.

Plymouth has commissioned ten emerging Family Hubs, partly funded through the Start for Life and Family Hubs Grant, six are now open and a further four are on schedule for 2024. The family hubs are offering a range of support through universal offer to extra/early help and safeguarding and SEND support for families. [Family Hubs | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#) They have created a growing network of agencies who are building together an integrated offer locally for families.

Targeted Offer

In Plymouth we have developed a response to the need of disabled children and those in the care of the Local Authority that ensures a number of services are commissioned from the 'adult service market' to support young people from the age of 16 onwards (e.g. improving access Psychological Therapies, accommodation, adult social care transition worker) and some services that for children and young people can reach up into early adulthood (e.g. Children's Disability Team Transition Social Worker, CAMHS children in care team, 0-25 EHCP officers)

Providers

A diverse array of organisations currently supports Transitions in Plymouth, ensuring that children and families receive comprehensive support tailored to their needs. Key providers include:

- **Plymouth City Council:** Plymouth city Council have many staff and departments working on different areas of Early help. Social Service are often those who triages cases and coordinate with various partners to ensure children and families receive appropriate support.
- **Family Hubs:** Managed by Barnardo's, Action for Children, and Lark, these hubs serve as primary points of access for universal early help services. They receive requests for support from nurseries, schools, colleges, and other agencies across the city, as well as from families who walk in seeking help.
- **Health Services:** Partners include Livewell Southwest, Public Health and NHS Plymouth, providing health-related support.
- **Schools and Colleges**
- **Community Organisations:** Plymouth Information and Advice Service (PIAS) Safe Families, MIND, Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service (PDAS), Plymouth Safeguarding Partnership, Hamoaze House, Harbour, The Children's Society, Youth Services, Argyle Community Trust, YMCA, Improving Lives Plymouth, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), and Plymouth Community Homes to name a few who work with families to address challenges and prevent escalation.

CURRENT SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND FEEDBACK

Feedback from the information gathering stage of the project indicated that while there were areas of good work taking place, there is insufficient join up between services, meaning that there is too much opportunity for families to fall into gaps, wait too long or not have needs identified and met swiftly enough.

Currently when a children's services client is approaching their 18th birthday (age varies between 16-18) a referral is made to Livewell/ASC to assess their ongoing needs in adulthood. There are 2 "arms" to the referral process:

- Safeguarding – Adult social care intake team

The majority of these referrals will be from permanency and include Children in Care and Care Leavers. To meet the ASC threshold there will also be some additional needs.

- Care and Support – Livewell (part of the ASC intake team commissioned by ASC). These referrals are usually via CDT and SEND and Livewell assess the current care plans inc. living arrangement and will recommend whether to continue with the current care plan or what changes will be made when the child turns 18.

There are various pathways that transitions can take and these are as follows:

- Employment
- Independent Living
- Community Inclusion
- Health

A young person transitioning may require assistance with one or a number of the above pathways. A decision is made via all the agencies involved who will be the lead worker on a case-by-case basis and referrals are not always made in a timely manner and can be very last minute which can make the transition rushed, chaotic and not ideal for the young person.

The Commissioned services for these pathways are:

Theme	Commissioned services for children	Commissioned services for adults
Employment	CSW	Supported employment for adults (PLUSS)
Independent living	Placements including fostering, residential, 16+ supported accommodation and supported lodgings Merrivale training flats Short breaks	Supported living Sheltered and extra care (usually for over 50's) Shared Lives Housing routes
Community inclusion	Family Hubs Young carers services Parent Carer voice	Wellbeing Hubs Befriending Day opportunities Non- dom floating support Adult carers services
Health	Camhs Health funded dom care	Adult mental health services

Recently, Children's Services have formed a Monthly Transitions Meeting which is a multi-agency meeting including Children's Services (CSW/CDT/Permanency), Livewell, Health, Adult Services, NHS). The intention of the meeting is to have oversight of children aged 15 ³/₄ who have an agreement to put a referral into ASC. These are added to a spreadsheet and includes relevant information and progress. Currently the emphasis is on children fast approaching their 18th birthday.

As corporate parents to our Children in Care we have set up the Corporate Parenting Managers Operational Group which is another multi-agency group which looks at strategic planning and support and our corporate parenting responsibilities which includes transitions. This multi-agency meeting feeds into the Operational Managers Board which is attended by PCC managers and Cllrs.

Plymouth Parent/Carer Voice

Bullet point feedback from this forum was as follows:

- Transitions between CAMHS and Adult Mental Health is not good as young people may not have a consultant, and this can affect ongoing support.
- Autistic young people may not meet Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) criteria, and this can sometimes be decided 6-8 weeks prior to 18th Birthday which means services can just stop.
- Respite care for parents and carers is limited and cannot be used for prolonged holiday care.
- The success of transitions is dependent on the social worker – some are very good some not so.
- Not all social workers live in Plymouth, and this can create a barrier to forming a bond with a young person as appointments are rigid and the worker is not accessible.
- Transition planning is quite often left to the last minute and needs to happen earlier.
- Agencies work in a siloed way.
- The innovation fund which is used for young people to attend activities finishes at 18 and there is no appropriate provision in Adult Services for young people. This can make the young person feel isolated and reduces their interaction with peers.

PCCV runs "Preparing for Adulthood Conferences" for young people aged 14-25 and there have been 2 to date. These are multi-agency and are attended by various organisations to engage with and disseminate information to young people. This can include On Course South West, ASC, Community Connections, Plymouth University etc.

ACTIONS AND PROGRESS

Through the course of the summer 2024 we ran a series of workshops with partners to share the findings of the initial research and to gain support for a multi-agency approach to improving transitions for children and young people across Plymouth, regardless of whether they have a SEND, health, or social care need, or no need at all.

This has led to the creation of a multi-agency Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood Board, co-chaired by senior leaders from Children's and Adults Services, with clear terms of reference and an associated action plan. The Board meets monthly to monitor the progress of the creation and delivery of the Transitions Action Plan. The Board was launched in September 2024.

VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Our vision, principles and project scope have been created in multi-agency collaboration and with input from children and young people.

Our vision is that all children and young people in Plymouth will have their voices heard and have the right support and the ambitious opportunities for their futures.

We will achieve this by being:

Collaborative: Working across organisations and with children and young people to build trust and develop the required pathways and information to make transitions consistent and equitable.

Empowering: Giving staff, young people and families the information, advice and opportunities to enable effective pathways to be developed for all Plymouth's children and young people

Ambitious: Removing barriers and obstacles and encouraging all children and young people to aspire and reach as far as they can for their own futures.

Honest: Being clear about what support can and can't be offered and sharing information with all parties openly, transparently and with sensitivity.

SCOPE

The scope of the project incorporates six priorities:

1. Preparation for Adulthood for Children and Young People with SEND
2. Transitions into, through and beyond school for Children and Young People
3. Transitions from Children's to Adult's Social Care Provision
4. Transitions from Children's to Adult Health Provision
5. Transitions from Young Carers to Adult Carers
6. Transitions Universal Advice and Guidance

Each strand has a multi-agency delivery group with a lead officer from across the partnership.

Progress Of Each Strand

Preparation for Adulthood for Children and Young People with SEND

- The data cleanse for the academic year 2024/2025 is complete with the Children's Social Work Group. Regular updates are embedded into practice. With accurate data we can accurately report EET, SEET and NEET status of young people.

- There has been a continued shift in EHCP timeliness and EHCP reviews. There are now 100% decisions made within 7 days of the 6-week decision mark, and 88% on time within 6 weeks. Team output of final plans has increased 72% in October.
- The needs and voice of children and young people is understood and embedded into the EHCP. Their voice reflects improvement in the way in which they are supported through the pathway to adulthood.
- The decision-making panel for post 16 has been re shaped to ensure that clear communication and processes are in place across SEND and commissioning.
- EHCPs embed a consistently good standard of preparation for transition at all phases.
- 57 Supported Internships November 2024, increasing to 75 Supported Internships by March 2025.
- Employment, Education and Training status for our SEND young people is 90.4% (November 2024) up from 72% (January 2023).

Transitions into, through and beyond school for Children and Young People

- An action plan has been developed following sessions between the cross-sector membership of the group with specific actions being followed up with appropriate colleagues and monthly oversight by the group lead. Action areas include:
- Deferred/delayed entry into school from Early Years provision - A task and finish group has been established. This includes looking into the reasons for the increase and consideration of the potential impact. Currently undertaking a survey with settings and parents/carers with a questionnaire developed for use in the New Year. Responses will be evaluated in line with research findings leading to the development of co-produced guidance for settings, parents/carers.
- Placed Based Work - One of the strands is working on transitions at all stages of a child's educational journey. This will consider the most impactful elements of transition including enhanced transitions for children with SEND. Following a launch at a headteacher conference, a Placed Based working group session took place on 9.12.24. The first draft of action plans developed, building on the summary feedback from the strand consultation groups is currently underway. Through consistency of approach, with identified best practice, young people will have plans that enable a smooth, positive transition into a new setting.
- The Child in Need framework – Being relaunched in the spring, leading to improved care plans developed through a collaborative approach around care planning for these children. So that all relevant professionals are aware of the support for children open to social care leading.
- Updated accessibility of information support available - CDC (Child Development Centre) page within the trust has been updated, therapies teams (physiotherapy and occupational therapy) along with other CDC services now have individual dedicated generic emails where referrals, and queries can be sought. Training sessions with SENCOs have been delivered which include service information.

Transitions from Children's to Adult's Social Care Provision

- Transitions Protocol from Children's Services to Adult Social Care to be finalised and launched (31/01/2025). This will mean earlier assessment of need and integration of this within pathway planning.
- Service Managers for Children's Social Care (CSC) to ensure that all children in care aged 14 upwards where it is considered likely that an Adult Social Care (ASC) referral will be needed have been added to the Tracker (By 17/01/2025) . Adult Services will be able to forecast future capacity requirements.
- Service Managers and Heads of Service to undertake dip samples of social work supervision for young people aged 14+ with additional needs to ensure that the early alert/referral process

is being discussed and actioned in supervision (28/02/2025) . Young people will experience earlier assessment and smoother planning.

- Transitions Pathway on a Page document have been drafted and meetings have taken place with the VOICE group to gain young people's views in respect of most pathways (Social Worker to Personal Assistant, Housing, CAMHS to AMHS) but not yet for CSC to ASC as this has not been completed. CSC to ASC Transitions Pathway on a Page to be developed with young people after Transitions Protocol is finalised (14/02/2025). Staff and young people will be clear on the pathway, timeframes, and responsibilities.
- There will be earlier pathway planning for children in care transitioning to adult social care.

Transitions from Children's to Adult Health Provision

- An action plan has been developed following three co-design sessions between the Local Authority, Livewell Southwest and University Hospitals Plymouth. Leadership arrangements and a monthly oversight group are in place to oversee the delivery of the plan.
- 3 actions have been completed relating to LSW, CAMHS and AMHS relating to successful recruitment of transition support workers, development of a transitions leaflet and reviewing the transitions policy between CAMHS and AMHS. 14 further actions have been identified with planned completion dates pre-April 2025. This will lead to improved patient related information and improved capacity to support transitions.
- Patient and Carer engagement is planned over the next quarter to identify further areas for focus once the initial actions have been implemented and to gauge the impact and benefit created from the initial actions.

Transitions from Young Carers to Adult Carers

- Young Carers Assessment & Transition Assessment - Follow up workshop with Time4U partners to develop the Young Carers (end of Jan) which will develop a workplan. Assessment and Transition templates and guidance as part of the assessment and transition pathway to be shared including young carers feedback
- Education - School's completing the Spring School Census to identify young carers through the young carers' indicators. Education have given guidance to schools on completing the census which opens on 16th January and closes on 12th February. Awareness raising training and young carers assessment training will be offered to schools and other professionals. Schools' young carers network meeting taking place in Spring Term led by The Children's Society. Young Carers Education Support Team has ceased but remaining staff member is being supported by The Children's Society who have developed a new capacity building support offer for schools.
- Voice of Young Carers - The 10 wishes audit completed by Time4U Partners, Housing and UHP which will help to inform our workplan going forward.
- Online Offer - Review of the POD Young Carers Support Hub pages to update with new support offers.
- Peer Review Visit - Peer Review taking place with a planned visit to the young carers group on 21st January 2025 and a carer specific session for the carer's provider and commissioners.
- Carers Strategy - Launched on Carers Rights Day 21st November 2025. Development of the Action Plan for the Carers Strategy will be monitored by the Carers Strategic Partnership Board.
- Data - Launch of the Young Carers Dashboard which pulls data from Eclipse (children's) and Capita. LIFT data pilot potential to be used to increase uptake of Carer Allowance.
- Research - Exploring opportunity with HDRC to build a research project on young carers and adult carers.

- Carers Allowance - DWP are developing carer friendly information that can be shared with young carers and adult carers. DWP also offered to attend YC Action Day in March 2025 to promote the Carers Allowance benefit.

Transitions Universal Advice and Guidance

- The focus for the Universal Advice and Guidance strand is to ensure there is clear, and easy to access and digest, information, advice and guidance for children, young people, parents, and carers from early years all the way through to work and further/higher education. This will require research and a review of existing information which is then co-produced with children and families. We will capture what information is required and in what format, to provide refreshed information, advice, and guidance. The following exercises are being undertaken:
- User Journey Mapping – how do children, young people and families find information and advice for Transitions
- Commissioning Mapping – what commissioned services are provided for Transitions advice, guidance, and service delivery from 0-25 years
- Attendance at the PPCV Transitions: Preparation for Adulthood Conference in February 2025 which will provide an opportunity for collaboration with children, young people, and families.
- Following this activity, the strand will design an offer, co-produced with young people and families, that will include information and guidance on how a young person can step into living independently and where to go for help.