

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Karen Samples: Director of Education  
Sally Smith: Head of SEND & Inclusion  
Justin Coleman: Designated Social Care Officer  
Emma Brown: Director of Adults  
Colin Reynolds: Service Manager - Community Learning Disability Team

### **Report Title: Transitions in SEND- Preparing for Adulthood**

#### **Purpose**

**This report will provide an overview of the transition process for young people with an EHC Plan in Trafford, with a particular focus on Preparing for Adulthood.**

#### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the contents of the report are noted and to receive further updates as appropriate.**

#### **Summary**

Trafford is ambitious for children and young persons with special educational needs and disability. We recognise the importance of ensuring a smooth transition to adulthood and to providing an integrated approach across education, care and health to ensure a smooth transition into adult services.

As young people with special educational needs move into adulthood it will be important for their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to support their aims for employment and training, for independent living, for good health and community involvement.

Transition remains a priority for all our children and young people. Further to external validation, we know we have more to do to ensure our young people and their families are supported at all key points in their lives especially in respect of preparing our young people for adulthood, independence, and employment, as well as maintaining positive relationships with others. Preparation for Adulthood is a key priority in our Strategic SEND Ambitions Plan (Ambition 4 - We will ensure that our young people with SEND have the same opportunities as all young people, so that they could have the same life outcomes).

#### **1.1 Background**

Section 8 of the SEND Code of Practice states:

*'Professionals across education (including early years, schools, colleges and 16-19*

*academies), health and social care should support children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities to prepare for adult life and help them go on to achieve the best outcomes in employment, independent living, health and community participation.*

*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 around 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'.*

Preparing for adulthood means preparing for:

- higher education and/or employment – this includes exploring different employment options, such as support for becoming self-employed and help from supported employment agencies
- 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

## **1.2 Starting Early**

When a child is very young, or SEN is first identified, partners from across the SEND system should seek to understand the interests, strengths and motivations of children and young people and use this as a basis for planning support around them.

Early years providers and schools should support children and young people so that they are included in social groups and develop friendships and ensure that, with the right conditions, children with SEN can engage in the activities of the nursery or school together with those who do not have SEN and are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the nursery or school and in any wider community activity.

Transitions from Early Years settings into schools are well managed. Transition events between schools and early years settings are held in the summer term providing an opportunity for them to come together to discuss children who may need extra transition support. This support is provided by the SEN Advisory Service (SENAS) workers for any child they are supporting, who is moving to school. SENAS also works closely with families to advise and support decisions about which educational setting may best meet the needs of their child, whilst also providing guidance and support to early education providers about how best to support a child/children attending their setting or school.

The strength of the education offer is reflected in the educational outcomes our pupils with SEND across the Early Years have achieved. Strong school leadership, high quality learning environments with support from Inclusion services ensures these outcomes remain strong.

The percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of Reception and the Year 1 Phonics standard have both improved this year (2023) for all SEND pupils. Despite a 3 point improvement to 18%, the proportion of Reception pupils with SEND achieving the GLD remains below the national level of 20%. In the Year 1 Phonics check, the performance for pupils with SEND has moved from the national level of 39% to over 45% compared to national level of 42.5%. This performance in phonics has occurred because both cohorts (pupils with SEN Support and pupils with EHCP) have improved; over 54% of pupils with SEN Support achieved the threshold whilst nearly 26% of those with an EHCP achieved it, up from 15% last year.

### **1.3 Year 6 to Year 7**

Every child who is identified as going through the key stage transfer process should have either a specific setting or a type of setting named by the statutory deadline, as per the SEND Code of Practice, which is 15 February.

Transition from year 6 to year 7 in Trafford is complex due to the nature of our education system, coupled with a pressure for school places. We also know that some of our families would say that they are truly worried about transitioning into secondary education. Last academic year, we named 94% prior to the February statutory deadline and all of the remaining 6% had placements named for September, however, we remain committed to ensure this position improves and the SEND Service Manager and EHC Manager are working with Trafford Parent/Carer Forum to agree the necessary actions.

In addition, during the SENCO Forum in June 2023, colleagues from Primary and Secondary settings were tasked to discuss the details of their provision and what reasonable adjustments looked like, at both phases of education to get a shared understand from both sectors. The groups were also divided by need, to enable a more forensic look at specific provision around Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), Autism, Dyslexia and ADHD. Each group was facilitated by colleagues from the SENCO development group, who were able to draw out the key features of provision from colleagues. This direct comparison between adjustments at Primary and Secondary level, enabled high quality discussion about the barriers and potential solutions to Year 6 / 7 transition. The main points of the discussions were recorded and will be used to influence further guidance materials about preparing SEND learners for transition.

### **1.4 Year 9 onwards (Preparation for Adulthood)**

Through our internal governance we recognised that our systems and processes for young people transitioning into adulthood were not sufficiently robust and were not adequately meeting the needs of all children and young people. Our externally commissioned exercise has confirmed that our self-view is accurate, and this is reflected in feedback from our parents and carers, who are clear that the decision making around support is confused.

Most recently **in June 2023, Paula Thompson-Jones, an Ofsted SEND trained inspector**, carried out sampling work to replicate the process Trafford will go through

when we have our Local Area SEND Inspection. This included a focus on the experience of children and young people transitioning into adult services.

**A summary of the findings are below.**

- Children's educational needs and their transitions are addressed as part of the EHC plans, and most children move into suitable education provision with support. Young people with very complex needs were seen to have a variety of educational and development opportunities and were being well supported to access these. However, EHC plans do not support broader transition planning to meet health and social care needs or help transfer to adult services.
- Due to the current PfA protocol, or pathway not being consistently implemented, it is a difficult experience for young people, parents, and carers, who do not feel well supported during a what is a crucial and difficult time.
- Children allocated in the CAN team (CLA or CIN) do not benefit from effective transition planning into adult services. Children are not consistently referred at the right time by children's social workers, and adults services do not get involved quickly enough when they receive a referral. This leaves families with great uncertainty and unnecessary stress and anxiety.
- Young people do not benefit from a timely response from adult social care and await allocation alongside other adults. Assessments of needs are undertaken by workers from generic adult social care teams alongside their other work, rather than by workers with specialist knowledge of working with young people, their needs, and available services. This approach does not consider the on-going intensive work required to respond to the inevitable continued changes and transitions during the early stages of adulthood for this group of service users.

The pathway for children with complex needs transitioning from Childrens Social Care into Adults Social Care, has recently been strengthened and although we have more to do, early indications are that this functioning more effectively.

In relation to children without a learning disability who may need to transition into adult social care we know we have more to do on these pathways to ensure early identification and better-quality experiences for children and young people.

Additionally, we have more work to do to ensure that young people not open to Childrens Social Care, but who may need ongoing support into adulthood receive support from the correct services and that health transitions are well managed. Though plans are in place to address this it is too early to see any impact.

### **1.5 Lived Experience Advisory Panels (LEAP)**

Trafford Parent/Carer Forum have worked with the SEND Partnership in Trafford to establish LEAP Panels. These provide an effective mechanism to hear the lived experience of families with children and young people with SEND to enable us to improve and shape our services going forward.

During the month(s) of June/July 2023, Health & Social Care jointly met with our parents/carers to listen to their lived experience of transition/Preparing for Adulthood

(PfA). These sessions took place at varying times of the day/evening to ensure that as many carers as practicably possible could attend.

The sessions were led by our parent/carers and were subsequently followed up with a meeting with the Director of the Parents forum to ensure we could collaboratively agree our learning.

To hear some of the experiences of our young people and their parents/carers was powerful. It enabled the panel to reflect on the impact professionals can have upon people's lives. There were examples of good practice, however there was also some feedback that has informed our improvement plans.

#### **Feedback following the session from our parents/carers:**

- ✓ Facilitation & 'follow up' (by the Parent Forum) was described positively
- ✓ The sessions were deemed to be supportive, and our parents/carers felt listened to
- ✓ Information was pitched at a level which was easy to understand
- ✓ Professionals can make a positive impact on our young people/carers outcomes

#### **Themes/issues raised**

- Increased support for people experiencing poor Mental Health
- Repeating our story- Streamlining reviews/meetings/minimising changes in professionals
- Communication, engagement and listening to our young people and their parents/carers
- Proactive support from professionals ahead of families reaching 'crisis'
- Strengthening our workforce learning and development offer
- Preparation for Adulthood needs to start earlier and incorporate Education, Health & Social Care professionals
- Enhance our Local Offer to include community resources available for young people who are preparing for adulthood (including 18-25 year olds)

Ambition 4, "**We will ensure that our young people with SEND have the same opportunities as all young people, so that they could have the same life outcomes**" will drive activity to improve transition.

#### **1.6 – Planning for Transition**

Current planning takes the form of the following

- i) Weekly report generated by the performance and development team that outlines young people aged 14 upward who have an EHC plan
- ii) 4 weekly Complex Care Pathway meeting (Children and Additional Needs Team, Community Learning Disability Team, Cheshire Wirral Partnership)
- iii) 6 weekly Neighbourhood Pathway Planning Meeting
- iv) Fortnightly Dynamic Risk Meetings

Referrals for young people can be made to adult services when they are aged 14 upward and thereon a process of information gathering and screening to ensure they are on the correct pathway is made. An adult screening process is to commence

between all Locality Service Managers and the Community Learning Disability Service Manager September 2023 onward.

Currently, there are 3 named pathways:

#### Independence Pathway

The Independence Pathway is for young people with an EHCP but are unlikely to need care and support into adulthood. This is determined by the discussion at the Year 9 Annual Review. A Care Act screening tool is under development to support these conversations too. The Preparing for Adulthood EHC plan from Y9 needs to be focused on the young person's education, employment, independent living, community inclusion and health and include advice and guidance. If specialist advice and guidance is required, a referral into Adult Social Care will be necessary.

#### Neighbourhood Pathway

This Pathway is for young people who are likely to need care and support into adulthood and those interventions will be delivered through the four Adult Locality Teams.

#### Complex Pathway

When a young person has a diagnosed Learning Disability, they enter the complex pathway. This is based on access to community health colleagues (Cheshire Wirral Partnership) and the offer of support applying for those people who are identified with an IQ below 70.

Should a person meet eligibility for Continuing Health Care Funding, then their care and support will be commissioned and monitored via a complex case manager within Trafford NHS / Trafford Integrated Care Board.

In addition to the pathway work we are also undertaken a series of work with key stakeholders, including parents and carers, regarding what good transition should look like with a view to co-producing a transitions strategy which will include PfA. We are working to ensure that the voice and experience of children and young people is driving work around PfA at the earliest opportunity, and we are also developing a range of employment opportunities to ensure that our young people with SEND have a diverse offer in terms of employment and training.

We are now ensuring that children are allocated an adult social worker within the CAN pathway at 17 years and 1 month. Performance reporting has been strengthened to ensure monitoring and compliance with this. As part of the reviewing and redesigning of the CAN service, we are also exploring the structure and resource that exists within our transition pathways to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

Support for our young people to gain employment, continue their onwards journey through Education includes:

#### **1.7 – Supported Internships and the SEND Employment Forum**

Supported internships are a structured, work-based study programme for 16 to 24-year-olds with SEND, who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The core aim of a supported internship study programme is a substantial work placement, facilitated by the support of an expert job coach. They provide the opportunity for young people to achieve sustained, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. The supported internship should contribute to the long-term career goals of the young person and match their capabilities. Alongside their time with the employer, supported interns complete a personalised study programme delivered by the school or college, which includes the chance to study for relevant qualifications, if appropriate, and English and maths at an appropriate level.

The aim of supported internships is to support young people with EHC plans to gain paid employment by:

- ✓ supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers
- ✓ enabling them to demonstrate their value in the workplace
- ✓ developing confidence in their own abilities to perform successfully at work

The measure of success of a supported internship is a transition to sustained and paid employment.

Every young person is supported in the work placement by a trained job coach, put in place by their education provider. The job coach provides in-work support that tapers off, if appropriate, as the supported intern becomes familiar with their role. Job coaches also work with employers, increasing their confidence in employing individuals with additional needs and helping them to create and support a diverse workforce.

Established in January 2023, the SEND Employment Forum meets quarterly and is the driver and monitoring group for the Supported Internship (SI) work which received grant funding from DfE for two years until March 2025. A part time SI Adviser has been appointed with the funding to lead this work. There has been excellent progress in Trafford already with a new SI pathway established by Trafford Council with Pure Innovations and Trafford College in addition to the current partnership offer through Trafford General Hospital. There are 10 funded places on each. Partners in this offer include Kier Construction and Amey. 12 young people are currently signed up across the two programmes.

The progress on Supported Internships and the representation across partners of our Forum was acknowledged by our National Development Team for Inclusion Regional lead, who attended the most recent Forum. Awareness raising work of availability of SIs and other employment opportunities is being developed by the SI Adviser in coproduction with young people and families and the Family Information Service will develop the Local Offer and information to be shared directly with families.

Of the 9 young people signed up to the Hospital based programme in 2021-22, 6 secured paid employment and in 2022-23, of the 8 young people, 2 gained paid roles within the year, 3 were offered paid roles due to start in September, one has a work

trial imminently starting, one will continue in a volunteering role one unfortunately was withdrawn (a likely 75% paid progression rate).

The forum has an action plan which covers a number of initiatives to reduce the over-representation of SEND young people in the NEET group (those not in education, employment, or training) and reports into the Youth Employment and Skills Group. The SEND Employment Forum and new SI Adviser will strengthen the tracking of, and support for, the 16-24 EHC cohort of young people.

#### Careers Support for young people with and EHC Plan

The EHC service are proactively referring NEET young people with EHCPs to the **ESF (European Social Fund) NEET projects**. Young people work with a professionally qualified mentor who provides one to one support for up to 9 months. There are 2 projects, covering young people aged 15-24, where over 30% of participants have a presenting SEND need. During May and June 2023, the service specifically targeted young people with EHCPs who were not in learning which resulted in 11 young people with EHCPs signing up to the projects in these two months alone – this represented over 30% of all referrals. ESF is due to be replaced by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in Sept 2023, and young people with EHCPs will continue to be a key target group.

The **Connexions Service** has a lead manager for SEND transition and specialist qualified Careers Advisers who work in all our special schools and the vast majority of our other secondary schools. The service is a MATRIX accredited provider of Information, Advice and Guidance and staff work across 17 schools providing additional support to all SEND young people within these Trafford Schools. For cared for Children with EHCPs who are educated out of borough, professional Advice is coordinated via an embedded Adviser in the Virtual School

#### 1.8 – Accommodation

There is a range of accommodation for adults learning disabilities in Trafford, e.g., we have a respite provision of 5 beds. This service was developed during 2021 to support those families in need of a break. We know we have more to do to develop our range of accommodation options for young people with SEND. This includes a exploring additional internal resource in addition to reviewing our commissioned activities as part of the Short Break action plan. As part of this work, we will review whether any of our commissioned services should be commissioned up to the age of 25 as opposed to our current arrangements of separate commissioning for children and adults. However, we recognise that accommodation needs change and evolve over time and having a differentiated offer is part of our transformation programme.

We recognise that we need to work with our parents and carers to enhance the support and offer to them as their young people progress towards to independence. We have more to do to ensure communication to parents and carers regarding the differences in the legislative context for children and adults is clear. We will also use our LEAP panel processes to ensure that our focus us inclusive of key areas identified by parents and carers.



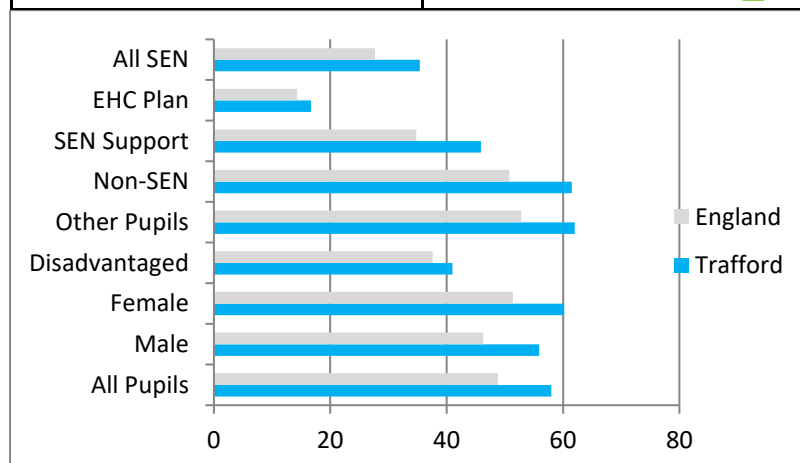
## **1.9 – Key Stage 4 outcomes (2022)**

At the end of Key Stage 4, young people with SEND performed exceptionally well in 2022. The average ‘Attainment 8’ score for young people with SEN Support was 46 against a national score of 35. For students with an EHC Plan ‘Attainment 8’ score was at 17 compared to the national figure of 14.

The ‘Progress 8’ score for all young people with SEND remained better than national comparators.

54.5% of pupils at SEN Support and 17% of pupils with an EHCP achieved grades 5-9 in English and Maths in 2022, both achieving well above national comparative data.

Average A8 score by pupil characteristic	Trafford			England		
	2021	2022	Change	2021	2022	Change
All Pupils	60.2	58.0	▼	50.9	48.8	▼
Male	57.0	55.9	▼	47.4	46.3	▼
Female	61.6	60.2	▼	53.1	51.4	▼
Disadvantaged	43.4	41.0	▼	40.2	37.6	▼
Other Pupils	60.4	62.0	▲	53.7	52.8	▼
Non-SEN	62.7	61.5	▼	53.7	50.8	▼
SEN Support	43.0	45.9	▲	36.4	34.8	▼
EHC Plan	19.0	16.7	▼	15.2	14.3	▼
All SEN	34.7	35.4	▲	30.7	27.7	▼



*\*2023 data has not been validated at this point*

## **2.0 – Next Steps - what will good transition look like across Trafford?**

Parents/Carer confidence in transition for their young people is rightly low – parents share their frustrations, confusion, and fear through the parent forum as they are not clear about what will happen for their young people. We recognise that we have more to do get this right and that we need to gain pace and traction. Therefore, the following actions have been agreed to improve outcomes for our young people:

**Ensure that the outward facing communication to parents, carers young people and key stakeholders is clear and co-produced**

Communication with families needs to be improved across the SEND system and is a feature across all the ambitions, but particularly PfA. A co-produced PfA and Transitions Strategy will be developed through engagement events with families and key stakeholders during this term and we will use the Communication & Engagement Group to ensure the Local Offer reflects accessible information. Part of this work is also about developing assistance for parents and carers in supporting their children through transition.

**Ensure that plans support good transition at all stages of child development by enabling children and young people to build their skills towards independence in line with their needs and ambition**

Through the improvement work that is taking place in SEND, the quality of EHC Plans is a priority. This includes developing practice standards across the wider SEND system, to enable improvements in the quality of advice and ensure they are person-centred.

**Develop the performance metrics to support strategic understanding of transition across both health and social care**

It is clear that there is a lot of commitment to SEND children and young people in the borough and this is accompanied by excellent operational knowledge of individual children. However, we also need to improve the use of performance metrics and accompanying analysis to promote a shared evidence-based understanding of need, demand and outcomes across the SEND system. This would also ensure increased system wide accountability.

**Ensure that young people, voice, wishes and aspiration are central to all transition planning.**

Both SEND Ambition 1 and 4 are committed to ensuring young peoples' voices are heard and affect change and part of the transition work is determining the resource requirements to enable the development of a forum to truly capture the voice of the child and to co-ordinate the mechanisms that are already in existence.

This will also include working with young people to understand what behaviours, values and skills are required to understand what good transition looks like and share learning and good practice with partners from across the SEND system.

**Conclusion**

We all go through periods of transition and change during our lives, and we know that these can be difficult or stressful times. For children and young people with SEND and their families, the transition from childhood to adulthood can be particularly challenging for many reasons.

Adapting to changes in school, living arrangements, health services or transport can be very difficult. This can be made all the more challenging when these changes happen all at once, and when at the age of 18, the services that young people and families are so used to relying on seem to disappear. Uncertainty about the future leads to increased anxiety for families and young people themselves, and the

changes in support structures and thresholds for services often leave families feeling as though they have 'fallen off a cliff edge' and feeling like they must battle the system to access the support they need. One message that we have heard time and time again is that transitions planning and work with young people and families is not happening early enough.

We are committed through our SEND Ambitions Plan, to ensure we work in partnership to move in the right direction, and ensure that all our young people with SEND have a successful transition period and are enabled to thrive as adults.