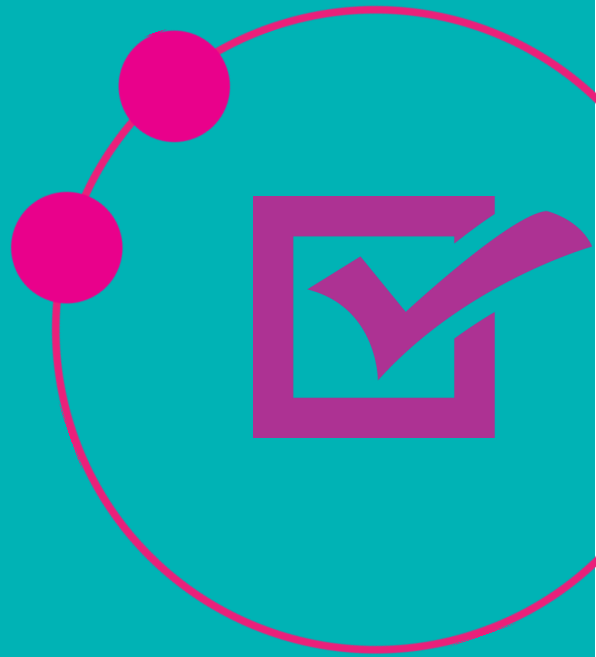




Carer's Guide To Leaving Care



Contents		
Page 3	Introduction	
Page 5	Part 1 - Teaching Life Skills 1) Accommodation and Housing	Housing Costs, Housing Options, Maintaining Accommodation.
Page 8	2) Daily Living Skills	Nutrition and Planning, Grocery Shopping, Food Preparation, Household Chores and Safety, Transport
Page 10	3) Identity	
Page 11	4) Friends and Family Relationships (Social Development and Interaction)	
Page 12	5) Feelings and Behaviour	
Page 13	6) Education, Training and Employment	Study skills, Motivation, Removing barriers, Choosing options. Motivation and career choice, Planning ahead, Finding and applying for work
Page 17	7) Health and Hygiene	Alcohol, drugs and tobacco, Relationships and sex
Page 19	8) Money	Beliefs about money, Savings, Tax, Banking and credit, Budgets and Spending, Legal rights and responsibilities
Page 24	Part 2 Putting things in Place	
Page 26	Part 3 Managing Expectations	
Page 30	References and resources to support looked after children's transition to adulthood	
Page 32	Foster Carers own useful Toolbox	
Page 33	Appendix 1 Foster Carers Toolbox	
Page 34	Appendix 2 Young person with Learning & Emotional difficulties / Global delay / ASD in Mainstream Foster Care	

Introduction

The transition to adulthood and the development of life skills is a lifelong process beginning with early learning primarily in families, education and communities but for some of our children and young people this process is interrupted or sometimes stopped. We need to ensure our children and young people have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to take care of themselves, their homes and their money, engage in education, work, and training, to stay in touch with others and become the best person that they can be.

'Leaving care' simply means the young person has turned 18 and their care order or episode of being in care has ended. It does not necessarily mean they have to leave their carer's home although this might happen at the same time.

To help prepare for this, young people in care, together with their social worker / personal adviser, and others, assess their needs and what they need to learn through using the Transition to Adulthood - Independent Living Skills workbook. This helps to develop a Pathway Plan to map out what is needed, how long the goals might take to achieve and who will help and support along the way. Young people are usually given a copy of the Pathway Plan soon after their 16th birthday.

The young person's Pathway Plan focuses on 8 key areas of a young person life,

1. Accommodation (Housing options)
2. Daily living skills
3. Identity
4. Family / friends
5. Feelings and behaviours
6. Education
7. Health
8. Finances

The Independent Living Skills workbook and Pathway Plan are really helpful in supporting our young people in care getting the right skills to become a successful adult. However, both are no substitute for the personal support that is provided by you, their carer. To help you in this role we've provided this booklet.

This booklet is divided into three sections first 'Teaching Life Skills' then 'Putting Things in Place' before ending with 'Managing Expectations'.

For young people aged 15 upwards, the focus should be on developing life skills. They need opportunities to practice skills such as cooking and discussing issues such as money or looking for work. The Teaching Life Skills section gives practical advice on how to teach these skills to young people.

During the last year of care there is a greater emphasis on making sure that goals in the young person's Pathway Plan are being progressed as agreed. What will their source of income be, where will they be living, do they have a job, are they enrolled in post 16 education, training or an apprenticeship? The Putting Things in Place section provides a guide to make sure the most important issues are being considered.

Both you and the young person need to be clear about what life will be like after they leave care. This can raise some difficult issues: for example, would you be happy for them to continue socialising with your children and dropping in for meals? How will you feel if you want them to continue living with you but they can't wait to leave? The Managing Expectations section raises some of these issues and may help you prepare for them.

There is no need to work through each of the sections in turn or to complete them within a certain timeframe. They are a guide to help you make the most of opportunities as and when they arise.

You are not expected to know everything or to do it without support. This booklet will guide you but you can always ask for help or advice from your fostering social worker or the young person's social worker. There are also a range of other services that the young person may be able to access via the internet, in person or be referred to for help, support or expertise.

With your help, the young person will be able to make the most of every opportunity to grow into a happy and successful adult. This is a time for you both to look forward to.

Part 1

Teaching life skills

It often takes several years for young people to make the transition to adulthood. Along the way they need to develop skills such as cooking, looking after their health and budgeting.

You are the best person to teach these skills as you know the young person's strengths and interests, what they do well and where they struggle. You can also provide regular opportunities to practice familiar skills or learn new ones.

Many skills are already taught by you when you involve children and young people in everyday activities. How you shop for bargains, find information about train timetables or keep in touch with friends are all behaviours that young people will copy if they see how you do it. This is called modelling behaviour and is a very casual and informal way of teaching.

There are a number of useful websites including Kent County Council, Virtual School Kent, Kent Cares Town, Kent Fostering and Young Lives that provide useful information. There are also national websites and organisations such as Voice of the Child in Care, Care Leavers Association and New Belongings that can provide useful information and the experiences that other young people in care have had. Most are youth friendly and some have interactive tools or games for learning about subjects like buying a car, banking and finding accommodation. Look up some of these websites with the young person, discussing the issues and adding to them with your own experiences.

'Transition to Adulthood – Independent Living Skills Workbook' includes a list of living skills. This is just to start a young person thinking about what they should be able to do for themselves as an adult; however, there is no rush to take on adult responsibilities.

The tips in this section are just suggestions for practical ways to help someone learn. Feel free to use them or your own ideas about teaching life skills.

1 - Accommodation / Housing:

Unfortunately, some young people find themselves homeless or in unstable housing after they leave care. This may be because they had not thought about where they would be living, were not prepared well enough to find and maintain a suitable place to live, or did not allow enough time to find a place.

Whether the person in your care moves out when they turn 18 or later, they need to learn how to go about finding somewhere to live, their options and the cost of housing.

Your social worker along with the young persons' social worker will talk to you about "Staying Put" - this is a piece of legislation that encourages Local authorities to work with carers to explore the possibility of young people remaining with their carer post 18 under a "staying put arrangement". There are some significant differences in regards this arrangement compared to being a child in a foster placement.

- A meeting should take place three months before a young person's 16th birthday or 3 months after a young person becomes Looked After if this is after they are 16. This should include the foster carer(s); the carer's supervising social worker and young persons allocated social worker. This meeting should seek to establish:
- The viability, appropriateness and likelihood of a "Staying Put" arrangement occurring.
- The key tasks and roles and responsibilities related to extending the former fostering arrangement.
- The impact on the foster carers' financial circumstances should the placement continue after the young person's 18th birthday.
- Foster Carers approved after 2016 that have been recruited specifically to offer permanency will have been advised of the Staying Put policy and expectation to be able to care for young people up until the age of 21 years.
- Any potential barriers to achieving a successful Staying Put arrangement.
- The expectation that the carer will be expected to prepare the young person for independence and ensure they are accessing education training and employment opportunities.
- The difference between caring for a child and supporting an adult

Your social worker will be able to advise you on the details of these arrangements so that you can make an informed decision as to whether this is something you can consider.

One of the ways that carers can start the process about future accommodation is by talking with the young person about their wishes and feelings about where they would like to stay in the future and what their feelings are regarding moving out and what their worries might be about this i.e. living by self, managing monies, and managing tenancies.

Although these are difficult conversations to have, it is important that open conversations with young people happen as early as possible so that all options can be explored and the young person can then be best placed to understand all the potential future options.

Housing options

What do I need/want?

Ask the young person what they would look for in a place to live and to put them in order of importance. Did they list things like big rooms, a good view or a particular appearance ahead of practicalities such as close proximity to transport, work or a place of study? If so, talk about the difference between needs and wants. Discuss other factors they may want to consider such as number of bedrooms, furnished or unfurnished, whether pets are allowed and proximity to friends and support networks.

Housing options

Not everyone can afford to live in a big house in the best location. Look at ads for houses or flats and house shares for rent and compare the prices for different sizes and locations. Discuss what

the young person may be able to afford either by themselves or sharing with others. Help them explore a range of options to work out what is possible within their budget. Options include social housing assistance such as public or community housing tenancies that are subsidised, or assistance to access private rental. You can go to Shelter .org.uk for more information or ask your social worker to help.

Having a flatmate

It is common for people to share accommodation to keep costs down, but for some, moving from a family home to sharing with another person of similar age can be difficult. There is no older adult to take charge so everyone in the household must share responsibilities. There will be a need for compromise and cooperation. Have the young person list the pros and cons of having a flatmate, living with relatives or a boyfriend/girlfriend

Where to look

Share the story of how you found your first place to live. Together with the young person, see how many different ways you can find places to rent. Use the internet, newspaper and estate agents, magazine ads, community noticeboards or any other ways you can think of.

Choosing the right place

Inspect a couple of flats or houses that are for rent even if the young person in your care is not intending to move yet. Ask what they think about the condition of the property, the size of the rooms, the standards of the fittings etc. Have them work out what their share of the rent would be if they shared with one person per bedroom. Ask them to make up a checklist of what to inspect before moving into a place.

Emergency accommodation

The time to talk about emergency accommodation is before it is needed. Together, look for the services that can help with crisis or temporary accommodation. Even better, help the young person plan their accommodation needs well in advance so that they can minimise or prevent their need for emergency shelter.

Housing costs

Starting out

Ask the young person in your care to write down everything they would have to pay for if they were to move into their own place next week. Give them plenty of time to do this, then go through the list and talk about what they missed. You may have to explain what some costs are. Make sure you discuss deposit, advance rent, connection fees/costs for utilities, basic household items and ongoing costs such as food, rent and council tax. Ask them to list the basic items they would need such as a bed, linen and kitchen utensils. Help them identify where they can get assistance with these costs or shop keenly to get them.

Keeping a reserve

What happens if the young person is sharing a place and someone moves out? Will they be able to cover the rent until they find a new flatmate? What if they lose their job or their hours of work

are cut back? Talk to them about the importance of having a cash reserve so they don't end up with a broken lease or no place to live.

Maintaining stable accommodation

Tenancy agreements

A tenancy agreement may be the first contract a young person signs as an adult. Talk to them about what it means to sign a legal document and the consequences of breaking the lease. This can include losing their deposit or being charged rent until the property is re-let or the lease expires. Explain how breaking a lease can make it hard to rent somewhere else. If you have a copy of a tenancy agreement, show it to them.

Maintaining a tenancy

Talk about what is needed to successfully maintain a tenancy and avoid breaching the tenancy agreement. Important things they should know include:

- budget carefully to ensure rent is paid on time
- keep the property in good condition
- be careful not to disturb neighbours – this includes managing visitors carefully; for example, not having loud parties too often
- Seek permission from the landlord if a visitor is going to stay for an extended period of time.

Carers can start to help a young person prepare for this by helping them to start ensuring that they look after their own space within the home, and adhere to certain house rules around tidiness / cleanliness of their bedroom and other rooms around the house and expectations around noise / bedtimes.

2 - Daily Living Skills

There are many things young people need to learn in order for their lives to run smoothly. Learning daily living skills – including meal planning, grocery shopping, and cooking, cleaning and home safety – are important to make sure that they know how a home functions.

Nutrition and menu planning

Variety and balance

Sharing a meal at the table provides an opportunity to talk about nutrition, different parts of the meal and why they are important. Meat/poultry/beans provide protein; vegetables/fruit provide vitamins and minerals, starches provide carbohydrates for energy, dairy foods make our bones strong.

Healthy snacks

When shopping, have the young person choose a variety of healthy snack foods. Talk about what makes a snack healthy. In addition, invite them to make some healthy snacks (eg crackers with dip, popcorn or muesli bars).

Make a favourite-recipes cookbook

After making a meal, have the young person determine whether or not to include it in their own “cookbook”. By creating a cookbook of nutritious meals they enjoy, the young person will be encouraged and more likely to maintain a healthy diet.

Some other useful resources are also available on line such as the “Easy Pleasy” cookbook available through the children’s society website. This recipe book was written by care leavers from Cheshire in conjunction with the Childrens Society and has simple / nutritional recipes based on a budget of £21 per week.

Grocery shopping

Developing a shopping list

Involve them in developing a family shopping list. Be sure they include the ingredients for any meals they want to make. Pay attention to other items like cleaning products that they may not think to buy. When shopping, carry a calculator and ask them to add up the cost of each item. Remember to take shopping bags.

Comparison shopping in the supermarket

Involve the young person when shopping. For example, they could be responsible for finding certain items on the list. Tell them to compare brands and determine which is cheaper, healthiest or the best value. Talk about quality versus cost and why the least expensive item is not always the best one to buy.

Involve the young person in picking out the fruits and vegetables on your list. Show them how to tell if the food is fresh. Have them check on the internet about when fruits and vegetables come into season and talk about what it means to buy produce that is not in season.

Shopping alone

Pull together everything an older young person has learned about meal planning and shopping by letting them plan a day’s or weeks’ worth of meals, develop the shopping list and purchase everything with a set amount of money.

Food preparation

Hands-on practice

Involve a young person in cooking. Start by asking them to help with part of a meal. As they gain confidence and skill they may be able to move on to preparing the family dinner once a week.

Practice with recipes

Although we don’t use recipes every time we cook, it is good to know how. When the young person would like to make something special, have them choose a recipe from a cookbook. You can supervise them reading and following the recipe. If the meal was a success, have them copy the recipe into their own cookbook.

Food storage

After a meal is finished, have the young person be responsible for putting away any leftover items. Explain what can be safely kept, for how long and how it should be stored. Discuss the use of leftovers in other recipes. For example, if they make a stew or casserole, any leftovers could be turned into a pie for another meal.

Household tasks and safety

Develop a weekly task rota

Establish a weekly family task rota so everyone is clear about their responsibilities. If possible, rotate the tasks so the distribution of work is fair and everyone gets to see how what they do, or don't do, can create work for others. For example, if the young person's job is to clean the bathroom they quickly learn not to leave toothpaste all over the basin.

Beginning to do laundry

Introduce the young person to the idea of doing laundry by giving them a basket to put their washing in and showing them how to use the washing machine and/or dryer. Let them get used to washing a load of their clothing on their own. Teach them about sorting clothes into whites, light colours and dark colours and about reading clothing labels, especially items that need handwashing or can't be put in the dryer.

Internet and Phone Scams

Scammers have become more sophisticated in their bid to part us from our cash. From email scams and copycat websites to nuisance calls and tax rebate scams, we need our wits about us.

Transport

Getting around

Knowing how to read a map or find your way to places you go to regularly is important, but many young people sit back and take no notice of the route that is followed. Ask the young person in your care to notice landmarks such as street signs and buildings, and to give you directions the next time you go the same way.

Public transportation

Using public transport can be an important key to independence. When planning an outing, have the young person look up timetables or check the internet for information.

3 – Identity

It's normal for young people to question who they are and where they fit into the world. You may have already seen or heard the young person in your care questioning what their peers think of them, how the community treats them, or what their place is in both your family and their birth family.

The way a young person sees these issues will form many of their values and attitudes while contributing to their opinions about self, relationships, work, ethics and life in general. It's important to support them through this difficult time and make sure you are emotionally available.

Ensuring young people have a clear understanding of their past is essential and it is really important that you are able to talk to the young person about their experiences, (when they want to talk about it), to enable them to make sense of their journey into and through care.

All young people should have had some Life story work completed with them, which will help explain their history, family relationships, key events in their life. Where possible encourage the young person to look through this and talk to you about its contents.

As a young person develops into adult hood, they will continue to ask questions about who they are? So that they can begin to understand and be confident in saying "This is me": Issues around gender, sexuality, race, religion, disability, may come to the fore during this time, and it is important that you allow the young person to openly talk and express their views regarding issues that are important to them.

Young people in care may come from a different culture or community than yours. If this is the case, ask how they feel about it and if they want to learn more about their culture. Discuss whether this can be done through contact with their birth family or, if not, help them to find and join a cultural or community association.

Picture yourself

Have a young person cut out pictures, words and phrases from a magazine that describe how they see themselves or things that are important to them. Make a collage with all of the pictures and words. Talk about their choices and what they mean. Talk about what kind of self-image is communicated by the pictures/ words they've chosen.

Strengths list

Help your young person to make a list of their strengths and things they do well. It could be simple things like having good manners or being good at a sport. Try to include some thoughts about the type of person they are. For example, you might say that they are good at helping or comforting their friends. Have them write these things down on a note-card and keep it some place handy. When they are feeling down, they can pull out the card and be reminded of all their good points and things that they do well.

4 - Friends and Family Relationships (Social development and interaction)

Young people moving into adulthood will continue to form and finish different relationships.

Peer group becomes incredibly important to this age group as young people test out their own values and experiences with others.

Also, for those children in Care, there is often a desire to re-establish / maintain contact with family relationships that have previously been separated.

Social inclusion

It's important for any young person to have social and leisure activities that involve others and not spend all of their time alone. This can be hard to achieve for some care leavers who become socially isolated after leaving their carer's home. Encourage the young person in your care to develop a network of friends and activities that they will be able to continue with after they leave care. If they move out of the area they can still maintain contact with friends and can find a new group where they can continue the activities they enjoy.

Watch yourself in action

If a young person is having trouble with some part of communication (like saying how they feel about something or telling someone they are angry without becoming aggressive), have them practice with you. Ask what they think about how they're coming across. Reverse the roles and use their language and mannerisms so they can see what it sounds like from the other person's point of view.

5 - Feelings and Behaviour:

As you know from your role as a carer – how a young person feels can greatly impact on their presentation and behaviour. As a young person continues to develop into adulthood it is important that we support young people in their ability to be able to self-regulate and manage their feelings and behaviours, and where they are unable to, then to know who and where they can access additional support from:

When young people have control of their bodies and minds they are better able to address other concerns and work towards independence.

While normal behaviour can include moodiness, irritability or withdrawal, a distinct change that lasts at least a few weeks may be a sign of something more serious. Encourage the young person to talk to you about their concerns but also make sure they know of other ways to get help. Talk about services which can offer help, advice, support or counselling and if needed help the young person to make contact.

If you are in any doubt, talk to your fostering support worker or the young persons' social worker about the presenting issues and seek advice on next steps.

Learning to negotiate

It's important for young people to learn to negotiate. If a young person is upset about something they've been asked to do, teach them how to politely ask if it can be changed. For example, if you've told them to clean up their room in the middle of their favourite TV programme and they are upset, suggest that they ask you (reasonably) if they can do it right after the programme. If it's okay with you, let them do it the way they are suggesting. Explain that while it's fine to ask, not everything is negotiable – sometimes they will just have to do what you say when you say it.

Stress busters

Stress affects people of all ages. When a young person gets worked up about something, teach them to take five to 10 deep breaths to calm down. Offer to go for a walk with them when they're

stressed, or have them walk (or run) around the block. Talk about things you do to calm down such as, taking a shower or bath, phoning a friend, listening to music or playing with a family pet.

Anxiety

When a young person is worried about something invite them to problem solve with you. Ask them to come up with at least three ideas for dealing with the problem that's worrying them.

Evaluate each idea and what the likely outcome would be. Encourage the young person to choose a solution and try it out. Reassure them that one solution they can always use is to ask for your help.

Useful websites such as young minds have a wealth of information for adolescents and their parents / carers and also have links to other resources that be useful.

Self-harm

Some young people do harmful things to themselves such as cutting or burning parts of their body. If a young person comes home with a story about how someone in their school did this, talk about the incident. Ask what they think caused the person to act that way. Ask how they would get help if feeling alone, sad, overwhelmed, etc. If you see evidence of self-harm on the young person in your care, ask them to stop and seek professional help immediately. Do not ignore this behaviour.

Watch the self-talk

If you hear the young person in your care making negative comments about themselves ("I'm so stupid," "I can't do anything right"), gently draw attention to it. Ask what they mean or challenge what they're saying. Help them remember things they can do well by talking about or looking at old photos or point out things they have done well that week. Praise them for their efforts and thank them when they help out around the house.

There's more than one way to communicate

If you have a young person in your care who has a hard time expressing emotions, write notes to them. Sit near them and pass notes back and forth about how they're feeling, what's wrong, etc., leave a note in their room or write in a journal. Writing can be less threatening because tone of voice and eye contact is not involved. It also allows us to think through what we want to say before we "say" it.

6 – Education, Training and Employment:

Education and training are important for employment prospects, and all young people can benefit from good study habits and an understanding of vocational training.

This is particularly important for those in care as they may be disadvantaged in their studies because of disruptions to family life or limited finances. There are supports specifically for this group and the young person should be encouraged to take advantage of the help on offer.

Speak to your fostering social worker, the young person's social worker or VSK for help and guidance.

Young people should remain in a form of education, training or employment through to the age of 18 now and there is a wide range of opportunities for young people to be accessing. They can remain at school in the sixth form, go to college, undertake an apprenticeship, accessing a work based learning programme, and be employed or volunteering with training. Spend time exploring these options with your young person to see what may best suit their needs. It is also important to remember that young people will need to continue working on their English and Maths skills during their post 16 education aiming to achieve the GCSE Grade C or above or equivalent.

Study skills

Learning styles

There are different ways to learn. Some people learn best by hearing, some by seeing and others by doing. For example, to learn a mathematical formula some students will repeat it out loud, some will write it down several times and others need to use it regularly. Ask your young person what subjects they like best and talk to them about whether it is the content that interests them or the way it is taught. Talk about how they prefer to learn and how they can apply these preferences to their studies or training.

Study environment

Ask the young person to do some reading or maths problems for about 10 minutes at a time in different settings. These could be in front of a television, at the kitchen table, on their bedroom or at a desk. It could be in a quiet setting, with loud music or music playing quietly. Talk about how productive they were in each setting and where they could best concentrate on something they found challenging. Their views may not be accurate, so be prepared to challenge them by asking questions about the material they read or the number of maths problems they answered correctly.

Motivation

Use incentives

Consider using incentives if it is hard to get the young person to do homework or assignments. Encourage them to suggest the incentive plan which may range from time on the phone or watching television for small pieces of work to a special outing for completing a major assignment

Get involved

Show how important the young person's education is to you by being involved in their life both in and out of school, e.g. homework, sporting events and social gatherings.

Older youths as tutors

Encourage the young person in your care to help younger children with homework, this builds their self-esteem and reinforces their own learning.

Removing barriers

Disengagement

Sometimes people stop learning because of reasons not directly related to study. They may be depressed, being bullied, using alcohol or other drugs or they may have a learning disability. Talk to your young person about why they have lost interest, then discuss with them talking to their tutor to help or perhaps VSK.

Finances

Lack of money can be a barrier to education and training. This can be upfront fees that discourage a person from starting a course or commencing post 16 education, or ongoing costs that make it hard to continue. Research the costs of training or post 16 education together and check if they are eligible for any allowances. Talk about hidden costs such as travel and discuss ways to meet expenses. This can include part-time work throughout the year or during breaks from study. How will they cope if they rely on this work but it isn't available when they need it? How much would they earn as an apprentice? It should be noted that carers would receive 'Staying Put' placement fee if the person in their care is part way through full-time studies or training when they turn 18 and remain with you. For young people aged 16-18yrs, most post 16 education programmes will be free to the young person but check this with the provider. There is also a bursary for Children in Care and Care Leavers when accessing a fully accredited programme during years 12 and 13 to help with course related costs. This needs to be discussed with the education provider as to how it will be used.

Choosing options

Which course or institution?

Some young people have a clear idea of what they want to do in life and the study or training needed to make it happen. Others are less certain and need help sorting out the options. Talk to the young person in your care about the type of work they want to do, and then look at the qualifications they will need. Is this level of study realistic for them? Could they perhaps be aiming higher or lower? What are the requirements for travel and commitment of time? Help them think about when, where and how to study or train or can this be done 'on the job'?

Employment

Finding work can be very competitive for young people as many of them start looking at the same time and few have much experience.

The ideas below will help prepare a young person to enter the workforce with confidence and a planned approach.

Motivation and career choice

Why work?

If your young person has friends who work, ask why their friends got jobs and what they can do because of this work. Can they afford to buy a car, go out more often? Do they miss out on anything because of their work? Overall, are they better or worse off?

Starting early

A young person doesn't have to wait until they finish school to start working. If the young person wants extra pocket money, they may be able to help out in the locality with part time work – gardening, working in a shop or on a farm. They may want to work part time or seasonally which can also give them a taster of different jobs they might be interested in as a career.

Career information days

Schools often hold career information days. Or there may be a job exhibition near you. Take the young person along and find out about as many of the careers that interest them as you can. Suggest they prepare questions before going so they can make the best use of the time available.

Work experience

Be involved with helping the young person choose their work experience. At the end of each day talk about what they did and what they learnt about their future in the workforce.

Encourage them to discuss their experiences with the school careers advisor.

Information sources

There are lots of internet sites with all sorts of information about careers. Some are divided into fields of interest and list the skills you need to work in different roles in that field. These are very helpful for making career choices. The VSK website has lots of ideas and help too.

Planning ahead

Plan a pathway

Have the young person write their career goal at the top of a page. Starting at the bottom, ask them to write everything they are doing to help reach the goal. For example, if their goal is to be a veterinarian they may be volunteering at an animal shelter or working at a pet shop. Above this, they can write other things to do to help reach their goal and the names of any people who can help them.

Keep a work history

Encourage the young person to keep a record of all the jobs they have had, including volunteer work. This should include dates, the type of work, what they learnt and names and contact numbers for people willing to give a reference. This record will be useful when completing a job application or maybe asking for a reference.

Prepare a CV

When the young person is starting to look for work have them prepare a CV that includes their work history and training. You can find examples of CV's and advice on the internet. The CV should be updated whenever there is anything new to add.

Finding and applying for work

Where to look for work

Ask the young person to list all the ways they can think of to find a job. Talk about how to find a job rather than waiting for a job to find them. For example, if they have friends who are working, see if they can ask about any vacancies. If there is a company or a shop they are interested in, have them contact the manager and tell them why they are interested. They may even want to send a copy of their CV to show how keen they are. Is there e mail address one that employers will want to use and shows their maturity? How confident are they when speaking on the phone?

Prepare for interviews

If the young person is offered a job interview, have them think about the questions they may be asked, how they meet the job criteria and what the employer will want to know about them. What will they wear, are they confident in shaking hands? Do a practise interview, asking the questions they developed. Talk about what they answered well and what could be a little better. Make sure they sell themselves. Let them interview you so they see how to answer questions and hear what the answers sound like to the interviewer. Get them to write down any questions they may want to ask such as hours or rates of pay.

Follow up on interviews

Encourage the young person in your care to follow up after an interview with a thank you note, email or phone call. If they were unsuccessful encourage them to ask if there is anything in particular they need to improve on or if there is a skill they should have before the company will employ them

7 - Health and wellbeing:

Making sure that we get and stay physically healthy (as well as mentally) is a day-to-day task.

It is important that young people are encourage to look after all aspects of physical health, including eating healthily, taking exercise, knowing where to get relevant health advice, whether it is advice regarding a minor ailment / condition through to serious health needs / emergencies.

Health and hygiene

Developing good hygiene habits

Maintaining good hygiene starts with basic routines such as hand washing, showering and brushing teeth. As a young person matures, this expands to personal care such as physical appearance, hair and skin care. To help a young person through this period, devote some time to talking to them about the kinds of things that are important to them. You could get them to try

various products that meet their hygiene needs and use this time to address the way they feel about themselves.

Caring for simple injuries

Teaching about taking care of injuries and illness can start at any age. Use whatever opportunities come along to allow appropriate self-treatment with plasters, disinfectant or ice packs. Explain how and why each is used.

Linking symptoms of illness to treatment

Help young people recognise how they feel when they are sick, and ask them to be as specific as they can about their symptoms. Before giving any over-the-counter medication, have older young people read the label to see how it relates to their symptoms and what the correct dosage is, including the maximum dosage in a 24-hour period. Have them read warnings about seeing a doctor if the symptoms persist.

Finding a doctor, optician or dentist

If a young person needs a new doctor or dentist, walk them through the steps of finding one. Suggest looking in the phone book, on the internet or asking people in the area to recommend someone. Talk about when you may need to go to the hospital instead of a general practitioner or call 111.

Going to the doctor

Older young people need to know how to set up medical appointments. Let the young person make the appointment when they need to see a doctor, optician or dentist.

Learning about prescription medication

If the young person in your care takes prescription medication, make sure they understand what it is for and how it is used. When they run out and need to replace it, talk about why they take the medicine, how it helps and the possible consequences of not taking it correctly. This can include not finishing a course of antibiotics.

Alcohol, drugs and tobacco

Testing attitudes and knowledge

When a story about a celebrity's alcohol or drug abuse is in the news, use it to explore your young person's attitudes and knowledge around these issues. This may be a sensitive issue if they came into care because of similar issues in their family and they may have strong emotional responses.

Practice for peer pressure

Role-play with them to help them find solutions to different situations. For example, you might say, "You'll be at a party next week and someone's going to offer you some beer. What are you going to do?" Or, "What would you do if somebody says, 'Come on, have a cigarette'?"

Relationships and sex

Sex and sexual development

As the young person in your care matures, you will need to find ways to cover issues relating to sexual development. There are lots of helpful websites and you might also want to talk to the LAC nurses to get information that will support you with what to talk about and how to say it. Remember that young people in care may have been abused and may be reluctant to talk about sex or their body so don't force the conversation on them.

Basic anatomy

Teach the young person the correct anatomical names for the parts of their bodies. Try to provide honest answers to their questions about sexuality, or provide them with age-appropriate written materials that cover the basics of human sexuality. The internet or VSK could support you with this information.

Healthy relationships

Role models are important for teaching young people about healthy relationships. Ask the young person in your care who they think has a good example of a healthy relationship. Discuss their response including what they think healthy and unhealthy relationships look like. Ask what they should do if they are in an unhealthy relationship.

Peer pressure and sex

Peer pressure can affect a young person's decisions about sexual behaviour. Tell them a story about peer pressure faced by yourself or someone you know and how it was handled. Ask whether they think young people sometimes "talk up" their sexual activities to look grown up to their friends or have sex just to fit in. Explore and role-play ways to resist negative peer pressure.

Early parenthood

Discuss the responsibilities of parenthood and explore the impact they think being a teenage mother or father would have on their life. Ask what they know about contraception and safe sex, and remind them that knowledge alone won't avoid a pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease (STD) until it is put into practice.

8 – Money:

Young people start out with limited amounts of money and a poor idea of how it should be managed. Some make mistakes that see them end up with large debts and poor credit ratings that affect them for years. This can be overcome with good money habits such as keeping to a budget, having a regular savings account, shopping for value rather than buying on impulse and avoiding credit.

This section has ideas on how you can help young people develop good money habits and to start thinking about how they can make their money last.

Beliefs about money

What money means to you

Talk to the young person about what money means to them. How important is it? What is it for? What are their priorities for money - buying a mobile phone, clothes, saving for a car, investing? Help them explore their attitudes to money.

Savings

Saving for a goal

Your young person might want to save up for something expensive like a trip away with friends. Help them to work out how much it will cost and how much they need to save each week to reach the target in time. Suggest they draw up a chart or graph so they can mark off progress and see how close they are getting to their goal.

Develop a regular savings plan

Encourage the young person in your care to work out a savings plan and to stick to it. This can be very basic; for example, one third to long-term savings (not to be used until they leave home), one third to short-term savings (for the things they want but don't yet have enough for) and one third they can spend straight away.

Tax

Income tax

Talk to the young person in your care about the different parts of a payslip including the amount of tax that was deducted. If they work, use their payslip or, if you don't mind sharing the information, use your own.

Banking and credit

Banks

Talk about the bank you use and the services they offer including the account you use for your day-to-day banking, ATM services, online banking, credit cards, savings or personal loans and the fees and interest charged for each of these. Explain the difference between an access account that pays low interest and an investment account that pays higher interest. For a young person who finds it difficult to save, an investment account with limited access may be the best way for them to achieve their saving goals.

Buying a car

Buying a car is a high priority for many young people and often involves borrowing. Discuss the options of buying a cheaper car or borrowing to buy a more expensive car. What will the costs end up for both? Will the cheaper car cost more to maintain because it may not be in as good condition? How much will the interest add up to over the life of the loan for the more expensive car and will it cost more to insure each year, especially for a young driver? Will the more expensive car be easier to sell later but have lost more of its value?

Money troubles

Mobile phones and interest-free periods on loans are common causes of debt and bad credit ratings for young people. Talk about how easy it is to fall into debt when spending money you don't have to pay until later. Together, look for the services that can help with debt or if you just need advice about money.

Budgets and spending

Develop a budget

Help the young person in your care develop a budget. You can use one of the tools on the internet or draw up your own basic version. At the very least, it should show their income, fixed expenses such as board or pre-paid mobile fees, and variable expenses such as clothing and outings.

Practice living on a budget

The best time to experiment with living on a budget is before leaving home. Work out with your young person how much you spend on them each month. This may include their mobile phone, clothes, lunches, toiletries, pocket money and food that only they eat. Include infrequent expenses like a haircut. Then, ask them to develop their own budget. At the start of the month put the cash into separate envelopes for each expense and let the young person manage how they are used. If they run out of money don't give them any extra. At the end of the month talk about what went well and what didn't. Did they run up a big phone bill, buy more expensive clothes than they needed or spend too much on snacks? If they have money left over think about letting them spend it or save it for unexpected expenses. As they get better at managing the money stop putting it into envelopes but ask them to draw up a more detailed budget to help keep track. Explain how direct debit or Standing Orders can be used to make regular payments to help with budgeting.

Where did it all go?

If the young person is having trouble keeping to a budget get them to write down everything they spend in a month. This may show that the budget is too restrictive or it may show where money is being wasted. Talk about their priorities for spending. For example, do they really think a third of their money should be spent on their mobile phone?

Comparison shopping

Show how to make money go further by shopping around. Find the same item, such as a CD, in different stores or online and compare the prices. Compare the price of generic brands with name brands. If the young person insists on name brands give them a budget for an item and tell them if they want a more expensive brand they have to use their own money to make up the difference.

Legal rights and responsibilities

Teaching a young person about their legal rights and responsibilities is an important part of their transition into adulthood. The information provided in this section is not meant to provide legal

advice but to introduce some concepts of rights and responsibilities. More information about this can be found by contacting the Childrens Legal Centre at www.childrenslegalcentre.com.

Rights

Knowing your rights

Ask the young person in your care to list as many of their personal and legal rights as they can.

You could make this competitive with some of their friends or siblings to see who can come up with the biggest list. Let them use the internet or other resources for help.

Matching responsibilities

After the young person has come up with a list of rights, see if they can match each one with a responsibility. For example, a right could be “free speech” while the responsibility may be “respect for others”.

Exercising rights

Involve the young person in activities where you are exercising your rights. For example, if you have bought something that doesn't work, ask them to check on the internet what your rights are and if appropriate, take them to the shop with you when you take it back to see what is said and the outcome.

Learning about the law and legal issues

TV programmes provide opportunities to talk about a variety of issues. If you are watching a programme that shows someone dealing with a legal issue talk to the young person about it. Discuss the crime involved and their attitude to it. See if they can understand the consequences of not obeying the law.

Coming under the police spotlight

Young people may come to the attention of the police for several reasons. They may be asked to move on if they are loitering or creating a disturbance, questioned about a crime, charged with an offence or just asked to provide their identification. They should always cooperate but should also be aware of their rights. Together, check their rights.

Dealing with discrimination

If you or the young person in your care experiences any type of discrimination, talk as a family about the situation. Talk about the feelings that come up when someone discriminates against you and use it as an opportunity to teach the importance of not acting that way towards others. Teach the young person how to handle discrimination when they encounter it by explaining that it is not the fault of the person discriminated against but shows a lack of understanding or experience by the other person. Depending on the situation it might be best to ignore the incident, take the opportunity to challenge and inform the person who is prejudiced, or report it to someone who can take action.

Identification and voting

Can you prove who you are?

Teenagers and young adults need identification to prove their age and identity. Help the young person list all of their identification papers. This might include a birth certificate, NHS card, National Insurance card, passport etc. Together, find out what identification documents are needed to apply for government services, benefits or housing.

Get in early with voting

When the young person approaching 18, help them understand voting processes and what voting can achieve. Help them to ensure they are on the electoral role.

Part 2

Putting things in place

What are pathway plans?

There must be a pathway plan for when a young person reaches 16 which carries through to adulthood and beyond with appropriate changes to reflect this and the progress they make. This applies to young people in foster care, and in relative or friend care, residential care and where the care arrangement has occurred under an order or by agreement.

Although people can move to independent living earlier, in most cases, this happens when they turn 18 and the order or arrangement placing them in care ends. Arrangements must be made to ensure young people don't leave formal care without somewhere to live, a source of income and an understanding of who can provide them with support.

While this is referred to as leaving care or moving to independent living, it does not necessarily mean that the young person will move out of their carer's home. Many stay on as part of the family while others move out to explore life on their own

The early stages of planning in more structured way for independent living begin around 15/16, this is mainly about developing life skills and exploring options for education, training and employment but as we know these skills are learnt throughout life as well.

Around the time the young person turns 16 and certainly by 17, planning starts to focus on what they will be doing after leaving care. Their social worker should be talking to them about updating their pathway plan to include accommodation and where they will live, whether they will be working or studying, where their money will be coming from, how they will look after any health issues, and who they can turn to if they have problems.

The plan will set out strategies to be used to help the young person achieve their goals. For example, if they want to move into a place of their own while studying, the plan might say:

- The young person will apply for social housing and housing benefit
- 18+ will provide money for establishment costs and textbooks
- The young person's leaving care grant will be applied for
- Other services the young person needs to support them in sustaining a tenancy.

The plan is designed to ensure that all of the necessary supports are in place to allow the care leaver to succeed in life as a young adult.

What is the Care leaver entitled to?

Carers can support young people in knowing their entitlements. Useful websites from the become charity clearly set out what young people should expect and what they are entitled to.

Kent County Council has created it's own leaflet that set's out what young people's entitlements are including:

What level of support they can be expect from a social worker /personal advisor.

What financial support they can expect

This leaflet can be accessed from the Kent Cares Town website.

www.kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk/

What role can I play?

Carers have a role to play in developing the young person's leaving care plan.

Firstly, if you believe the planning process should have started but it hasn't done so find out what will happen and when. In many cases the planning may have already started with the social worker collecting and reviewing information, but it is a good idea to let them know your young person is ready to start being involved in this important stage.

The social worker will usually want to involve you in the planning process. They may ask about the young person's needs, whether you would be happy for them to stay on at your home and how you can help them apply for services like education, training, benefits and social housing assistance.

A young person in care may want to distance themselves from their local authority or prove they can do things for themselves. If this happens, encourage them to take an interest in developing the plan and reassure them it is okay to ask for and accept help at this time. You should also encourage the young person in your care to engage with their social worker and other agencies so that they can continue to provide help and support.

Probably the most important role you can play is to see that the young person's pathway plan reflects their goals and addresses their needs for the next few years, as well as identifying contingency plans if things don't go according to plan.

Part 3

Managing expectations

Young people in care are often unsure of what will happen when they leave care. Whilst their pathway plan will help them understand the bigger issues such as where they will be living, it is often the unspoken concerns that have the biggest impact or that can bring plans undone.

As a carer, you will need to consider the changes that will take place in your life whether the young person moves out or stays on in your home.

This section describes some of the common problems that come from false expectations about leaving care. It does not attempt to tell you how to deal with what are sometimes emotional issues. Instead, it attempts to raise your awareness so you will be able to correct or deal with these expectations before they become a significant problem.

Consider each of the issues mentioned below and whether you need to discuss any of them with the young person. Or perhaps just reflect on your own feelings about what they mean to you.

Having an independent adult in the house

If a young person continues to live with you after they turn 18 you will both need to adapt to having another adult in the house. Like any teenager, they will want to assert their independence but they will need to abide by the house rules.

You might want to renegotiate those rules to make sure everyone is clear about the privileges, freedoms and responsibilities that come with being an adult. Will it be alright for them to bring someone home for the night or to stay out without letting you know beforehand? What will and won't change?

Misunderstandings about why the placement is ending

By the time the pathway plan is written, you and the young person will know if they are to move out of your home. However, there could be misunderstandings about why this is to happen, especially if one of you wants the placement to continue.

You may consider the young person to be part of your family and want them to stay on. They were originally placed with you because they needed care and protection and you might have concerns for their safety if they move out. You might also have expected them to stay, and been surprised and confused by their decision to leave.

The young person may have become dependent on your support or expected that it was up to them to choose when to move out. They may not understand that you believe it's time for them to experience independence or that you don't think they should stay on as an adult.

Even if this issue has been discussed, either you or the young person may feel a sense of rejection at the end of the placement.

Grief and loss

The young person, carer and the carer's family may all experience feelings of grief and loss at the end of a placement.

When your own child leaves home as an adult you may be sad to see them go but you know they are still part of the family. However, when a young person in care leaves your home there may be a greater sense that you no longer have a place in each other's lives.

This doesn't apply in all cases, but for some these feelings can be significant. Young children in particular can be upset at the thought of losing a 'big brother or sister' and may need to be carefully prepared.

Post-care relationships

Both you and the young person need to understand what your relationship will be after they move out. Are they welcome to drop in any time for a meal or to do their washing? If there are any bills you currently pay for them such as a mobile phone account, will you continue to pay them? Will they have to take all their belongings with them or can they leave some until they have somewhere permanent to live? Will they have a key to your house? How would you feel if they let themselves in and raided the fridge while you were out?

What if the placement has been a difficult one? If there have been problems, are you happy for them to continue socialising with your children? Will they still take part in family gatherings such as a regular get-together at Christmas?

Usually, there isn't enough discussion about post-care relationships so people develop their own expectations. These can be very different and lead to unnecessary tension or limit a young person's options if their leaving care plan doesn't work out.

Saying goodbyes

What opportunities will people have to say goodbye when a placement ends? Will there be a party or gathering to mark the occasion or does the young person prefer to leave quietly without any fuss?

Moving away from what may have been their family for many years can be traumatic for a young person. Being able to say goodbye or exchange mementoes, photos, etc. can help to ease the pain.

Make sure you and the young person have kept their life story work up to date. A young person should leave with a thorough record of their time with you. Working with them to ensure their photos are in chronological order in an album helps build your relationship with them.

Unrealistic view of birth family

Many young people in care have an unrealistic view of their birth family. It is natural for someone to want to believe their mum or dad will provide them with love and care even if it hasn't worked out that way in the past.

A young person may feel that as an adult they can handle any family situation or are no longer at risk. They may also believe they have a duty to help family members overcome the problems that led to them being in care in the first instance.

A young person, who returns to their birth family at 18 for any of these reasons, without having first given it careful thought, may be disappointed or find themselves in an unhealthy or dangerous situation. Before they leave, you could help them think about these issues, decide how they will determine if returning to their family isn't working and what they will do if that is the case.

What stays or goes

Differences in expectations about what leaves with the young person can be particularly upsetting. If you bought a television for their bedroom, was it for them personally or was it intended for any children who stay with you? Are there any shared gifts that belong to the care leaver and others in the family?

Are there items around the house the young person considers as theirs because they use them more than others?

It's a good idea to discuss what items in their room such as rugs, lamps or chairs are theirs to take with them. Use birthdays and Christmases as opportunities to give them items to help with independent living such as bedding, crockery or a set of saucepans.

Young people in care often have a special bond with pets and it may be devastating to them to have to leave a pet behind. On the other hand, they may want to take a pet with them but you think that where they will be living is unsuitable. Are you willing to look after the pet for them?

Positive and negative perceptions

Is the end of the placement being seen in a positive or negative way? You and the young person will probably see good and bad points about the end of their time in care. For example, if they move out they will gain freedom and independence but take on extra responsibilities without always having you there for support.

Sometimes people focus more on what they will miss rather than what they are looking forward to. It often helps to discuss both the good and bad so you can acknowledge what you will miss but put it into perspective with all the positive points. In this way, you should be able to see that overall, the change is a positive one.

Carers related to the young person

Many of the issues in this section take on a special meaning for carers who are related to the young person and their birth family.

For example, feelings of rejection or abandonment at the end of a placement may be greater and expectations around post-care relationships will be different. The most difficult issue to deal with if you are related to the young person is likely to be if they have an unrealistic view of their birth family.

You may be uncomfortable discussing addiction, abuse or other issues with your niece or grandson when the person you are talking about is your sister, daughter or other close relative.

If you are seen as too critical, the young person may become defensive and turn against you. You will also need to consider that as an adult they have the right to make their own decisions. However, you will want to speak up if you think they will be putting themselves in danger or have unrealistic expectations of their ability to help their parent overcome their personal problems.

References and resources to support looked after children’s transition to adulthood

Organisation	You can find more information on	Contact Details
Kent County Council	Transition to Adulthood Policies and Procedures including Staying Put	http://kentchildcare.proceduresonline.com/
Kent Cares Town	Info Zone – Information about being in Care	http://kentcares town.lea.kent.sch.uk/
Kent Fostering	Kent Fostering Handbook	http://www.fosteringhandbook.com/kent/
Young Lives	Research and Publications	http://www.younglives.org.uk/
Voice of the Child in Care		http://voiceofthechild.org/
Care Leavers Association	Grants for children in care	http://www.careleavers.com/ General Enquiries: 01678540598
Shelter	Housing Advice	www.shelter.org.uk/
Children’s Society	‘Easy Peasy’ Cookbook	www.childrenssociety.org.uk/
Young Minds	The voice for young people’s mental health and well being	www.Youngminds.org.uk/
Become Charity	Financial entitlements and Support Packages	www.becomecharity.org.uk/
A National Voice (ANV)	National advocacy information	http://www.anationalvoice.org/ General Enquiries: 0161 237 5577
Buttle UK	Grants for vulnerable young people	www.buttleuk.org
Who Cares? Trust	APPG; Care Leavers Week; Bullying guide; HE Handbook; Town Bank; and, Listen Up! Event	Web: www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk General Enquiries: 0207 251 3117

New Belongings		http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org/
Kent Live News	Places of Worship	http://directory.kentlive.news/search/kent/places-of-worship
Railcard	Applying for a Railcard	https://www.railcard.co.uk/
Loyalty Cards	A guide to the best loyalty cards	http://www.savestudent.org/shopping/a-guide-to-the-best-loyalty-cards.html

Appendix 2

Young person with Learning & Emotional difficulties / Global delay / ASD in Mainstream Foster Care

Kent County Council Foster Carers Carol Moody writes:

Building a good relationship and planning for transition begins early so that there is time to establish good communication and build a trusting relationship with your young person and other professionals you work with as part of a team. Recognise that transition is a process, rather than a series of assessments and reviews; and that young disabled people's transition to adulthood may well take longer because of the barriers they face – than that of their peers. Practice to develop independent living skills and teach the tools necessary for adulthood as early as you can. Give them tasks to do, get them used to shopping and money, playing board games is also a useful tool.

Assessments, reviews and meetings are often about meeting their care needs and cover what a young person cannot do because of their difficulties, but should also be about identifying disabling barriers which could be tackled. Meetings should be an opportunity to build on the young person's strengths and to strengthen their weaknesses in a targeted, proactive and focused way. We shouldn't be viewing the Young person as a slow learner, but a different thinking one, so carers need to be aware of this and proactive in those meetings. Young People are dependent on the adults around them to share all important information. Transition is likely to require more detailed planning, Professionals and Carers should be encouraged to share their observations/views of Young people's choices, and the preferences reflected in these, at every stage. Young people often need someone who will push to get the best for them- Getting support of an independent advocate for the Young person.

Some young people have had a high degree of adult supervision in their lives. May face many barriers to an independent social life so will need extra 1.1 support to achieve this. Independent access to transport is a worry for Carers as they become adults. Keeping them safe from harm as they are too trusting, believe everything they are told and trust other adults easily so they are particularly vulnerable. Sex and sexuality are important issues in the transition to adulthood for young people, but adults do not always recognise that disabled young people will have the same sexual feelings as others of their age, although they may be functioning at a lower age they still go through puberty. This can result in a lack of information and inappropriate advice, creating confusion. There is a need to discuss appropriate relationships, personal interactions, keeping safe on line, supported to have positive, healthy, informed and safe relationships and talking about consensual sex. This should be an ongoing discussion, it's important to set social stories to keep them safe and to discuss different scenarios with them and talk about how they can keep themselves safe. Young people are often black or white and will respond better to straight factual talking and rarely are embarrassed to talk about this. Some Young people may still need help with personal care and this should be noted during the transition. Some young people may be involved or need further input from Adult mental health. Carers should discuss this during transition.

Leaving School, Colleges or Children's Services can mean losing contact with other professionals who supported you and the young person and this can be unsettling for both so it is important that you try to establish a new network. Carers should have a support network. Some young people have little experience of an independent social life and few opportunities to make friends: Recognise that relationships, particularly with their own peer group are often the most important issue for some young people themselves. Making and keeping friends can be the most important/difficult aspect of their lives so try and support their friendships. They can face negative attitudes of non-disabled peers and some adults who don't understand their difficulties because they look ok and just think they are being badly behaved or rude. Engage them in clubs and community activities as soon as you can, make sure they are supported in this, helping them to be comfortable in a variety of situations with different people and give them the skills and support to build on. As they get older offer opportunities in social activities which they can continue into adulthood. One example is Scouts and then they have the opportunity to be an Explorer, then young leader regardless of their difficulties well into adulthood.

Educational needs- People in general think that young people who have been at special schools will move on to specialist colleges and then into adult day services. Many young people have experienced low expectations of careers service professionals and others. Following education and training, young disabled people experience barriers to paid employment.—Lets change attitudes because many famous and accomplished individuals who have achieved greatness because of their way of thinking! (E.g. ASD) Carers need to change this way of thinking, being positive, being supportive, and shouting the loudest if need be, in making sure that they get all the help they need for them to achieve, because they can they just need extra support- rather than putting them on a track for continued failure.

Adjusting to having fewer and less structured supports is difficult for many young people as they are often functioning at a lower emotional age. Transition from School to College - Change can be difficult so it is important to have a good transition plan in place and make sure you have a named contact person in place if you need to contact them. Colleges will treat the young person as an adult even if they are functioning younger than their age and are usually reluctant to share information with you so you are often left in the dark as to how well they are doing (until there is an issue which is when it's really bad) share information when needed. Make sure you involve VSK 18+ support worker and invite them to the EHCP reviews, encourage the Young Person to attend and participate in some way. Make sure the support is given that is required according to the EHCP. Making sure they also have the opportunity in an educational setting- the different ways in which young people communicate, lap top, I- pad, mobile, social stories, pictures, photos of people and settings, creative role play in different scenarios, can all be used to promote communication and enable young people to express their views. It's important for carers to work with other professionals with Young people from minority ethnic communities, and those with significant cognitive and/or communication impairments so you feel supported. Seek out support groups.

Although a young person is an adult at 18 they still need strong boundaries and help with routine and daily living - this is what has helped them to achieve well this must continue. Young people might need a visual chart to remind them of what is expected of them at home and out and about a variety of individual things, appointments, shaving, birth control, activities, online banking and a breakdown of how much money they can afford to spend. It is good to note with the young

person how they would like to be helped and how they would like this to happen and do this together involve the PA. As an adult your job is to offer advice, support, encourage and include them in every decision.

Young people wanting to move into their own home face considerable barriers. Carers need to be aware of what the barriers are from young people's points of view. Plans, strategies, assessments should all start by finding out from young people themselves what they want to achieve and what gets in the way. Recognise the importance of multi-agency assessment and planning for some young people, and ensure that health, social services, education, housing and employment services are actively involved.