

3. Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support and Options for Post-16



When your child turns 16 and continues in education, whether at a sixth form, college, or a training provider, they are still entitled to special educational needs (SEN) support, even if they don't have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

What is SEN Support?

Post-16 SEN support is provided to young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) to help them succeed in education and training after they finish compulsory schooling. This support is tailored to individual needs and can include academic, social, and emotional assistance.

SEN support applies to the following post-16 settings:

- Further education colleges
- Sixth form colleges
- 16–19 academies
- Independent specialist colleges

The purpose of this support is to promote independence and progress toward:

- Employment or higher education
- Independent living
- Good health
- Community participation

The Graduated Response: "Assess, Plan, Do, Review" (APDR)

Where a young person has a special educational need (SEN) or disability that requires special educational provision, their setting must discuss with them the appropriate support they will need.

Further Education Colleges usually use a cycle of assessment and planning called 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' (APDR).

- **Assess:** Teachers and staff observe how your child is doing in class, talk to you, and may use tests or specialist advice to figure out what kind of support would help.
- **Plan:** Once the teachers have a clear understanding of what your child's needs are, they write a support plan. This includes what help will be given, how often, and what goals your child is working towards. You'll be involved in this planning.



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- **Do:** The plan is put into action. Teachers and support staff work with your child using the agreed strategies – this might be extra help in class, small group work, or special resources.
- **Review:** After a set time, the setting checks how things are going. They look at progress, talk to you and your child, and decide if the plan needs to change.

Throughout this cycle, the setting respond to your child's needs in a thoughtful and flexible way, making sure support is always tailored and effective.

If SEN support is not sufficient to meet the young person's requirements, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may be considered. A setting, parent/carers, or the young person (if over 16) can apply for an EHC needs assessment.

Post-18 Considerations

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), it can continue until they are 25, as long as they remain in education or training (excluding university). The EHCP should focus on helping them achieve outcomes in:

- Employment or further study
- Independent living
- Community participation
- Health and wellbeing

Annual reviews of the EHCP should continue and include planning for adulthood. You or your child can also request changes to the plan or ask for a new assessment if their needs change.

If a young person has an EHCP, the local authority (LA) may cease the plan after the age of 19 if it is no longer appropriate for the support to continue and/or the educational outcomes have been met. The LA must also consider whether the young person requires additional time to complete their education or training compared to their peers without SEN.

What Kind of Support is Available Post-16?

The support available is diverse and can be customised to your young person's specific needs. It may include:

- **Learning Support:** 1:1 or small group tutoring, adapted learning materials, and specialised equipment
- **Pastoral Support:** Mentoring, help with social skills, and emotional support
- **Accessibility:** Physical adjustments like ramps and accessible toilets, and modified transport
- **Technology:** Assistive technology such as text-to-speech software, braille displays, and communication aids



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- **Transition Support:** Help with moving from school to college or work, including career guidance and work experience opportunities.

How to Get Support

The first step is to talk to your college, sixth form, or training provider as early as possible. They have a legal duty to provide support for students with SEN.

- **For those with an EHCP:** The local authority is responsible for making sure the support in the plan is provided. You should discuss the EHCP with the new provider's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) and the local authority to ensure a smooth transition.
- **For those without an EHCP:** The college or training provider's SENCO is the key person to contact. They will work with you and your young person to assess their needs and create a support plan.

Preparing for Adulthood

All young people need guidance to prepare for their future, but a young person with SEN may face additional challenges. "Preparing for Adulthood" refers to the planning for a young person's future as they transition from school to college, and from college to adult life. Schools, colleges, health, and social care should work together to support this process.

Transition planning starts in Year 9 (age 13-14) and can continue until age 25, if necessary. If your young person has an EHCP, they must have "Preparing for Adulthood" reviews and receive information, advice, and support about their options and choices.

Where Can Young People with SEND Study?

- **School Sixth Forms:** Mainstream and special schools often have sixth forms, which offer courses for all young people, including those with SEND. Staying in a school can provide structure and familiarity.
- **Further Education (FE) Colleges:** These colleges offer mainstream and supported learning courses.
- **Sixth Form Colleges:** Primarily offer A-levels.
- **Independent Specialist Providers:** Approved providers of further education specifically for young people with SEND.

Supported Internships

A supported internship is a study program that includes unpaid work experience with a local employer, lasting between 6 and 12 months. It's for young people aged 16-24 with an EHCP who want to move into employment but need extra support.

The program is personalised and includes on-the-job support from a job coach, as well as support for non-workplace learning. The goal is to prepare young people for paid employment, build confidence, and develop skills for a CV.



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Traineeships

A traineeship is a training course with work experience that prepares young people for work or an apprenticeship. It can last up to 6 months and focuses on work preparation, English and maths training (if needed), and a work experience placement.

Young people aged 16-24 who are unemployed and have little or no work experience may be eligible.

Apprenticeships

Young people aged 16 or over who are not in full-time education and live in England can apply for an apprenticeship.

- **English and Maths Requirements:** Apprenticeships have specific "exit requirements" for English and maths qualifications. For those with an EHCP (or who had one in the past), there may be flexibility around these requirements.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** As with any other job, an applicant can request "reasonable adjustments" for help with the application process and for support during the apprenticeship (both at work and while studying).

Funding for Apprentices with Additional Needs

The government provides extra funding to support apprentices with SEND. This includes payments to training providers and employers for apprentices aged 16-18, or 19-24 with an EHCP or who were previously in care.

- **Learning Support Funding:** Training providers can claim funding to cover the costs of reasonable adjustments, such as extra staff, specialist equipment, or additional time for exams.
- **Access to Work:** This government scheme provides grants to apprentices to help pay for workplace adjustments, such as a job coach, specialised equipment, or transportation costs.



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