

Using a PATH as a 'Preparing for Adulthood' planning and EHCP process tool.

Following the changes in SEND legislation and the 2014 SEND Code of Practice, a young person can now have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) until the age of 25. A request for an EHCP was received for a 22 year old who was attending a course at a mainstream Post 16 College. To enable this young person and their family to get the greatest benefit from the statutory process required to obtain an EHCP a PATH approach was used for the following reasons:

- Although the young person had been enjoying their college course, they found it difficult to see how the course could translate into a potential career.
- It was important to capture all the young person's aspirations as they moved into their adult world.
- Over the years the young person and their family had faced a range of traditional assessments – all those involved were keen to try a new approach to feel like something different was happening.

Using a PATH allows a young person to share their future dreams, which includes employment, social, health and independence plans, with their friends and family. The skills of those in the room are then used to develop a realistic and positive plan of the action and support the young person needs to help them get there.

The PATH meeting was facilitated by Local Authority Educational Psychologist. The following are some of their 'Top Tips' in getting the most out of the PATH process.

- **Get the invites right:** Ask the young person who they want to invite and agree how best to do this. On this occasion the young person chose their parent, sibling and college Learning Support Assistant who worked with them on a daily basis. Having their sibling in the meeting enabled the young person to 'dream-big' and avoided boundaries and limitations.
- **Use a visual template:** The PATH template provided a visual cue for the discussion and the drawings added during the session provide a series of key memory hooks which are then enriched by supplementary questions.
- **Props:** The parent and sibling really enjoyed the props as they felt involved throughout the session. The parent said the use of the chains prop was a very helpful reminder to 'leave frustrations of the past behind'.
- **Think about language and key questions:** As a facilitator think of key questions and phrases to bring out the best in the session. For example "preferred future" can work if the person finds the use of the word "dream" difficult. Wondering out loud with comments such as "what might mum / dad wonder about housing?" or, "What would that bring to you?" "What might that look like?" can help deepen the conversation.
- **Use paired / small group discussion tools** to support rehearsing of ideas before individuals share them more widely with the group.
- **Be flexible with the approach:** If the young person finds it difficult to talk in the past tense during "One Year On", change it to "In a year's time, what would I see you do?" matched with a response of "I will see you / you will see me [activity / feeling]" etc.
- **Capture Strengths and Gifts:** The 'Now' section can be used to bring out the young person's strengths and gifts as well as what is going well / needs further work e.g. "What do others admire / like about you?".
- **Time:** Leave enough time for the session: 2 hours is the typical length of time required for a PATH. For this PATH the 'Dream' took 30 minutes and the 'One Year On' section 20 mins.
- **Actions:** This can be broken down into two timescales: 'Bold Steps' being those actions that need completing in 6 months and 'Next Steps' where each person in the room agrees one thing they will do within the next week to make sure all can quickly see that something is happening.
- **Ending the session:** Ask each member of the group if they would like to share a positive reflection about the PATH process / meeting.

