

Parent/Carer Guide to Planning for College/Training



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College/training – where to find information

Some young people (YP) will already have a clear idea of what and where they would like to study.

Some need to have a better idea of what is available before deciding.

Your school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will be able to help you to know what level of course to look for. The college/training provider will also advise.



Talking with your YP will help you both to decide which of these are important to you at this stage:

- developing independence
- gaining skills for employment
- beginning to train towards a particular job or career (vocational learning)
- aiming to gain more academic qualifications

Start or refine your search by looking at:

Help You Choose (HYC)

You can find the HYC website at:

www.helpyouchoose.org

This has information about courses and training for 16–18-year-olds. You can search by geographical area, by courses and by level. You can apply to a college/training provider directly from HYC.

Special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) Local Offer

The SEND Local Offer has information here:

www.Norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-training-provider-provider-0-25

College/training providers' websites

Simply make an internet search for the college/training you are interested in. You will find a link to the courses they offer on the home page of their website.

Parent/Carer guide to college/training provider

Speak to someone

Most colleges/training providers have advisers to talk to. You will find the phone number for their main reception on their website. Ask to speak to someone who can give information, advice and guidance about courses. These advisers will not only give you advice about the college/training provider you are calling about, but they will give you good impartial advice about other providers.

Check entry criteria

Courses will have different requirements. Make sure the courses you choose match your YP's ability and qualifications.

Your checklist / notes

Visiting colleges/training providers

It's always good to visit a college/training provider you are considering.

Most have open days or evenings.

You can find out about them on the college's/training provider's website or ring their main reception to find out.



If you are unable to attend the open day or evening, or if you are still planning and thinking about choices, you can arrange a visit by ringing the main reception and saying you would like to come and look round.

Some colleges/training providers have virtual tours that enable you to visit from your own computer at home.

Your checklist / notes

Applications

As soon as you know which course you like, fill in an application form.

You can find these online on the college's/training provider's website. You can also collect a paper copy from the college/training provider. Or you can ask for one to be posted to you.

You should apply as soon as possible from the September in the year before your YP is due to start at the college/training provider.

The college/training provider will tell you what to expect once you have applied.

Some courses fill up quickly, so apply early.

When applying for a course, think about transport and whether there are options near to where you live.



Your checklist / notes

Education, health and care plans and annual reviews

If your YP has an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), share with the local authority (LA) your post-16 preferences. You will get a letter from the LA explaining how to do this.

Once the local authority (LA) has received the information, they will make contact with your preferred college/training provider and look into the placement for you. This is called consultation.

Don't worry if you change your mind later. Just let the LA know as soon as possible and they can update consultations on your behalf.

Once the LA has your views and has undertaken consultations with the colleges and providers, they will send you the final EHC plan by 31 March of the year your YP is due to start college/training. The final EHC plan will confirm the name of the education provider for the transfer in September.

Your EHC plan coordinator will be available to guide, support and answer any further questions.

Don't forget you can talk to your school or LA at any time – not just at your annual review.

If you need help to make choices, give the LA a call on 01603 679183 and they can assist you.

If you would like to talk to someone independent of the LA about the 'phase transfer' process, Norfolk SEND Partnership Information, Advice and Support Service (often referred to as SENDIASS) offers a free service. Call 01603 704070 or email sendpartnership.iass@norfolk.gov.uk.

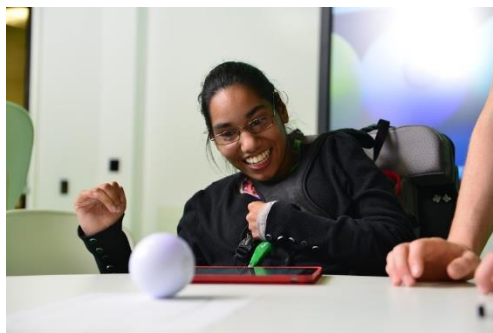
To find out about other kinds of support for children with SEN and their families in Norfolk, visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/SEND for our Local Offer.



Visits and tasters once a course is agreed

When your YP is moving from school to college/training provider, there will be lots of questions and things you would like to know.

Some visits or tasters are arranged directly through the school SENCO and the college/training provider. Ask your SENCO if these are planned.



You can also call the college/training provider and ask to speak to the tutor of the course you are interested in. They will be able to discuss what your YP will need for the step from school to college/training provider to be successful.

For example, your YP may like to arrange to speak to students already on the course if that was not possible when you visited.

Your checklist / notes

Getting ready for college/training provider

Many things about starting college/training provider will be new.

It is a good idea to practice some of these:

1. Help your YP to think about what to do if they have questions and/or worries.
2. Practice choosing and paying for lunches, if that is what will happen at college.
3. Practice new transport arrangements, such as a new walking route or catching a bus.
4. Find out about any equipment needed.
5. Your YP may have worn school uniform since they were small. What will they wear at college?
6. How will you be able to keep in touch with your YP when they are in college/training?
 - Do they use a phone?
 - Do they know how to be safe using it?
 - Do they have all the numbers they need?
 - Can they contact you independently?



Your checklist / notes

Next steps

Before your YP starts college/training, it will be helpful to have the next guide in this set, which is available from your chosen college/training provider. It will give you and your YP details about the college/training provider and much more information about what they can expect.

Parent/Carer guide to college/training provider

