

Over 60 parents/carers, young people and professionals gathered to discuss the “Local Offer” for young people preparing for adulthood (14 – 25yrs old) around education and employment.

The morning began with some young people describing their experiences of life after school, providing an insight into the process of finding the right pathway for each individual. This highlighted the importance of thinking about what the young person really wanted to do, and investing time to look at the options that are available. It was very interesting to hear their experiences, and their presentations were all excellent.

There were also presentations made by a number of organisations, such as Prospects, Heart of England Training and the Connect Me programme.

Feedback from those attending suggested that the Local Offer needed to be more focussed on meeting the needs of all young people with SEND and not just those who have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

This was particularly aimed at those services which support young people in accessing education and employment, like travel training and careers advice.

The way that these services are currently commissioned means that it is very difficult for young people to access these more specialist services if they do not have an Education, Health and Care plan.

Another interesting point was that only about 50% of attendees had heard of the “Local Offer”, which considering the event had been billed as a “Local Offer event” shows that the concept of the “Local Offer” is not yet easily recognised by both parents, young people and professionals alike. There have been recent developments to promote the Local Offer more widely, including a poster designed by young people from Sherbourne Fields school which has been distributed to education, health and care settings.

Attendees were also encouraged to view the Local Offer website to make comments on the Preparing for Adulthood area, particularly with regards to employment and training. One of the comments talked about the fact that there was little information about the types of education and employment – work experience, supported



internships, apprenticeships – that are available and the differences between them. Instead the pages were mainly showing individual providers of these services, which meant potentially looking through lots of records before finding what you are looking for.

There was also a strong endorsement for similar events to focus on the other strands of Preparing for Adulthood, with another event planned to look at keeping good health and opportunities around friends, relationships and community involvement in Spring 2018. The date will be confirmed through the “In Partnership” e-bulletin (you can sign up to receive this through the [main council website](#)) or on the [events page](#) on the SEND Local Offer website.

Special thanks to all those who presented, and all those who attended to make the session worthwhile.