

Preparing for Adulthood – Enabling Independence

22 March 2018



This event was run in partnership by the One Voice Parent Carer Forum, SENDIASS and representatives from the Local Authority and Health. It was a follow up to the event held in November 2017 around Education and Employment, aimed at young people and their families who were entering into "Preparing for Adulthood" from aged 14 and over.

The aims of the event were to offer the opportunity for parents and young people to find out about the sort of opportunities that are available in Coventry to fit in with two of the broad areas of the Preparing for Adulthood agenda: "Independent Living" and "Friends, Relationships and Community". This had been requested by a number of attendees from the Education and Employment event.

The event started with a general introduction from the children and adults all-aged disability team, before attendees were invited to a "speed dating" opportunity to hear about different areas of support, including Occupational Therapy services, Direct Payments, Health services. There was also a presentation from Grapevine about their work, specifically relating to raising awareness of annual health check-ups and the Help and Connect programme.

Unfortunately, the turnout from young people and parents was lower than expected (about 25) which meant that there were more professionals at the event than parents. Many parents fed back that this created the impression that it was more of a professionals event than one firmly focussed on parents.

Feedback from the event was mixed, with suggestions of improvement indicating that a market place arrangement might have been better than the "speed dating".

"I'm not sure that anyone is going home knowing exactly what to expect or what they can access" – parent

"I'd hoped for more specific guidance – less waffley talks which didn't tell me much" - parent

"There was a lot of promises made about what will be available in the future, but no idea of when these things will be available. Many young people and their parents need to know this now!" - parent

There was also the opportunity for attendees to access the Local Offer website via a bank of computers, to look at the ways that the information was presented on there. Once again, there was a very small percentage of attendees, including the professionals in the room, who had used the Local Offer – some professionals indicated that they weren't aware of whether their information was even included on the website.

One of the main things to come out of the event was the need for all areas of the Preparing for Adulthood offer to be reviewed and updated on the website, to ensure that clear information was available .