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# **Preparation for Adulthood- Navigator Impact Report**

**July 2025**



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## **PFA Navigator Impact Report**

### **Background**

In October 2022 PACC's Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) Navigator Service was launched. The project was developed as a result of feedback from Parent Carers highlighting:

- Parent Carers do not know what is available
- The PFA Pathway is unclear
- Young People's PFA journey is not starting early enough
- Education, Health and Care Plan process for PFA is unclear and ineffective
- Parent Carers are unsure of where to get help with PFA

It was also identified that there was a perceived lack of preparation for adulthood for SEND young people in Shropshire.

- Limited opportunities to develop the skills needed.
- A focus almost solely on academic progress and not development of life skills.
- The right services not being available, accessible, known about or understood by families and practitioners.
- A lack of support to navigate the PFA process

Based on this feedback, the PFA Navigator service was launched with the aim to:

1. Create Peer Support Opportunities for both young people and parent carers
2. Improved quality of life outcomes for young people
  - a. Developing independence
  - b. Improved mental health
  - c. Increased activity levels
  - d. Stronger peer network
  - e. Successful transition to Post 16 services and adult social care support
  - f. Reduction in the number of young people who experience placement breakdown.
3. Supporting Parent Carers to be able to think ahead and actively participate in decision making relating to their young persons' next steps
  - a. Information provision
  - b. Creating a training offer
  - c. Provide a listening ear
  - d. Gathering feedback
  - e. Developing effective working relationships with local PFA services and SEND practitioners
4. An Improved PFA experience for parent carers
  - a. Providing better access to information
  - b. Empower Parent Carers to be able to actively plan ahead and contribute to decision making etc, improved parent carer wellbeing, reduction in sense of isolation

## Enquiries

Through the 3-year PFA Navigator service, there has been contact with 1863 Parent Carers.

Term	Community Support	1:1 Contact	Total number of contacts
Year 1 Term 1		22	22
Year 1 Term 2	27	19	46
Year 1 Term 3	27	57	84
Year 2 Term 1	131	26	157
Year 2 Term 2	168	30	198
Year 2 Term 3	208	110	318
Year 3 Term 1	181	23	204
Year 3 Term 2	292	47	339
Year 3 Term 3	393	79	472
<b>Total</b>	<b>1420</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>1863</b>

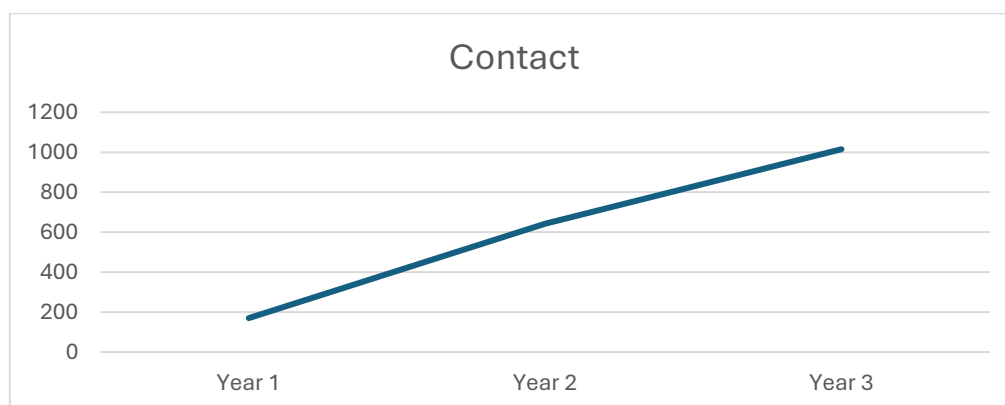
Community Support has included:

- Training events- delivered by external practitioners. This has included EHCP Masterclass, EHCP workshops, Finances and Deputyship, Post-16 law workshop, PFA webinar.
- Online Drop-in sessions hosted by the PFA Navigator- PFA social opportunities, EHCP's, being part of the community.
- Peer support opportunities- in person coffee events for parent carers and activities for children and young people with parent carers.
- Seasonal activities- Disco's, craft session and SEND grotto
- Healthy Lives Programme- holiday activities
- Buddies Social Network- Term Time activities
- Celebration events

1:1 contact is available through:

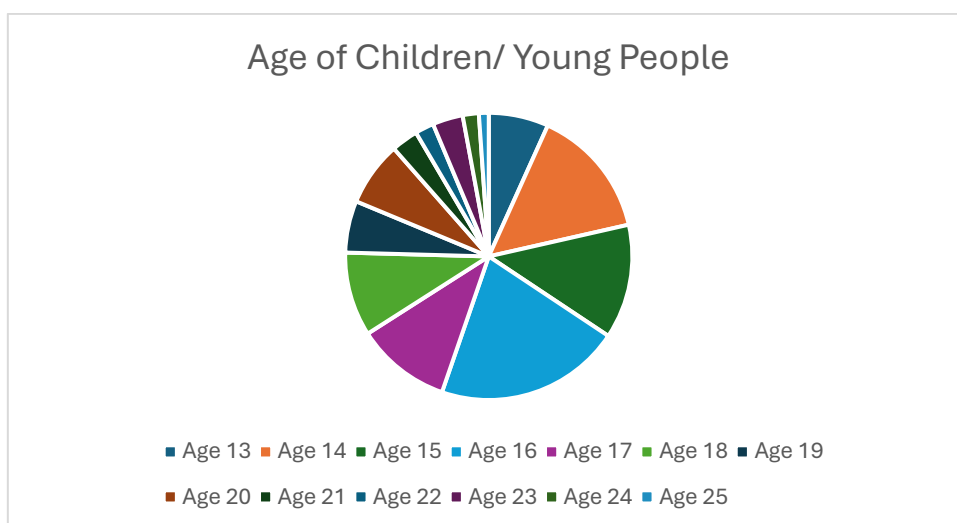
- Teams Calls
- Phone Calls
- In person at events

\*Contact where there has been 1 email and a response to provide the exact information has not been included in reporting as it is not possible to provide an exact figure with the large volume of emails and website contact directed to the Navigator.

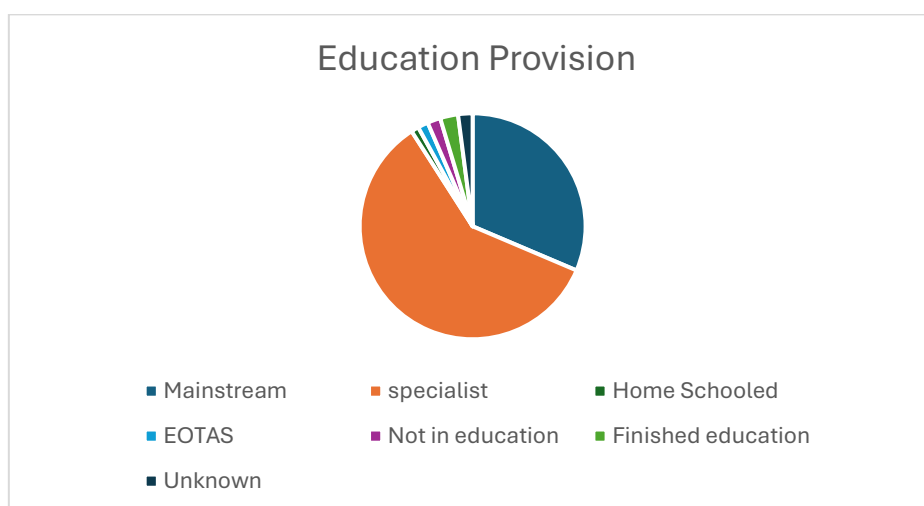


Through Year 1, there was a steady increase in the number of Parent Carers making contact. This correlated with an increase in social media comms and mail outs raising awareness of this service. Through Year 2 we saw a large increase in the number of Parent Carers making contact. In part this was due to the increased awareness of PACC's Healthy Lives Summer Programme and the social opportunities being offered to the 14–25-year-old SEND cohort, which are reported as extremely limited, especially during holiday periods. Towards the end of year 2, we also saw a high increase in the number of Parent Carers contacting in crisis where illegal practice meant their child/ young person was out of education, on a reduced timetable, or not being provided services.

Through Year 3, with an increased Social Media presence, signposting by practitioners and services, and an increase in PACC's Community Support offer, we have seen the highest number of contacts with Parent Carers. PACC's Healthy Lives Holiday Programme for 14–25-year-olds has also seen a high increase in registrations. Unfortunately, in Year 3, we have continued to see a rise in contacts regarding illegal practice, and a **421% increase** in contact from Parent Carers to understand the formal complaints procedure for Shropshire Council.



Parent Carers have contacted regarding children/ young people aged 13-25.



Children/ young people have been in mainstream provision, specialist provision. EOTA's, home schooled, do not have a named provision or have finished education.

Diagnosis of children/ young people has included autism, ADHD, down syndrome, learning disabilities, GDD, SEMH, anxiety, PDA, selective mutism, Tourette's, learning difficulties, speech and language, physical disabilities and chromosome abnormalities. Autism, Anxiety and SEMH being the most prevalent diagnosis'.

### **Meetings with Practitioners/ Community Services**

One of the key considerations of the PFA Navigator project was ensuring the development of effective working relationships with local PFA services and SEND practitioners.

Through Year 1 of PFA Navigator service relationships were developed with key partners across Education, Health and Social Care, which have continued for the duration of the contract. Monthly or termly meetings have been held to share feedback (themes and individual case studies where appropriate) with the local system to inform service development.

Over the 3-year contract, the project lead has attended a total of 107 meetings, including:

- Preparation for Adulthood Workstream
- SEND employment forum
- Team Manager – Learning Disability, Autism and Preparing for Adulthood.
- Supported Internship workstream
- Designated Social Care Officer
- Banardos Keyworkers
- Health SEND Leads from across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin
- Health Transition Awareness
- Post-16 Shropshire Ordinarily Available Provision

A total of 150 in-person activities and events have been attended, including:

- Transition events at Severndale Academy
- In person information events at Secondary Schools and Colleges
- Guest speaker at SSAFA annual conference
- IPSEA training events
- PACC conferences, including "Planning for the Future for Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities"
- Community Support events, providing peer support and signposting to support and services

### **Key Issues and Themes**

Contact with Parent Carers has been grouped into themes and has been summarised below with the number of Parent Carers that have made enquiries about that topic each term.

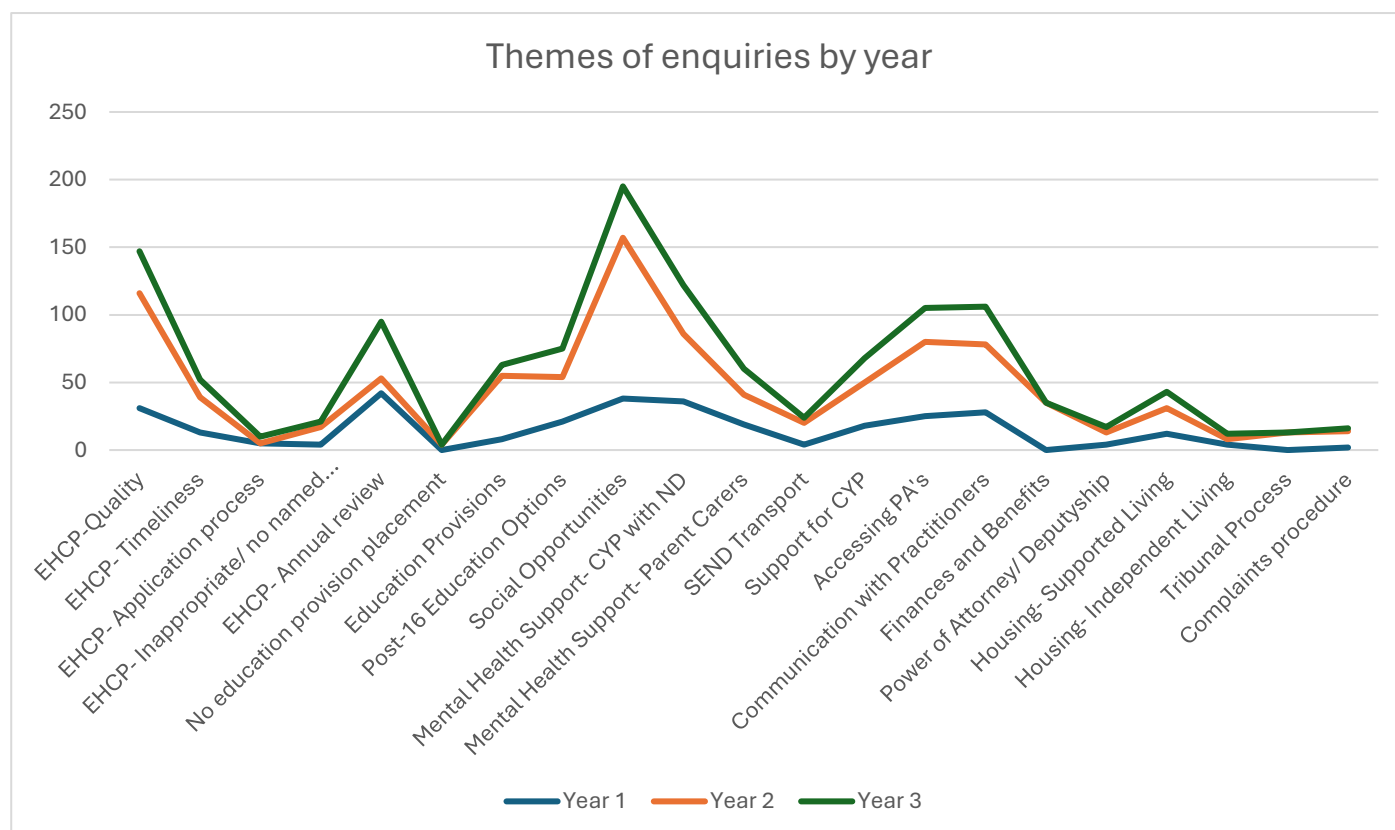
Each term, our Navigator has collated themes from contact with Parent Carers to feedback to the system. These themes have then been raised in meetings with the appropriate practitioners, across education, children's social care, adults social care and health.

Topic	Y1T1	Y1T2	Y1T3	Total	Y2 T1	Y2 T2	Y2 T3	Total2	Y3T1	Y3T2	Y3T3	Total 3	Total for Y1, 2 and 3
EHCP-Quality	6	12	13	31	21	42	53	116	27	31	23	81	228
EHCP- Timeliness	2	5	6	13	0	15	24	39	34	42	37	113	165
EHCP- Application	1	0	4	5	0	0	0	5	2	0	1	3	13
EHCP- Inappropriate/ no named provision	0	2	2	4	0	5	12	17	11	17	5	33	54
EHCP- Annual review	10	14	18	42	27	0	26	53	16	19	24	59	154
EHCP total enquiries	19	33	43	95	48	62	115	225	90	109	90	289	609
No education provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	9	12	6	27	31
Education Provisions	0	2	6	8	15	26	14	55	6	8	2	16	79
Post-16 Education Options	0	10	11	21	11	16	27	54	12	17	12	41	116
Social Opportunities	0	6	32	38	33	35	89	157	32	47	68	147	342
Mental Health Support- CYP with ND	4	13	19	36	20	26	40	86	28	26	14	68	190
Mental Health Support- Parent Carers	2	5	12	19	13	14	14	41	32	48	26	106	166
SEND Transport	0	4	0	4	3	6	11	20	3	5	3	11	35
Support for CYP	0	3	15	18	16	16	18	50	13	9	15	37	105
Accessing PA's	1	5	19	25	26	34	20	80	19	12	21	52	157
Communication with	6	10	12	28	12	26	41	78	24	38	32	94	200
Finances and Benefits	4	5	9	18	11	12	12	35	3	5	12	20	55
Power of Attorney/	0	3	1	4	2	3	8	13	2	1	9	12	29
Housing- Supported	0	4	8	12	9	11	11	31	8	12	12	32	75
Housing- Independent	1	2	1	4	2	3	3	8	2	3	5	10	22
Tribunal Process	0	0	0	0	3	4	6	13	1	2	6	9	22
Complaints procedure	0	2	0	2	5	4	5	14	18	24	17	59	75
1:1 contact	22	19	84	125	26	32	110	142	23	47	79	149	416
Community support	27	27	27	81	124	168	208	500	181	292	393	866	1420
Total Contact	22	46	111	179	150	200	318	642	204	339	472	1015	1836

The 5 themes with the highest number of enquiries over 3 years are:

1. Social Opportunities (342 enquiries)
2. Quality of Education, Health and Social Care Plans (228 enquiries)
3. Communication with Practitioners (200 enquiries)
4. Mental Health support for Neurodivergent children and young people (190 enquiries)
5. Mental Health support for Parent Carers (166 enquiries)

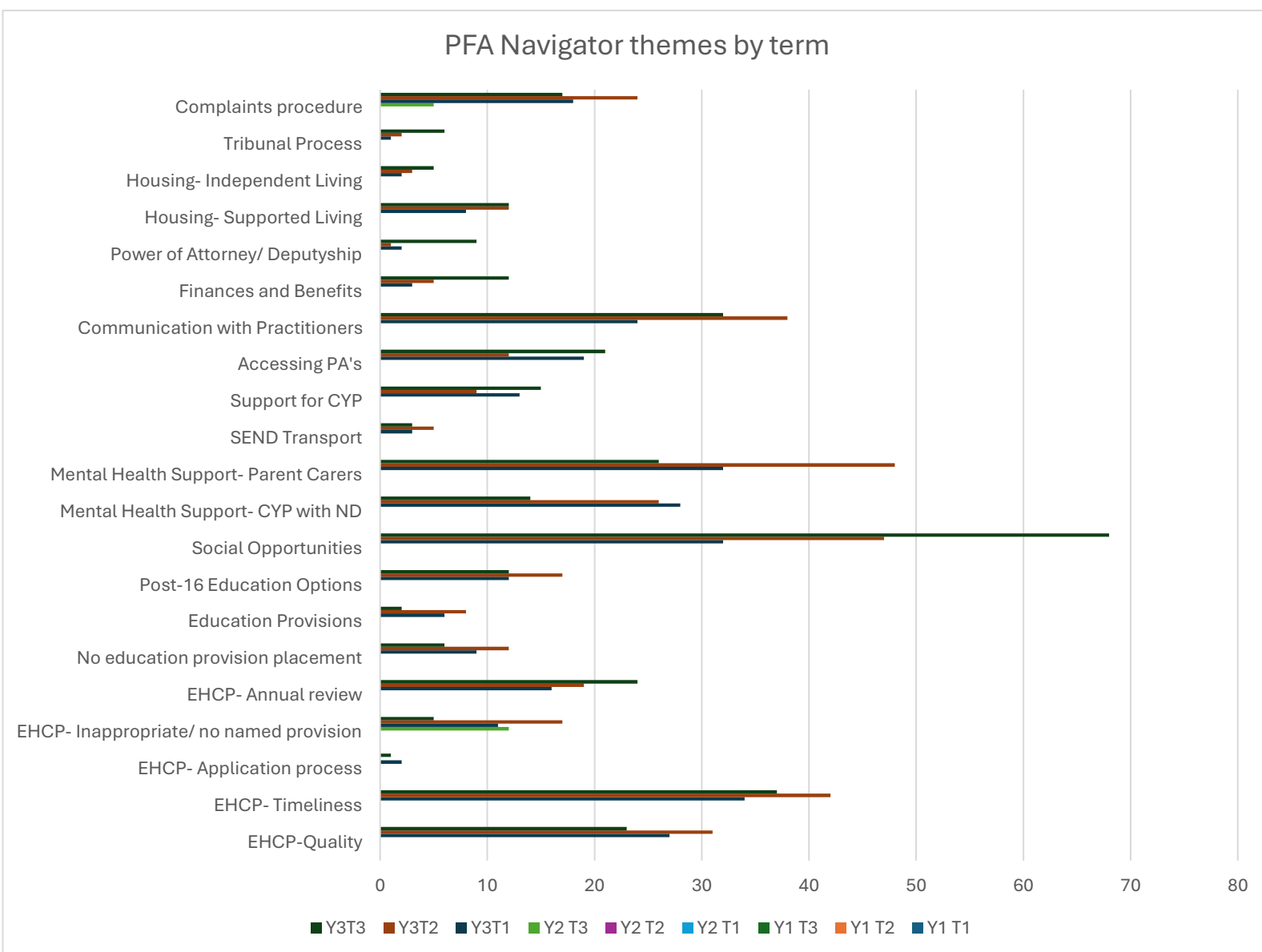
The graph below captures all themes that have been raised during year 1, year 2 and year 3 by year.





The highest point of enquiries is Social Opportunities- this is due to the increase in families registering for PACC's Healthy Lives Programme. In addition, the project lead has developed an extensive knowledge of social opportunities in Shropshire. Families regularly inform us they that struggle to access suitable opportunities, which in some cases is due to practitioners signposting families to activities that cannot meet the needs of their child/ young person. This is particularly prevalent in children and young people requiring 2:1 or 3:1 support, those with complex health needs, behaviours that challenge and when activities are not suitable because needs are so complex that a very personalised environment and approach to support is required to prevent distress to the young person occurring.

The graph below captures all themes that have been raised during year 1, year 2 and year 3 by term.



The most common themes are explained in further detail below.



## Education, Health and Care Plans

- Information is outdated, Reports from professionals over 6 years old and not a true reflection on CYP
- EHCP's not being adhered to in education provision
- Parent Carers unaware of PFA annual review and how this differs from previous reviews
- Following reviews EHCP's are not being returned within time scales.
- Phased transfer deadlines not being met
- Only section I being updated on plans which had gone over phased transfer deadlines
- Unaware of EHCP outcomes for PFA
- Issues with EHCP reviews not being returned within timescales
- Issues with EHCP reviews not being held
- Y9 annual reviews not having a focus on PFA
- Parent Carer's unaware what PFA review should be
- Concerns of EHCP not being implemented in provision Education
- Lack of Transition Support and planning
- Information being removed from plans around child/ young person's needs
- Difficulties contacting SEN team
- Case worker changes and families not being informed
- Lack of information available on Further Education
- Consultation information not being provided
- EHCP's Ceasing- It was highlighted following the EHCP Masterclass that Parent Carers were being advised young people's EHCP's would cease following completion of a supported internship- IPSEA clarified that an EHCP could not be ceased if the young person did not move into full time employment and wished to continue with education.

PACC have raised concerns shared by families with the EHCP Team. This has included asking for clarification on processes, creating surveys to capture issues where plans have not been completed on time (such as phased transfers or following an annual review), highlighting illegal practice.

Families have shared that communication from the EHCP team has improved, and conversations between PACC and the EHCP team are ongoing to ensure families are provided with accurate information.

We have also held 2 workshops with IPSEA enabling Parent Carers to have clear information about legislation and what should be included in plans.

Parent Carers have been signposted to IASS, IPSEA, been provided with the new case officers contact details, and have been signposted to external resources such as NDTi for guidance on how an annual review should be conducted and what information should be included in the plan.

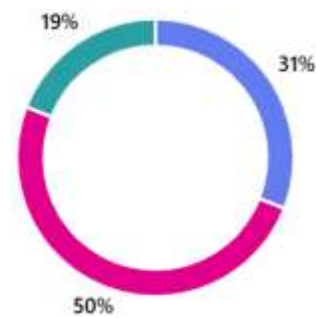
PACC also created MythBusters for social media and a frequently asked question document with the most asked questions around plans, which can be accessed [here](#).

At point of publishing, several families are still waiting for post-16 phased transfer EHCP's to be issued (legislation states a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March) and concerns with the quality of plans are ongoing.

Feedback from EHCP Survey

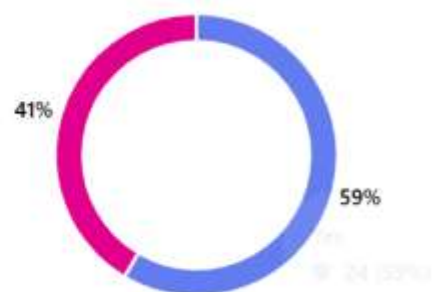
Was the EHCP issued in the legal 20 week timeframe?

Yes	13
No	21
Can't remember	8



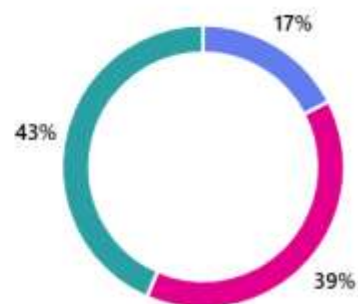
Have you experienced any delays in the plan being updated following a review?

Yes	24
No	17

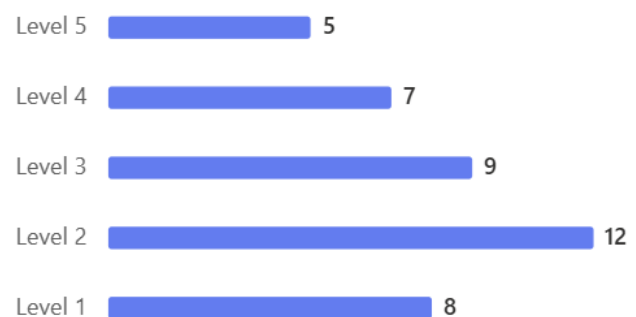
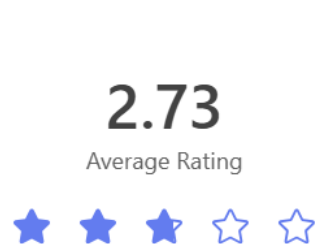


If your child/ young person is in Year 9 or above, did they have a focus on Preparation for Adulthood in their Year 9 annual review?

Yes	4
No	9
Don't know	10



How much do you agree or disagree that the help/support described in the EHCP will achieve the outcomes you have agreed? (strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree)



## Education

- Education Provision- Unclear of options for post-16 and criteria
- Accessing provision- school anxiety/ school refusal
- Increased contact from parent carers with children and young people of compulsory school age with no education provision
- Families only being provided with limited information of education provisions available
- Lack of information and support finding appropriate provisions for consultation
- Parent Carers feel blamed as their child/ young person behaves differently in school to home
- Reduced timetables being implemented not adhering to legislation

PACC have continued to develop relationships with education providers, attending transition events and open days, and staying in touch with providers about upcoming events to share with families. This has included maintained and independent schools and colleges.

There is a lack of information being shared with families sharing schools out of county for those with complex needs. Through year 3 we have had contact from families with young people with PMLD whose needs cannot be met in Shropshire provision.

Our project lead also worked closely with practitioners to ensure appropriate information is available on the Local Offer. PACC's PFA guide also explains post-16 options and links to local resources.

## Social Opportunities

- Lack of information available to parent carers about opportunities and how to access the correct level of support for CYP to participate.
- Families being signposted to providers that cannot meet needs
- Families being told to use community activity providers as respite
- Concerns of Activities being stopped once YP transition from CSC to ASC
- Activities- unaware of what community activities are available
- Unable to find a PA to support YP at activities
- Limited knowledge of providers with SEND experience
- Cost of accessing SEND activities
- Families with more than 1 child unable to access opportunities
- Unable to travel to activities

PACC have continued to offer Term-Time activities through Buddies Social Network and Holiday activities through The Healthy Lives Programme. From speaking to families, practitioners have continued to incorrectly inform families to use this offer as respite or as a holiday club.

Following feedback from families of the lack of opportunities in areas such as Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Market Drayton, PACC offered activities in these areas as part of the Healthy Lives Programme.

There is a clear gap in activities for children and young people requiring 2:1 or 3:1 support, those with complex health needs, behaviours that challenge and when activities are not suitable because needs are so complex that a very personalised environment and approach to support is required to prevent distress to the young person occurring.

PACC have raised concerns of the limited information publicly available around social opportunities for children and young people with SEND in Shropshire. Monthly Newsletters produced by PACC share as many opportunities as we can find.

## **Social Care**

- Parent Carers not receiving clear information of how direct payments can be used
- PA rates not being explained
- Actions agreed with social workers not being completed
- Misinformation being given about accessing day opportunities
- Misinformation being given about social opportunities
- Social workers unclear on housing options
- Care plans inaccurate and outdated
- Concerns over support at existing supported living homes
- Concerns over support being removed without updating care assessments
- Concerns over supported living properties not having appropriate management
- Concerns over inappropriate placements for supported living
- A lack of information available about housing on the Local Offer
- No point of contact for housing information
- Referral process for Early Help unclear
- Support available through Early Help unclear
- Assessment process for DCT not being explained to families
- Families being asked to complete paperwork that Early Help should complete

PACC created a [frequently asked question resource](#) for Parent Carers to understand Direct Payments. Further information is also available in PACC's PFA guide. PACC also shared information on The Healthy Lives Holiday Programme to ensure families were being given the correct information about the programme and the cohort this programme is suitable for. Unfortunately, families where the needs of their child/ young person are still being signposted to inappropriate community provision, causing false hope for families.

PACC have continued to raise:

- issues with communication and actions being carried out by Children's and Adult's Social Care.
- Concerns with processes and support available through Early Help.
- The lack of information and support available around housing options.

Several individual cases have also been raised with the PFA team around communication, care plans, support and processes.

Families have also contacted us raising concerns that they were not aware of financial contributions for Social Care, leading to large invoices as families have not been provided clear information by social workers. Some families have also reported lengthy periods where there has been no communication with social workers, or their social worker has left, and a new one has not been assigned.

Local Offer content continues to be co-produced with Children's social care. Due to the PFA workstream stopping for a significant period, information on PFA and social care remains unedited.

## **Mental Health**

- Mental Health Support for Parent Carers- Parent Carers are in crisis, with limited or no support from family or friends.
- Parent Carers unclear of the process to get mental health support through BeeU
- Schools are not clear on how to support mental health needs if they are presented differently in school to how parent carer describes.
- Waiting lists for support
- Children and young people at crisis and not able to access support
- Increase in families paying for private therapy
- Lack of understanding from practitioners around neurodivergence and mental health
- Parent Carers have said they feel blamed for their child/ young person struggling
- Children/ young people self-harming as they are struggling
- Children/ young people unable to access keyworker service as they are waiting for a diagnosis

## **Health**

- Unclear transition pathways
- Unclear referral process for BeeU

- Waiting times to access support and services
- Issues with accessing GP appointments
- Issues accessing dentists
- Issues accessing blood tests
- Limited information available around puberty
- Limited information available around sexual health

PACC have continued to meet regularly with health practitioners to raise concerns families have shared. Frequently Asked Questions resources have been created to explain processes more clearly. Our project lead has met regularly with practitioners from BeeU and has been able to raise case studies where families are in crisis. All families have been contacted by practitioners in health.

Local offer content has been co-produced with Health practitioners regularly engaging with PACC where gaps in content have been identified.

## **Finances and Benefits**

- Universal Credit process unclear
- Families not aware of social care contributions when young person is in receipt of benefits
- Families unaware their claim of Universal Credit being impacted if young person claims
- Confusion of Child Benefit and how long families can claim
- Unclear information around wills and trusts
- Mental Capacity: Parent Carers unsure of this area, how to approach and what they need to do.

This continues to be an area with local information being very limited for families to access, with families reporting to be confused, alone and they do not know who to speak to about finances and benefits.

PACC have worked closely with PlanIt future to offer online information sessions and the PFA Guide covers all key areas that families have contacted us regarding.

## **Transport**

- Lack of information around criteria for School/ Post-16 Transport
- Legislation not being followed for SEN Transport for CYP with no EHCP
- Lack of information around post-19 transport
- Families being given incorrect information about transport

- Children/ young people struggling with transport arrangements

PACC raised with SEND transport that information being given to families and used on the Local Offer was not in line with legislation- families were being informed that their child/ young person was not eligible for SEND transport without an EHCP.

PACC also engaged with IPSEA due to the high number of enquiries received around SEND transport and the eligibility criteria and process. Following IPSEA looking at the Transport process, they raised that Shropshire Councils SEND Transport Policy was not available on the Local Offer as per legislation. At point of publishing this report, the school-age transport policy is not published online.

## Complaints

- Parent Carers unable to find the formal complaints procedure
- Parent Carers unclear on the process if legislation is not being followed
- Parent Carers being informed to follow the tribunal process where inappropriate provision is named in the EHCP
- Parent Carers unsure of the tribunal process and what it involves
- Complaints not being responded to in a timely manner
- Incorrect information being used as evidence in response to complaints



## Community Support Activities

Through Buddies Social Network and PACC's Healthy Lives Programme, 14–25-year-olds have been able to access:

- Bowling
- Horse Riding
- Theatre trips including Abba and Frozen
- Bingo
- Disco's
- Sing along sessions
- Yoga
- Self- defence classes
- Sailing
- SEND Santa Experience
- Activities with 19 community Providers through PACC's 2023 Healthy Lives Programme
- Activities with 32 community Providers through PACC's 2024 Healthy Lives Programme
- Activities with 31 community Providers through PACC's Healthy Lives Programme (May- August)
- Healthy Lives Programme awards and celebration events

Over 300 Children and Young People have been supported to access activities who prior to this had little to no opportunity to create friendships, maintain friendships and socialise with their friends like everyone else!

## Outcomes/ Referrals/ Outputs

Through lived and work experience the Navigator has developed a vast knowledge of support and services in Shropshire- this includes support for Parent Carers and Children and Young People- Social Opportunities, key contacts, as well as national organisations and charities.

Parent Carers are regularly signposted to appropriate services including:

- IPSEA
- IASS
- NDTi resources and guides
- Local Offer
- All In
- First Point of Contact
- Buddies Social Network
- PACC Healthy Lives Programme
- Citizens Advice
- PlanIt Future
- Community Activities (i.e., Arty Party, SYA, 4all foundation, Shropshire Inclusive Dance)
- Young Minds
- Autism West Midlands
- Shropshire Youth Support Trust
- Early Help Drop In events
- Healthier Together
- Dynamic Support Register
- Relevant Practitioners within the system
- Shropshire Council Complaints procedures
- SEND specialist solicitors
- Local Authority Ombudsmen

The Navigator has raised 91 cases with operational practitioners across education, health and social care which has resulted in issues within the system for these families being resolved. This has included experiences with EHCP's going beyond legal timescales, no communication from services with parent carers, misinformation being given to parent carers (transport, direct payments, EHCP's ceasing, transition and finances), reduced timetables not being reported,

complaints not being appropriately dealt with and case officers changing within the SEN team. It is positive that most individual cases raised at an operational level by the navigator have been resolved, however, it is disappointing this has not led to systemic change, and many of the issues and themes being raised by parent carers are ongoing.

Where Parent Carers have contacted in crisis and highlighted this including examples and evidence of illegal practice, the Navigator has also made key contacts within the Local Authority to raise emerging themes and concerns.

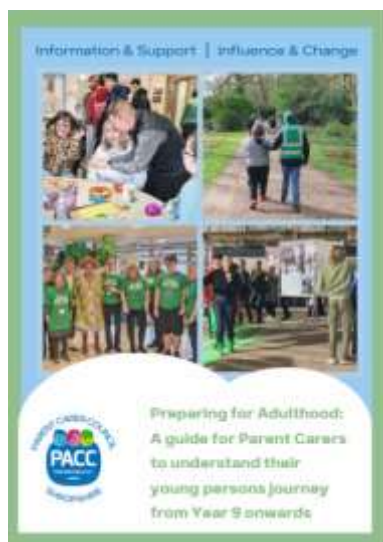
Where appropriate, individual case studies have also been raised with appropriate Directors within the Local Authority. To date 10 case studies have been raised (initially in 2023 and raised again in January 2024) where families have contacted the navigator to discuss repeat failings and illegal practice within the system- to date, responses to these are outstanding.

Through the navigator role and community support:

- 401 young people have accessed PACC's PFA Healthy Lives Programme
- 103 Parent Carers have accessed training opportunities
- 416 Parent Carers have had 1:1 calls to help navigate their child/ young person's journey
- 423 Parent Carers have accessed community support activities and peer support opportunities
- Many Parent Carers have reported feeling heard, valued and supported through Navigator Contact
- Parent Carers and Children and Young People have reported feeling less alone
- 89% Parent Carers would recommend contacting PACC's PFA Navigator to friends and family (N=62)
- 51 Parent Carers responded to a feedback survey and rated the PFA Navigator service 4.95/5
- 92 Parent Carers were not aware of 'Parent Carer Needs Assessments' and were signposted appropriately by the navigator
- Out of the 4 Parent Carers who contacted as their young person had no education provision, 2 of these are now in full-time education, which they have stated would not have happened without Navigator support
- Information Parent Carers have not been able to find in relation to PFA on the Local offer has now been updated
- More accurate information about SEN transport is now available on the Local Offer
- 3 Parent Carers completed The Healthy Parent Carer Programme- a 12-week online programme focusing on parent carer mental health- [Home – Healthy Parent Carers](#)

The Navigator service has provided Parent Carers with information and knowledge of the SEND system in Shropshire. More importantly, a key outcome to this service is providing a listening, non-judgemental and understanding experience for parent carers, who often feel judged, blamed and isolated.

## PACC PFA Guide



PACC's PFA Navigator Project Lead has created a guide for Parent Carers/ Family carers to support them to navigate their young persons journey from year 9 onwards. Co-produced with Parent Carers, this guide covers Education, Health and Social Care- providing information, QR codes to further reading, legislation and useful organisations.

The short version of the guide is available now, with the full version launching in September 2025. This version will be available in a printable version and an online version with click-links.

The short guide can be accessed [here](#).

## Feedback

- Just thank you for all you do.
- Thank you so very much for the difference you make
- Thank you so much to everyone involved
- We really value the work you do.
- Thank you for your time and dedication- it really is appreciated
- We all felt very welcome and included and really enjoyed the activities and meeting new people
- He is having the best of times, and it really helps the long summer holiday along having plenty of activities he can access and enjoy
- Wow, what would we do without PACC, all round great activities for families and young people
- Activities offered have been fantastic, He has been able to join in and see his friends and meet people, he has enjoyed everything he's done
- The program was amazing. We took part in the cycling and canoeing both were run very well and we all had a great time. The helpers at both were fantastic.
- The HLP has enabled me to know what provision is available for my daughter. It has given her a sense of belonging and community. Thank you.
- Thankyou for all the hard work and preparation you have put into making the Healthy Lives programme such a positive experience.
- A massive thank you to all the staff involved this has made our summer, and it's so lovely to see him out of the house having fun
- Amazing to set all this up and for free - thank you!
- A big thank you to all involved in the organising healthy lives and clubs
- The range of activities is all encompassing, and being given the opportunity to take part has been invaluable to us as a family. We are so grateful.
- She has absolutely loved every single activity she has done! There have been some fantastic activities on offer this year & a good mix to suit everyone's individual needs & interests. There has sometimes been a little confusion over times, places & who's attending but I wouldn't the job of sorting it, & overall everything has run quite smoothly!
- Thank you to everyone involved in organising & arranging everything, you've basically made her summer PACC and the Healthy Lives programme have made such a difference to our daughter. She has had opportunities to take part in so many activities that she wouldn't be able to access and enjoyed herself hugely along the way. The range of activities is really well

thought out and researched with something for everyone. The PACC staff and volunteers are amazing, so kind and helpful with a real understanding of our children's needs. She has had much more social 12 opportunities as a result of the programme and been able to access activities she wouldn't normally be able to. The benefit to her confidence and self-esteem is obvious. The chance to take part in the family activities this year was also a real positive. It enabled all of the family to be involved, meet other families as well as benefitting physically. It's the first time my husband has accessed any SEND activities with us and he really enjoyed it. The ability to access activities at a suitable level with excellent instructors was really good for her and she enjoyed activities we weren't sure she would like! In particular the family canoe day was a real treat with fantastic instruction as was the tennis, both of which we will now try to continue with in the future. The chance to do these activities for no charge is also so helpful and appreciated, it's not always possible to try new things when there is a cost and many of our young people wouldn't be able to access them. The programme really has made such a difference to us over the summer holidays and provided some real highlights and things to look forward to for our young person.

- The impact PACC's Healthy Lives programme has had on my young person's well-being has been huge. Before starting the programme, her additional needs meant she had spent her whole life trying, but failing to fit in. This resulted in mental health crisis. The support, encouragement and compassion shown to her during every single session has led my young person to finally believe she has a future, a sense of purpose and belonging. She has particularly enjoyed the gym sessions. Thank you! The healthy lives holiday programme has yet again offered a fun range of different activities for her to try. The family tennis was a big hit with us all. She particularly enjoyed the school of Rock, the Hive sessions, yoga and singalong with Eve. Disco on the boat despite the weather was awesome and she loved wearing her prom dress again and going out with her friends. Thank you thank you. It has been a great summer.
- Fantastic summer of activities, made a big difference to my daughters health and wellbeing. She has tried some new exercise which she can hopefully take up in the future. Also some new venues have been visited which will help with anxiety when going again in the future. Many thanks to the team.
- Informative, reassuring and empowering
- My PFA was superb! and the information they provided was excellent, it was just not suitable for my young person. There seems to be a gap in services and I believe that many young people that have hidden disabilities fall through the gaps. I am going to go to a coffee morning and see if I can get further information
- Abi was brilliant, proactive and reassuring. She was very approachable so I will be back in touch in due course!!
- Denise was friendly, professional and helped me to move forward. It was great to have someone to turn to for advice and has helped to reduce my mental load somewhat.. Thank-you.
- Very approachable and knowledgeable
- Abi has always been very supportive and helpful. I also attended a PACC conference with Shropshire council which was very informative
- I have found Abi and Denise to be amazing, it has truly improved my ability to function and support my son & confirmed that I am not alone, & not being an overprotective mum, the difficulties are real and the help with the day to day fight to get what is needed is brilliant.

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I came to PACC after signing up to a parent/ carer course. I had been feeling incredibly isolated and needed to connect with other people who understood. The course itself focused on my life as a carer and what I could do to look after myself. Something I hadn't really considered; all my energy goes to my children.

From the start of the course Abi made me feel incredibly welcome and comfortable. She is amazing at putting people at ease. I felt able to share my story and didn't feel judged at all. She listened to me and offered suggestions which were so helpful. She also made me laugh, gosh that should never be underestimated as important. Life is so serious, as a parent carer you can feel consumed by everything you have to do.

Abi signposted me to several different things that I didn't know anything about. Some for my children some for me. We signed up for summer activities which I didn't know about. These activities quite simply saved my sanity. My daughter struggles without a plan which the activities gave us. I got to chat to other parents and staff which was so lovely.

Abi has a vast knowledge of what our area offers and about the education system. Knowing she is an email away has been so helpful and reassuring. My daughter is in Year 6 so this year is going to be a challenge, looking for a suitable school to transition to, I know Abi will be there to support me if I have any questions. I value her expertise and knowledge very much.

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We first contacted Abi in November 2022 and wow what a source of light she is.

To prepare for this review we had a look at previous correspondence, and what comes over in these, (and telephone conversations), is her professionalism, demonstrated by her empathy with our situation, an ability to listen, and also ask good questions.

Abi is always very professional and will quickly follow through with any actions she has given herself, whether it be a link for a follow up meeting, going to chat to someone on our behalf, or finding out some information for us & quickly updating us on it.

Abi's knowledge of her subject is really helpful and has helped us understand the process we need to follow to get our son a school. Abi also got Debbie on the IPSEA workshop regarding EHCP's which was really helpful, as we hadn't heard of IPSEA till Abi advised us. Attending the course also helped us not to feel so isolated, as there were other parents/carers attending the course.

Could we also mention her never ending patience and cheering up superpowers. We have both felt down at times, with this long battle to get our son schooling (20 months), but Abi is always available for moral fortitude and that has been great.

We feel really lucky to know Abi, as I am sure you all do too. Thank you so much Abi.

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As a parent/carers of a SEN child leaving childhood and entering adulthood at the very same time as leaving the County he grew up in and moving across the

country to Shropshire, I am well placed to speak of the value of Abi Taylor in her position of Community Support Lead and PfA navigator. Her vast knowledge aside, the support we got while negotiating the very frustrating and at times alarmingly unhelpful SEN paths we needed to take in order to get our child an education placement was invaluable.

Firstly, Abi has always been available. As parent of a 18 year old SEN student, who was stuck at home for 9 months in total, while we fought for an educational setting and a Social Worker which we needed as we tried to secure him a place at Derwen, Abi has always very approachable, available and kind. Our child was at home full time and as such my moments when I was free to get advice were often times out of hours, never once was I asked to call back at a suitable time, my emails were always answered speedily and calls were never rushed. Her knowledge of the system and her advice on who to approach and how is without doubt the only reason we finally had some success in getting him a setting for a short while before the summer holiday and finally in getting things in place to ensure a start at Derwen College in September last year.

To say our journey since arriving in Shropshire and trying to get our son into further education after taking him out of an excellent 6th Form in Norfolk and bringing him with when we moved to Shropshire was frustrating and disheartening is an understatement. It was just by chance that we happened upon Abi at a Buddies Group event and after explaining our dilemma, she set to work with advice and suggestions immediately. We didn't know a soul in Shropshire and were already being let down before we had moved even though we had given plenty of notice to County of our arrival and our educational intentions for our son.

We were already being let down by the system that is designed to control the education of the vulnerable, we had to go through the right channels and those channels were proving frustrating and fruitless, we had months of no contact from the very people in control and Abi was the one person who listened and advised.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the success (albeit laboured and lengthy) of getting our son into Derwen College lies completely with Abi and her help. We would still be struggling now without her help.

Aside from that, his very active social life is attributed to her involvement too. The summer programme of activities organised by PACC was a well organised life saver. It kept him very busy gave me the breaks that I desperately needed and gave him a social life that he very much needed. It also gave him experiences with a great many activities he would never otherwise have been exposed to. We have never had such great involvement and care when it comes to our SEN child, in Norfolk there are no such positions, groups or activities. Abi is a massive part of all of these and as such is invaluable.

When talking to other SEN parents, it's clear ours is one of the easier cases by a country mile. Parents actually rely on Abi. Sometimes they have no idea how to proceed, who to email, contact or chase to get answers. Abi is a lifeline she

speaks on our behalf with knowledge and heart. We all know that nothing comes easily for those parents with SEN children, their day to day lives and their futures are a constant worry and just getting them their basic needs (like a decent educational setting) is a constant fight and struggle. People in positions like Abi, should be valued and looked after. They make real differences to the lives of the vulnerable and their families.

This time last year, we were in a whole different place to now when we have a very happy 19 year old in college and socially busier than he has ever been, there is no doubt we would still be in that place a year on without Abi Taylors help.

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## Reflection

The PFA Navigator Service has created Peer Support Opportunities for both young people and parent carers- through Buddies Social Network, Healthy Lives Programme, Training events and coffee mornings, both Parent Carers and young people have experienced positive peer engagement and support. Through opportunities for young people friendships have been created and continued to develop. Young people have also reported the positive of peer engagement in creating role modelling and seeing hope for their future.

Young People have experienced an Improved quality of life outcome through being able to attend regular activities with peers, where in time Parent Carers have been required to provide less support. This in turn has had a positive impact on young peoples mental health and confidence.

Direct contact with the navigator has provided Parent Carers with access to information to support their young persons journey and be able to forward plan and consider next steps. This has been achieved through:

- Providing clear information without acronyms or terminology that may cause confusion
- Signposting to further reading including legislation where appropriate
- Providing training opportunities including EHCP's, Post-16 transport, Wills and trusts, Power of Attorney and Deputyship
- Providing a listening ear with no judgement or blame and lived experience and understanding of the life of a Parent Carer
- Gathering and collating feedback termly to create opportunities and provide resources and materials


From feedback, Parent Carers have shared that they feel prepared, less alone and like they now have the support and capacity to look to the future and actively plan. Information provision has also empowered parent carers to feel their contribution is valued and important. Peer support and The Healthy Parent Carer programme has also improved Parent Carer wellbeing.

Disappointingly the PFA Navigator Service has not had an impact on systemic issues and service development. Navigator termly reports have been shared with practitioners and themes in feedback have been raised at relevant meetings and workstreams across education, health and social care- as shown in themes and graphs, key systemic issues are ongoing and work still needs to be done to improve services. Positive relationships have been formed with partners across all these areas, however, although issues and themes raised have been acknowledged in meetings and individual cases may have seen a positive change in their situation and have positive outcomes, systemic issues have failed to be recognised and addressed. There are clear barriers to addressing some of these issues and how to make positive systemic change.

Key issues which need to be addressed include:

1. Decisions about post 16 placements are made too late which means that there is a lack of quality transition taking place, putting placements at risk. Placement decision needs to be made earlier to support effective transition. The decision between a specialist or mainstream placement would ideally be made in Year 10.
2. EHCPs are often out of date at year 9 and are not being updated, meaning that post 16 providers are not receiving accurate information about needs and do not have the correct support or adjustments in place at the start of the placement. This is causing distress for both young people and parent carers and is putting placements at risk.

3. There is insufficient consideration of PFA outcomes in EHCP's from year 9, with a focus on academic outcomes and not the wider life skills that young people with SEND need to learn. In particular there is a lack of detail about provision and outcomes particularly relating to ensuring a successful transition between school and college, along with insufficient social care input to support active planning where it is likely that young people will need support with everyday living activities post 18.
4. Annual Reviews are happening inconsistently and are not considering the wider needs of young people, which is having a negative impact on transition. This means that frequently the health and social needs of young people are not being appropriately considered, even where these needs are significant. In particular we are concerned that families of young people with complex support needs and who are likely to need support post 18, frequently report no contact from Children's Social Care and a lack of understanding of the PFA Social Care offer.



## PFA Navigator Service

**As PACC's PFA Navigator Project contract comes to an end, we are reflecting on the last 3 years and what an important service this has been for the SEND community in Shropshire.**

"Over the last 3 year's, I have met over 400 SEND families in Shropshire and supported them to navigate their young person's journey. I would like to thank all of the families that have trusted me, shared their experiences / struggles/ achievements and felt comfortable to speak so openly and honestly.

I am looking forward to seeing where our new All-Age Navigator project takes us and meeting more new families.



**Abi- PFA Navigator Project Lead,  
Community Support Strategic Lead**