

Shropshire PACC

Co-Producing the Shropshire SEND Strategy
'Developing the Vision'
17th May 2019

Participation Report

I Aspire To Be.....



Shropshire SEND Visioning Day – Co-Producing the Shropshire SEND Strategy

The day was hosted by Shropshire Council, Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group and the Shropshire Parent and Carer Council (PACC). The audience was made up of children and young people (75) from a variety of Shropshire Schools and Colleges, parent carers (25) and practitioners, senior managers and elected members (30).

The event followed the PATH process, see <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/paths/>

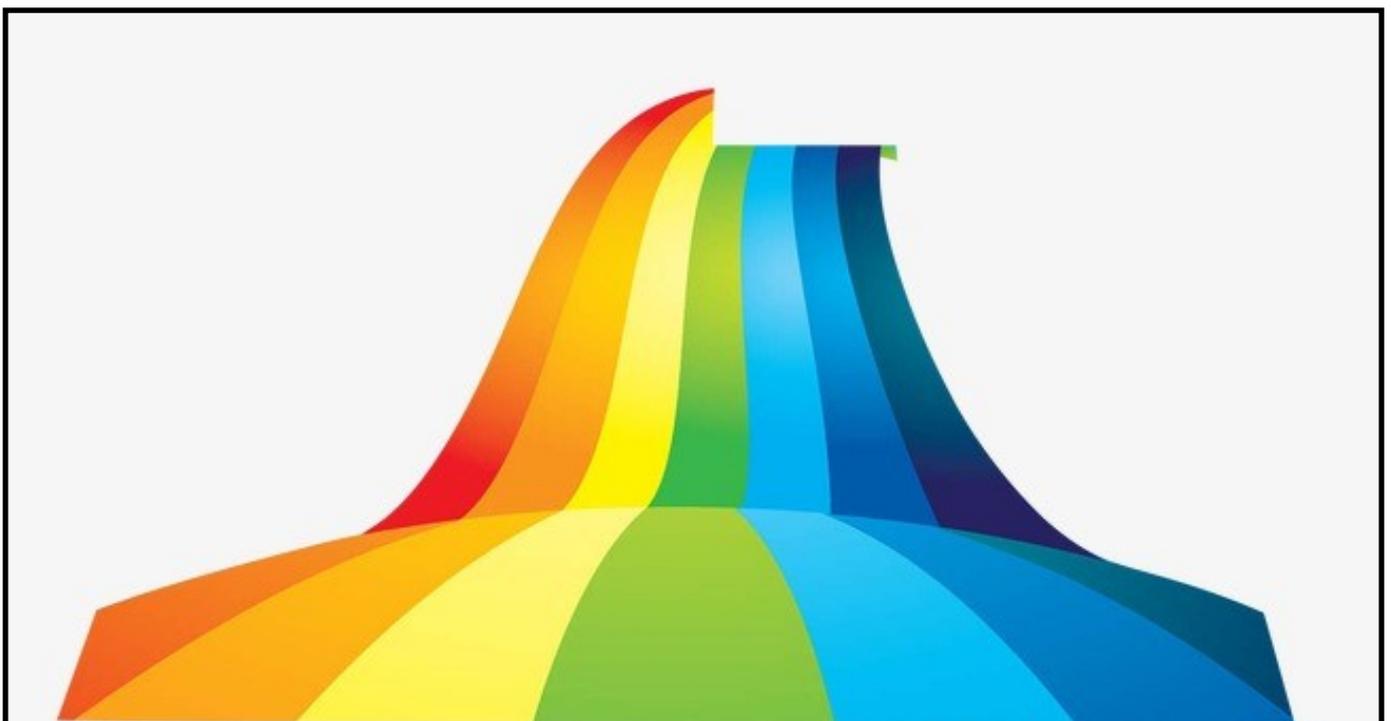
Feedback was taken from each table after discussion of each stage of the PATH. Each Table had a facilitator and a mixed group of young people, parent carers and practitioners.

Naming the PATH

Each table was asked to suggest a name for the Shropshire PATH. The top two were agreed by a vote. These were 'Being Me' and The Rainbow Road'. In the final vote 'Being Me' received the most votes but there was an agreement that both suggestions should be used to name the PATH. Therefore the Shropshire PATH is known as '**Being Me – the Rainbow Road**'.

NB. The Rainbow Road referred to is a course on a Super Mario racing game – it is described as follows;

“Rainbow Road is a recurring course found in the Mario Kart series, where it closes the Special Cup and the Grand Prix seasons overall. All the versions of the track share common elements : they are all suspended in space or sky, and have a very colourful track layout, hence the name, and powerful themed music. An uplifting-themed music has remained with Rainbow Road throughout the series. The roads often have limited railing, making the course extremely hard”



What is our Dream?

Attendees were asked to imagine their ideal future and what would this look like? This stage was about taking a positive approach with no consideration for potential barriers. It is important to understand what people see has a positive outcome for themselves when designing support. Each table had a short discussion and then shared 5 things that would describe their dream future. The table below lists the key themes and the amount of times they were mentioned.

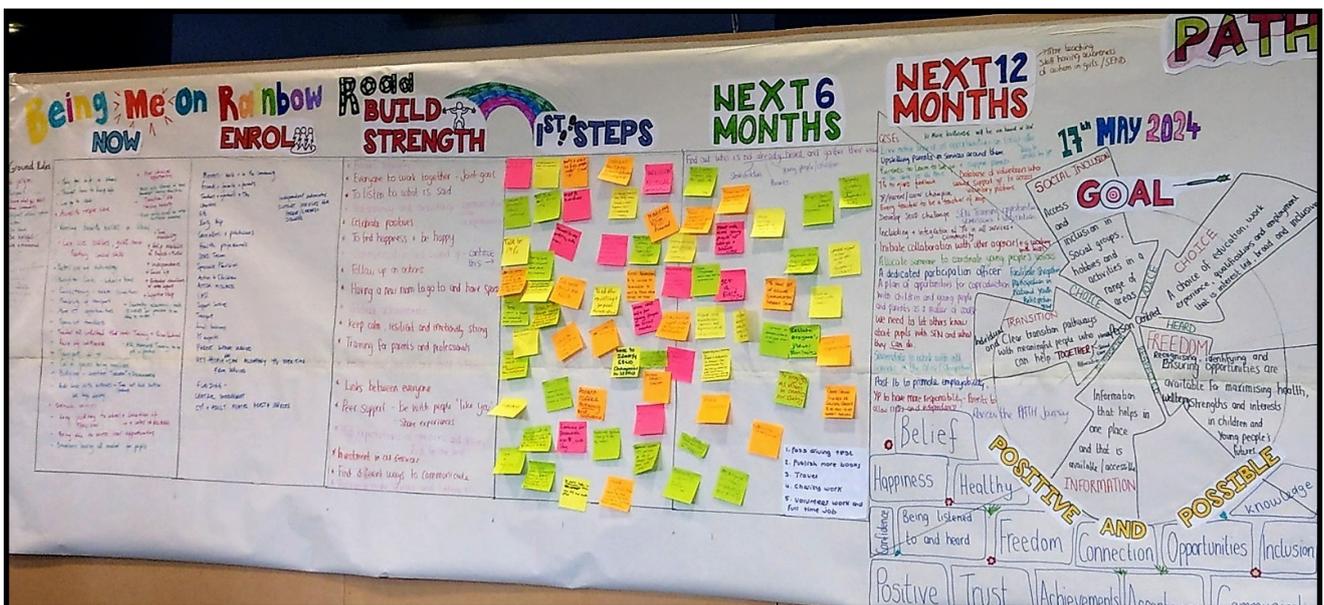
Theme	Number of times mentioned
Having my own home	8
Having a job	17
To be able to travel independently	4
Having friends	10
To continue to learn	1
Having a dog	1
Having a family	3
To participate in hobbies and activities in the community	5
To have a voice and to be listened to	5
To be an MP for special needs	1
To be financially secure	1
Good quality and consistent support	3
Support for transition in small steps	2
A good routine	1
A local skate park	1
To be independent and to have choice	4

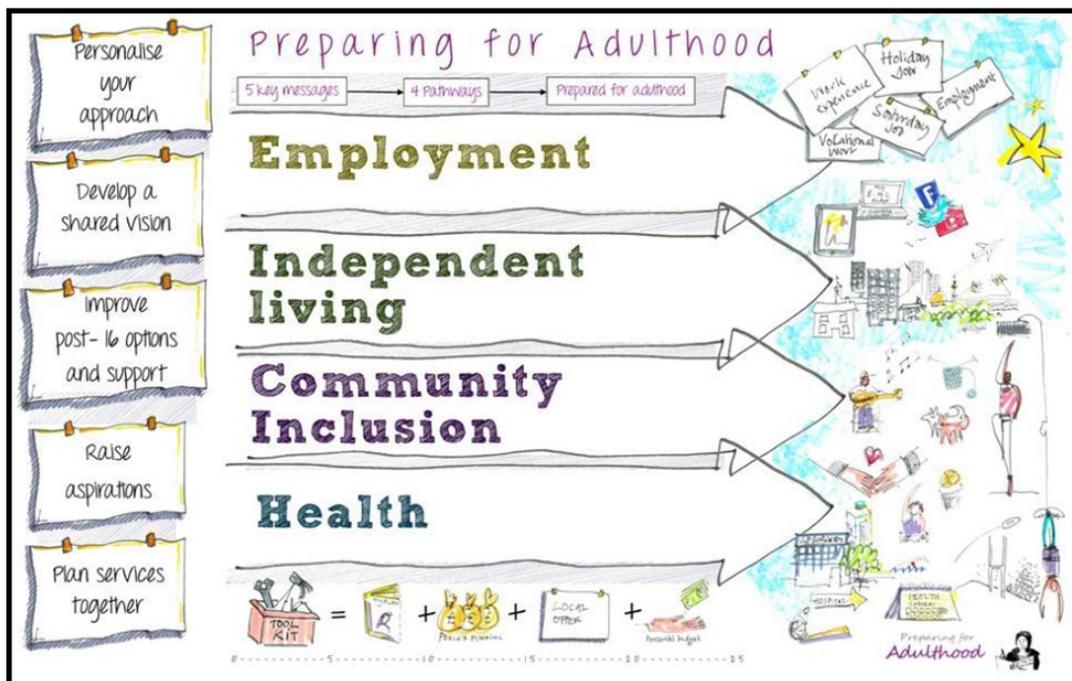


How will we know when we get there?

The next step was to think about how will we know when we have achieved our dream? Again, each table was given time to discuss this and then provided the following feedback;

- There will be more information available – earlier Support will be joined up
- Transition plans will be person centred
- There will be more opportunities for employment
- People will hear what we say
- We can travel to places independently
- We have opportunities to meet our friends outside of school
- It will be ok to change our mind if we try something and it isn't right for us
- Travel training will be on offer from a younger age
- Support is flexible, when I need and want it
- There is more purpose built accommodation available
- A clear matching process for deciding who lives with who that involves me
- I will have completed my qualifications and be living in my own home
- Better guidance is available
- Transition will be better
- More support from friends
- More job opportunities
- People will have a more positive view of disability
- I will have friends for life inside and outside of school
- I am supported to be active in the community
- I am supported to make and maintain friendships
- I received personalised and person centred care
- I have a social life
- There is good support for 18 – 24 years olds
- I have access to mentors and advocates to help me make positive choices





What is it like now and how will we move forward?

Each table was asked to discuss the current situation, what is working well and what needs to change so that we can achieve our dream?

There is a lack of social opportunities – especially for older young people. We need more support and opportunities outside of school and during holidays

We feel safe in school and are taught to look after ourselves (Severndale)

We can go to some after school clubs (Severndale)

We have overnight shortbreaks (Severndale)

We need better access to health care (Severndale)

We get support from scribes in exams and extra time

We need more opportunities to practice social skills

Not all teachers respond consistently

There is a need to strengthen links and communication between home and schools

There isn't a consistent approach for implementing exam adjustments

I can't access afterschool clubs because of using SEN Transport provision

We need to use technology better and more effectively

It is hard to find the right people to do the jobs

Teachers don't understand what I need to be successful

We need more and better Information, Advice and Guidance

We need more support and opportunities to build young people's self confidence

The chance to learn to travel independently was really good

More calm and safe places to go to if you are upset

Small acts of bullying are not dealt with soon enough

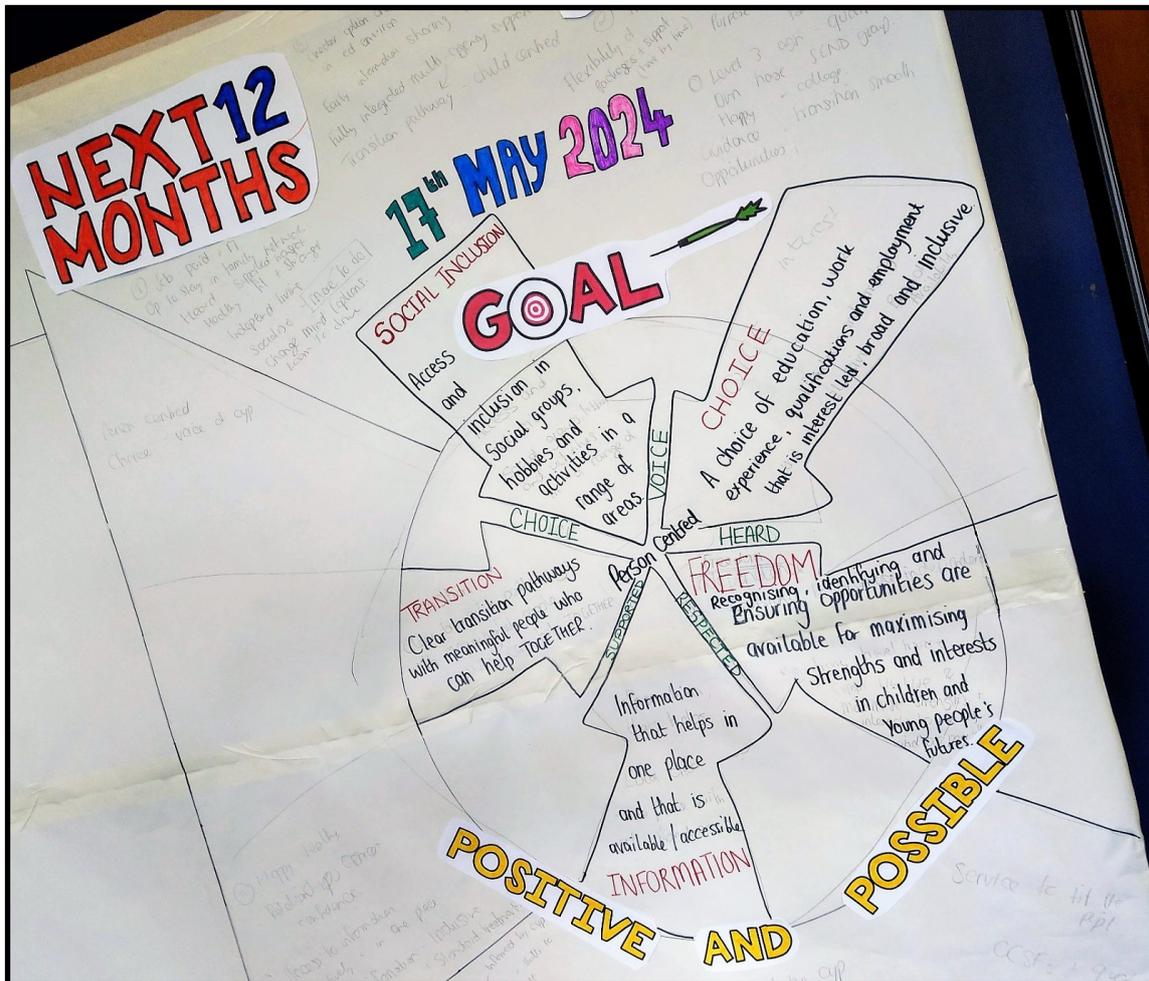
Long journeys to school are still a problem for some

Lack of consistent access to activities for all

Building Strengths

All attending the workshop were asked to think about what will help us on our journey. The following suggestions were made;

- Peers – being able to meet up with people who understand our lives
- More knowledge about how the system works – “Knowledge is power”
- Council/schools/local community working together
- Developing shared goals and vision
- Transparency and consistency in how support is allocated and provided
- Clear communication and a joined up approach
- Celebrate success and the positive achievements
- 24/7 joined up thinking and communication
- Actions followed up after meetings
- Training for parent carers
- Not to be scared to ask for help
- Spending time with like minded people
- Investment in services and families
- Finding something that you enjoy
- Finding a way to express yourself



What should we do in the next 12 months?

The next stage was to consider what steps we need to take to start the journey towards achieving our dream. Attendees were asked to identify goals for Shropshire to work towards and the following suggestions were made;

- Create an effective Local Offer
- Develop a plan about how we continually communicate with each other
- Plan regular opportunities for co-production across all services
- True integration and inclusion - being clear about what this looks like?
- Creating SEND Champions in all services, not just SEND specific ones
- Creating a culture where every teacher is a teacher of SEND
- More training and awareness raising for families and practitioners about SEND legislation
- Allowing young people to take risks – this can be supported by helping families confidence in services to improve
- Encourage more volunteer help for the SEND community – e.g. develop a database of volunteers who will support young people with SEND in voluntary positions
- Get MP's to listen – ensure that CYP with SEND have a voice nationally and locally – work more closely with elected members
- Identify which stakeholders haven't contributed their thoughts and plan to engage them.

The session ended with participants in the workshop being asked to identify further actions that should be done straight away and within 6months. These actions were written on individual post it notes and attached to the 'Path'



Final thoughts

The event closed with reflections from Sarah Thomas from PACC and Ed Potter, Lead Councillor for Children's Services.

Sarah Thomas;

"Today has been a great event and more specifically a great start to this process of co-producing the Shropshire SEND Strategy. As someone who works as a representative for parent carers, it has been really positive that what I have heard as being important to children and young people with SEND, is that same that I hear being said by parent carers and the people who work in SEND services. So the big message is that we all want the same thing and that must give us the best possible chance of achieving this.

We have also heard today that there are some areas where things are going well, but we must be careful not to think that we have solved a problem because some people have had a good experience. We will have only been truly successful when good experiences are the norm and are experienced by all.

The real test however, is what happens next and how we turn everything we have heard today, into changes in the system that will deliver our dream, which others might actually call an ordinary life, because what you have all asked for today is simply opportunities which others rightly take for granted.

So please don't leave today thinking that the work is finished – we need to carry on listening to each other and working together to do things differently. If we can do that there is a chance that we can reach that pot of gold at the end of the 'Rainbow Road'."

Ed Potter;

"There are some clear messages that I will take away from today's event. Firstly, that it is important that we believe in all of our young people and what they can achieve. I am new to this role and I admit that I have little experience of SEND issues, but I am going to commit to being a champion for SEND in Shropshire and will focus on enlisting my fellow councillors in this work. Another strong message is that the young people in the room today want what all other young people want, and it is right that they should have the same opportunities as their peers. Finally, we must celebrate positive achievements and perhaps more importantly use these to knock down barriers to success for all."

PACC Reflections on the day and next steps

This was the first time that this sort of event has been held in Shropshire and it was very powerful to hear the voices of a range of young people with SEND and to see them actively participating in strategic decision making. It is absolutely right that the voice of young people should inform what it is that we are trying to achieve, we have to know what good looks like to them, so we know what we are all working towards. We would like to thank everyone involved in developing and delivering the event for all their hard work in making it such a successful day.

Hearing the voice of children and young people, however, only provides one perspective and to fully understand the challenges and issues of the SEND system we need to see the full picture. For example, many children and young people might only see the support they receive and not the many difficulties

that their parent carers may have faced in securing that support. Many parent carers may not want to discuss these issues with their children, or some children and young people may not have the capacity to understand such issues. Also, some children and young people may be very positive about their experience of support, but not be aware of the opportunities that they are not being offered and so would not raise this as an issue.

We are also conscious that some things might be more important to some groups than others, for example for those with higher support needs, especially the PMLD group who were not represented at the event, having consistent and good quality care might be more important than having a job when describing their dream future.

It is essential that the event is seen as only a starting point for understanding the hopes and aspirations of SEND families. The feedback that has been collected should be used to inform further discussion with a wider range of children and young people with SEND, so that the needs of individual cohorts are properly understood. SEND is a broad community and we do a disservice if we do not make every effort to understand the differing needs and priorities within this community.

We would also recommend additional specific discussions with parent carers to explore the learning from this event and to develop this further. Understanding what good looks like to parent carers will provide another piece of the puzzle and enable us to fully understand the task of ensuring that the Shropshire SEND system is fit for purpose.

PACC will support this process by sharing this report on the event via our networks and by asking parent carers who did not attend the event to share their thoughts and comments on its contents.

If you are a parent carer and would like to contribute to co-producing the Shropshire SEND Strategy please complete the short survey on the link below

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WPFLTF6>

