

COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR SERVICE

Helping you find your way through SEND

PaCC's Community Navigator Service offers personalised signposting and Information Provision for families of 0-25-year old's with SEND in Shropshire.



We run online information sessions covering topics families have raised with us.

Follow our Facebook Page for more information!



We offer phone or Teams calls for families, providing a non-judgmental listening ear from someone with both personal and professional experience.



We produce Guides and Resources to help families be aware of their rights and options and make informed decisions.



We produce termly reports highlighting key themes in feedback and loads of useful information and resources for families!

Join the Pacc Community

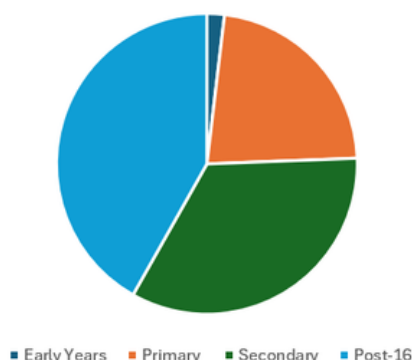
Community Navigator Service- Termly Summary Report

June 2026- September 2026

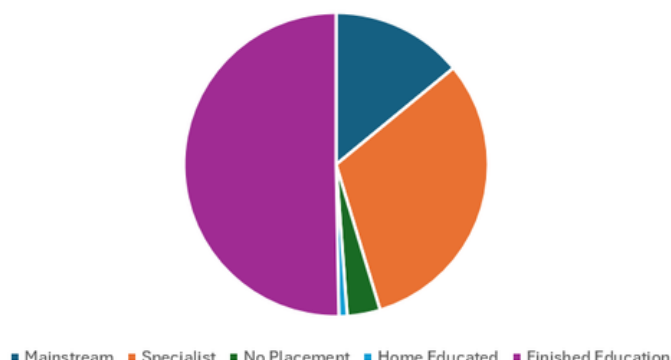
Engagement

This term, our Navigator Service has engaged with **287 Parent/ Family Carers** (a 51.9% increase from the previous term). This term we have seen an increase in the number of Parent/ Family Carers contacting us with children/ young people aged 14 to 25.

Age of CYP

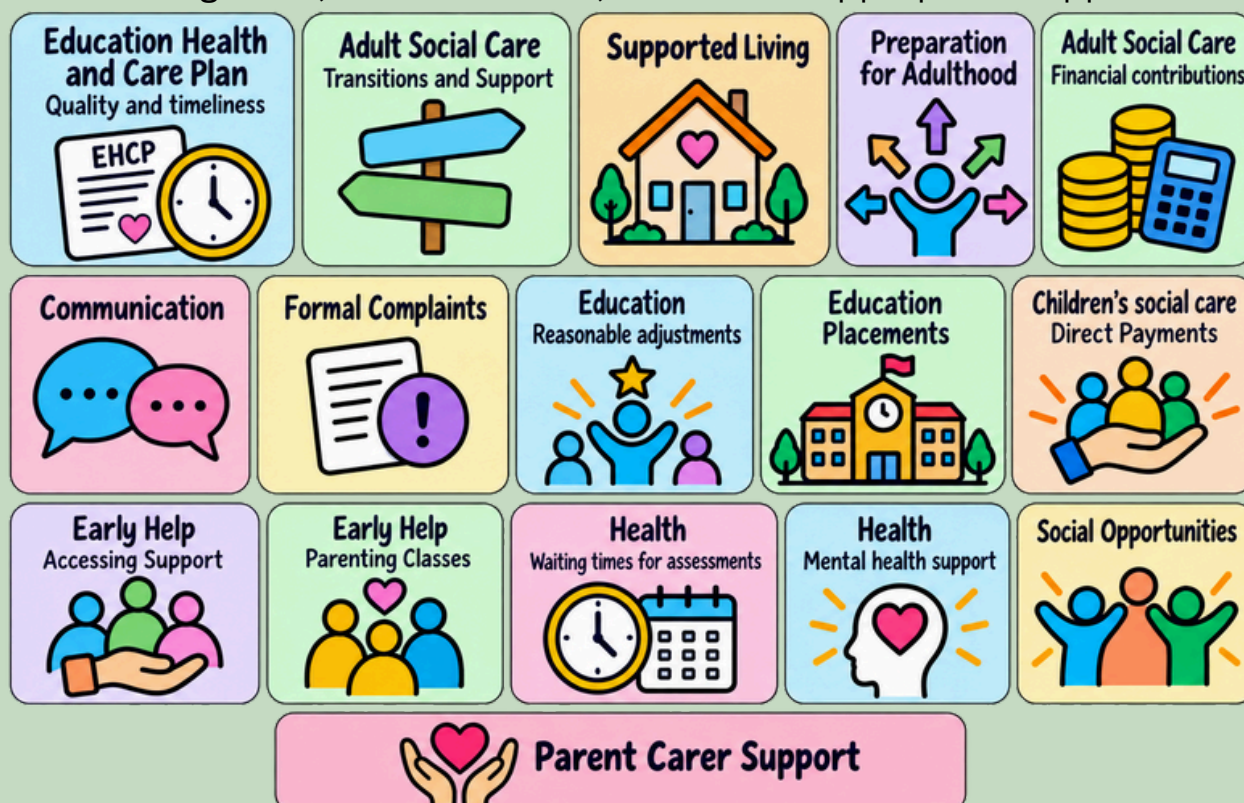


Education Provision



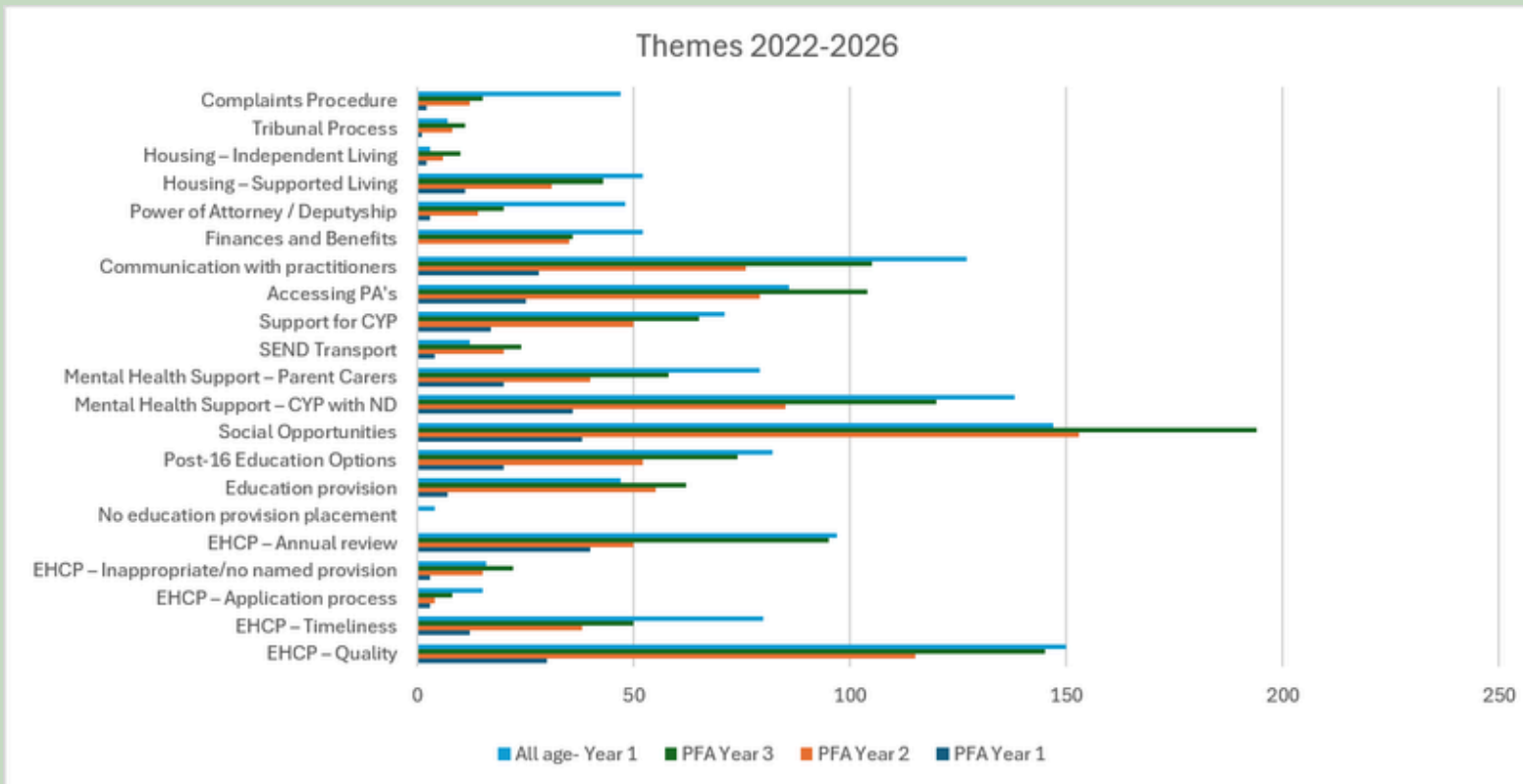
Key themes

The key themes that families have contacted us about remain consistent: access, waiting times, communication, transition & appropriate support.



What is the data telling us?

PaCC's Community Navigator Service started in 2022 as a Preparation for Adulthood Navigator Service (for Parent/ Family Carers of 14-25). The graph below shows themes in feedback over a 3 year period from September 2022 to September 2025. From September 2025 PaCC expanded the Navigator Service, now offering Parent/ Family carers of 0-25 year old's with SEND in Shropshire personalised signposting and Information Provision.



The data shows sustained growth in both the number and complexity of enquiries received by the Navigator Service.

The PFA data naturally had a strong focus on Preparing for Adulthood. Once the Navigator offer became all-age, EHCP quality, Annual Reviews, mental health and communication with practitioners remain among the highest themes. That suggests these aren't simply transition-age issues. They are issues being experienced by SEND families across different ages and stages.

The first year of the All-age Navigator Service shows that EHCP quality, mental health support and communication with practitioners continue to be significant areas of demand. This suggests that many of the challenges previously identified through the PFA service are not limited to transition into adulthood but are experienced by families throughout their SEND journey.

The data also indicates that families are increasingly seeking support to navigate systems, understand their rights and access appropriate support, rather than simply requiring information or signposting.

Families are not only struggling to identify what support exists, but are seeking help navigating between services and getting systems to respond to their child/ young person's needs.



Communication

What are families telling us?

- **Repeating our story-** Families tell us that every time they speak to a new part of the system that they are having to repeat their story.

Families tell us that they often have to repeat the same information about their child or young person every time they speak to a different service, professional or team.

This can include explaining their child or young person's needs, diagnosis, communication, behaviour, reasonable adjustments, medical history, education, family circumstances and the support they already receive.

Families can find themselves repeating information to education, health, social care and other services, even when this information has already been shared through assessments, reports, EHCPs or previous meetings.

For Parent Carers, continually having to retell their story can be time-consuming, frustrating and emotionally exhausting, particularly when they have to repeatedly describe difficult experiences or explain what their child or young person cannot do.

Families tell us they would like to see better communication and information-sharing between services, with professionals reading the information already available before meetings and appointments. Families want to be able to update their story, rather than having to start again each time.

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- **Having to chase for responses-** Families tell us that they are regularly having to chase professionals and services for responses, updates and agreed actions.

Parent and Family Carers describe sending repeated emails, making multiple phone calls and following up after meetings because they have not received a response. This can include chasing for assessment outcomes, referrals, reports, decisions, paperwork, appointments and actions that professionals have previously agreed to complete.

Families tell us that they often do not know whether their message has been received, who is dealing with their enquiry or when they can expect a response. Where a practitioner is absent or has left a service, families may also be unclear about who has taken responsibility for their child or young person.

This places an additional burden on Parent and Family Carers, who can feel that progress will not happen unless they continually chase the system.

Families would like clear points of contact, realistic response times, updates when there are delays and agreed actions to be followed through without families having to repeatedly ask.



Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP's)

What are families telling us?

EHCP's continue to be the most common reason families contact the Navigator Service. This term over 60% of families needed information and escalation processes.



- **Timeliness**- Families have told us they are not receiving EHCP's in a timely manner. This includes issuing following assessment, amending following annual review and providing final plans following Parent Carer feedback. Staff shortages and backlogs are still regularly being given as the reason for delays, While families understand that these are genuine issues, legislation states that this is not an acceptable reason for continuous delays and it is the Local Authorities duty to address this so that children and young people get the support they need within legal timelines.



EHCP legal timescales

EHCP processes have legal timescales that local authorities must follow. These are not simply recommended targets. There are limited circumstances where some deadlines can be extended, but these exceptions are set out in law.

An education, health and care (EHC) needs assessment is an assessment of your child or young person's education, health and care needs. It is the first step to getting an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). There is a legal timescale for the assessment process.

Stage	Legal timescale	What it means
Request for an EHC needs assessment	6 weeks	The LA must tell the parent carer/young person whether it will carry out an EHC needs assessment within 6 weeks of receiving the request.
Advice requested during the assessment	6 weeks	Bodies asked by the LA to provide advice/information for the assessment must normally respond within 6 weeks. There are limited statutory exceptions.
LA assesses but decides not to issue an EHCP	16 weeks	If the assessment takes place but the LA decides an EHCP is not necessary, it must normally tell the parent/young person by 16 weeks from the original request.
Draft EHCP	At least 15 days to respond	When the draft is issued, the parent carer/young person must have at least 15 days to comment, request a particular setting and ask for a meeting with the LA.
Final EHCP	20 weeks	The whole process—from the LA receiving the assessment request to issuing the final EHCP—must normally be completed within 20 weeks.

More information about the EHCNA Process is available on IPSEA's Website.



[More Info](#)

[Template Letters](#)

EHCP legal timescales

EHCP processes have legal timescales that local authorities must follow. These are not simply recommended targets. There are limited circumstances where some deadlines can be extended, but these exceptions are set out in law.

Stage	Legal timescale	What it means
EHCP must be reviewed	At least every 12 months	The LA must review the EHCP within 12 months of it first being made, and then within 12 months of the previous review.
Notice of Annual Review meeting	At least 2 weeks before	The parent carer/young person and relevant education, health and social care professionals must be invited with at least 2 weeks' notice.
Reports and advice circulated	At least 2 weeks before	Advice and information gathered for the review must be circulated to those invited at least 2 weeks before the meeting.
Annual Review meeting	Within the 12-month review cycle	The meeting considers progress, outcomes, needs and provision. From Year 9 onwards, it must also consider preparation for adulthood and independent living.
Annual Review report	Within 2 weeks after the meeting	A written report, including recommendations about any changes to the EHCP, must be prepared and sent to those invited.
LA decision	Within 4 weeks after the meeting	The LA must tell the parent/young person whether it will maintain, amend or cease the EHCP.
If the LA proposes to amend	At least 15 days to respond	The parent carer/young person must receive the proposed amendments and have at least 15 days to comment, request a particular setting and request a meeting with the LA.
Final amended EHCP	Within 8 weeks of the amendment notice	If the LA goes ahead with the amendments, it must issue the final amended EHCP as soon as practicable and no later than 8 weeks after sending the proposed amendments.
If LA decides not to make the proposed amendments	Within 8 weeks of the amendment notice	It must notify the parent carer/young person of that decision and its reasons.

What can families do if EHCP legal timescales are missed?



1. **Contact the EHCP Team** → state which deadline has been missed.
2. **No response?** → use Shropshire's EHCP escalation process.
3. **Still unresolved?** → make a formal complaint.
4. **Need help?** → contact Shropshire SENDIASS for independent advice.
5. **Delay continues?** → consider the Ombudsman and/or specialist legal advice.



- **Inaccurate reflection of needs-** Families have told us that their child/ young person's plan does not accurately reflect the needs of their child/ young person. Information in plans has been made generic and not specific to their child/ young person. Families have also told us that plans have not been updated in line with legislation where there has been a significant change in needs.

If an EHCP does not accurately describe your child or young person, raise this and provide evidence of what needs to change (such as any reports or information from practitioners). An EHCP should be individual to the child or young person and should reflect their current needs and the provision required to meet them.

If the EHCP is being reviewed: use the Annual Review to identify information that is inaccurate, out of date or missing. Ask for specific amendments and provide any recent professional reports or other evidence. The review must consider progress, whether outcomes remain appropriate and whether changes are needed. The LA must tell you within 4 weeks of the Annual Review meeting whether it will maintain, amend or cease the plan.

If needs have changed significantly-Ask the LA to consider an early review, an amendment to the EHCP or, where a fresh assessment of needs is required, a reassessment. The Regulations allow an LA to amend an EHCP at any time; where it does so outside a review or reassessment, it must follow the statutory amendment process.



[Checking a draft plan](#)



[Receiving the Draft EHCP](#)



[EHCP Guide](#)



- **Communication-** Families have told us that they are repeatedly having to chase for information and updates, that clear information is not provided and when deadlines are missed that there is no communication.

The easiest way to contact the EHCP team is by email. The Council suggests putting "PARENT" in the email subject line. If you know your child or young person's Case Officer, email them directly rather than also copying in the main EHCP Team. The team aims to reply within 5 working days, although this may currently take up to 8 working days.

If you have not received a response after 8 working days, the Council says you can escalate your email. Add "ESCALATION" to the subject line.

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What if we have done this and have still not received a response?

If you have followed Shropshire Council's guidance and have still not received a response, or you are not happy with the response you have received, it may be worth considering making a formal complaint to Shropshire Council.

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[EHCP Team contact details](#)



[Provide your feedback](#)



- **Case Officers-** Families have told us that they do not always know who their case officer is, or who they should contact if they are unable to get through to their case officer. PaCC regularly share the information off the Local Offer that identifies case officers, but some families are still unsure.

Information on Case Officers can be found on the Local Offer. This includes contact details for case officers, senior case officers and the team manager. If you are still unsure of who your case officer is, contact the senior case officer for your child/ young persons key stage.

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- **Provision** (The specific, actionable support, therapies, and resources legally required to meet a child or young person's special educational needs)- Families have told us that the provision outlined in plans is not always accurate.

In an EHCP there are 3 sections (F, G and H) which explain 'provision' – the recommended support and strategies which aim to help the child or young person make progress. There should be recommended provision for each of the child's needs and it should be clear how the provision will help the child achieve the outcomes in section E of the EHCP. The provision in section F of the EHCP is especially important. This is the support needed to help the child to learn and a Local Authority has the legal duty to ensure that the special educational provision specified in section F is secured.

Section 37: Education, health and care plans (Children & Families Act)

215.This section sets out what a local authority must do if the education, health and care assessment in section 36 indicates that a child or young person requires an EHCP for their special educational provision.

216.The local authority is under a duty to make sure that an EHCP is prepared and then implemented. The EHCP should specify the short and long term outcomes that it is designed to help the child or young person to achieve and the special educational, health and social care provision that will be made to support them. This could include, for example, access to specialist teaching, speech and language therapy provision, and short breaks.

217.The health care provision to be specified in the EHCP is that which is reasonably required by the learning difficulties and disabilities which result in the child or young person having special educational needs. For example, health provision could include therapies, such as occupational therapy, and equipment, such as wheelchairs and continence supplies (see also section 21).

218.The social care provision to be specified in the EHCP includes any social care provision which must be made for a child or young person under 18 by the local authority as a result of section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. This could include practical assistance in the home or providing an outing for a child.

219.The social care provision to be specified in the EHCP also includes other social care provision which is reasonably required by the learning difficulty or disability which results in the child or young person having special educational needs. This may include provision made under section 17 of the Children Act which is not covered by the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, for example residential short breaks. It may also include adult social care provision for young people aged 18-25 with an EHCP.

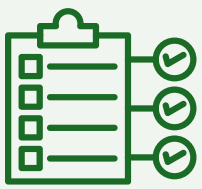
220.Other health and social care provision may be included in plans, where local authorities and health commissioners consider this would be beneficial to the child or young person. For example, if a child with an EHCP for significant dyslexia developed an unrelated illness, it might make sense for them, their parents and the professionals supporting them to co-ordinate their care through the EHCP.

Children and Families Act 2014

Legislation



IPSEA- Provision



- **Outcomes-** Families have told us that plan outcomes are not **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound), and that outcomes are heavily focused on education.

Section E EHCP outcomes are created to secure the best possible outcomes for a child or young person. The outcomes section is heavily influenced by Section A (aspirations), Section B (individual needs) and Section F (provision). Tying all sections together, Section E outcomes guide if the child has made the intended progress.

The SEND code of practice states:

9.61- EHCPs must specify the outcomes sought for the child or young person. Outcomes in EHCPs should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound).

9.66 – An outcome can be defined as the benefit or difference made to an individual as a result of an intervention. It should be personal and not expressed from a service perspective; it should be something that those involved have control and influence over, and while it does not always have to be formal or accredited, it should be SMART.

The success of an EHCP will be measured by how effectively outcomes are met. As a child/ young person grows and makes progress the outcomes in an EHCP will change, outcomes should reflect key learning and development across education, health and social care. At the year 9 annual review, the focus on Preparation for Adulthood will increase and this should be reflected in the outcomes in an EHCP. Outcomes in an EHCP should reflect not just education progress, but the development of social and independence skills also.

Remember, outcomes should be across education, health AND social care and should not just focus on educational achievement.



[More info](#)



[More Info](#)



EHCP Comms

Following Shropshire Council publishing an EHCP Team update, we received a number of enquiries from families asking us for information about the Needs Assessment process, and what evidence families were required to provide. (PaCC were not involved in creating this comms).

Legislation

Under section 36(8) of the Children and Families Act 2014, the test for whether the local authority must carry out an EHC needs assessment is whether: the child or young person has or may have SEN, and it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made through an EHCP. The local authority must consider the new request against the legal test for an EHC needs assessment. There is no general requirement for a family to provide “new and substantial evidence” before a new request can be considered.



PFA/ Adult Social Care- Transitions & Support

What are families telling us?

You Said, We Did

We are pleased to share that we are currently working with My Aspirations to produce a guide to Adult Social Care.



- **Supported Living-** Family Carers are still finding it difficult to understand the options available for supported living- how it works, who they can speak to, what care providers are available, eligibility and how to start the process. Information available is very limited. PaCC continue to raise this with practitioners. There is no information available on the Local Offer.

‘Supported living’ is a generic term which has come to describe arrangements whereby a disabled person has the benefit of a package of care and support together with accommodation – for which they will ordinarily have a tenancy.

To be eligible for supported living, you generally must be an adult (18+) with eligible care and support needs arising from a physical disability, learning disability, autism, or mental health problem. Eligibility also requires a local authority needs assessment and confirmation that supported living is the best way to meet your needs and help you live as independently as possible. Generally for Supported Living a young person needs a minimum of 50 hours support per week and over night support. You must also be able to pay for your own rent or be eligible for housing benefits.

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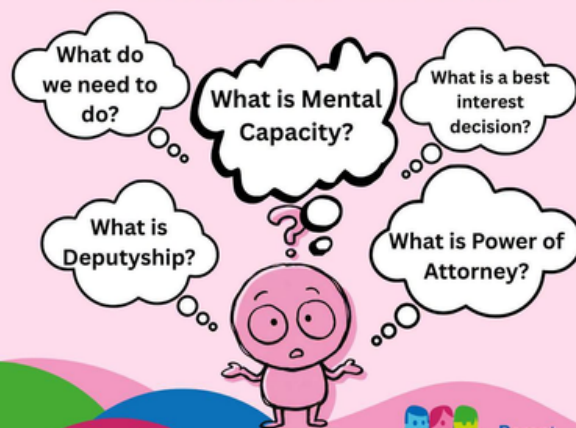
- **Mental Capacity-** Family Carers have told us that they have struggled to find clear information around Mental Capacity. This includes knowing when a Mental Capacity Assessment is needed, and who can make decisions for their young person.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005, decision-making rights shift from parents to the young person at the end of compulsory school age (the last Friday in June of the academic year they turn 16).

: Capacity is not all-or-nothing; a young person may be able to make certain choices but need help or representation for larger, more complex legal or medical decisions.

MENTAL CAPACITY- ONLINE SESSION

We will be holding an online information session later this month- more details will be shared soon!



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- **Contribution Payments-** Families have told us sometimes they do not receive information before the young person turns 18 about what contribution payments are and what to expect.

An Adult Social Care contribution is the amount an adult may be asked to pay towards the cost of their care and support. In England, if Adult Social Care assesses someone as having eligible care and support needs, the council may arrange or fund services to meet those needs.

However, unlike NHS healthcare, adult social care is generally means-tested.

How is the contribution worked out?

The council carries out a financial assessment. This looks at the adult's own financial circumstances, including things such as their income, benefits, savings and capital. The assessment calculates whether they need to contribute towards their care and, if so, how much they can reasonably afford to pay.

For a young adult with SEND, an important point is that the assessment is generally based on the young person's finances, not their parents' income or savings. The contribution might apply to support such as a Personal Assistant, support at home, day opportunities, community support or supported living care.

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Communication- Parent/ Family Carers have told us that social workers do not always communicate in a timely manner. Difficulty getting hold of social workers- calls/ emails not being returned, long periods of time with no communication, not knowing who to contact when their social worker is off/ has left. Lack of clear information- not clear what support is available, no clear information given about timescales, processes or what families need to do. Uncertainty- Needs of children/ young people not always understood, not always being kept up to date about decisions.

If an Adult Social Care social worker in Shropshire is repeatedly not responding, you do not have to keep emailing the same person indefinitely.

1. Send a clear follow-up email. Refer to the dates of your previous emails, briefly explain what you are waiting for, and say if the delay is affecting care, support, finances, accommodation, safety or another important decision. Ask for a response by a reasonable date.
2. Ask for the social worker's manager/team manager. If there is still no response, contact Shropshire Council Adult Social Care on 0345 678 9044 and explain that you already have an allocated social worker but have been unable to get a response. Ask for the matter to be passed to their manager and for someone to contact you.
3. Make a formal Adult Social Care complaint if the problem continues. Shropshire's statutory complaints procedure covers the actions, decisions and apparent failings of Adult Social Care, including concerns about assessments, care plans and reviews.

4. Escalate an unsatisfactory complaint response. Shropshire says you can contact its Statutory Complaints Officer if issues remain unresolved; another manager can be asked to review whether the response was full, fair and reasonable. Ultimately, a complaint can be taken to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, normally after giving the Council the opportunity to deal with it.

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- **Social Care Plans-** Assessments are not consistently conducted in a timely manner. Plans consistently do not reflect the young persons needs. Delays in putting support in place. Young people are not meaningfully involved in decisions about their support. Provision delivery can be inconsistent. Reviews and plan updates are sometimes inconsistent. Information in Care Plans is not always clear and accessible.
- **Family Carers** feel there is a lot of responsibility placed on them to support their young person (18+), as responsibility is not clear in plans.

What should be included in the plan?

What are my young persons needs? The plan should describe the needs identified through the assessment.

What support has been agreed? This should explain the type and amount of support, such as personal assistant hours, short breaks or support to access activities.

What is the support intended to achieve? For example, developing independence, improving wellbeing or taking part in community life.

Who will provide the support? This could be social care services, a commissioned provider or a personal assistant employed through direct payments.

When will the support start? Families should know when and how arrangements will be put in place.

How will the support be funded? This should include any personal budget or direct payment arrangements.

When will the plan be reviewed? Families should know when the support will be checked and how to request an earlier review.

Families should know that:

- They can share their views and explain what support they believe is needed.
- Their young persons wishes and feelings should be considered in a way that is appropriate for their understanding.
- They can ask for a copy of the assessment and plan.
- They can ask questions if decisions or agreed support are unclear.
- They can ask for the plan to be reviewed if circumstances change or support is not meeting identified needs.
- They can ask for written reasons when requested support is refused or reduced.
- They can challenge decisions and make a complaint if they believe the assessment, decision-making or provision is inadequate.

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Early Help

What are families telling us?



- **Parenting Classes-** Families regularly tell PaCC that they are contacting the system for support and are offered parenting classes. Signposting families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to parenting classes can be problematic because it risks assuming that the difficulties a family is experiencing are caused by their parenting, rather than recognising the child's individual needs, disability or barriers to accessing appropriate support.

What does Guidance Say?

Professionals should consider communication difficulties, sensory needs, physical and mental health, and environmental factors when understanding behaviours that challenge. Parent-training programmes can be appropriate for some families, but interventions should be tailored to individual needs and circumstances.

What does Legislation say?

Parent carers have rights to assessments of their own support needs in specified circumstances. Signposting to a parenting course does not replace those assessment duties (Children and Families Act 2014).

[Children's Social Care](#)

[Parent Carer Needs
Assessment](#)

[Early Help Support](#)



- **Information is not always accessible-** We often hear from families that Early Help has been suggested to them, but they do not understand what they offer or how they can help their family. Language used is often jargon heavy and information on The Local Offer is not easy to navigate.

Early Help provides support to children, young people and families who may be experiencing difficulties or need some extra help. The aim is to identify needs early, offer practical support and prevent problems from becoming more serious.

Early Help is not just for families in crisis. Families can access support when difficulties first arise.

Shropshire's Early Help Family Hubs support families with children aged 0–19, or up to 25 for young people with SEND. Families can access support by speaking to their child's school, early years setting or health professional, visiting a Family Hub, or contacting Shropshire Council on 0345 678 9021.

Early Help is not a replacement for specialist SEND support or statutory social care assessments.

Where a child's needs suggest they may require specialist services, short breaks or social care support, families should be helped to access the appropriate assessment or service. They should not automatically be directed towards parenting programmes as the only response.

Shropshire Council's published guidance specifically describes Early Help Family Support Workers as helping coordinate specialist involvement, supporting EHCP processes and working with children, young people and their siblings.



Children's Social Care

What are families telling us?



- **Direct Payments-** The process and criteria for Direct Payments is unclear. Families have contacted us to find out who is eligible for a direct payment, how it is assessed and what is considered when making decisions. We have also raised concerns of DLA being used in decision making.

A Direct Payment is money provided by the local authority (council) to help meet a child or young person's assessed social care needs. Instead of the council arranging the agreed support, the family receives money to organise and pay for that support themselves. A Direct Payment is not automatically available simply because a child has SEND or a diagnosis. However, a child does not need an EHCP or DLA award to be considered for children's social care support or a Direct Payment.

DLA is not means-tested. It is a benefit intended to help with the extra costs of disability. Receiving DLA does not automatically mean a child is ineligible for social care support. A child's assessed needs should not simply be dismissed because they receive DLA. The council should explain whether and how DLA is considered, including any distinction between assessing needs, determining provision and calculating financial contributions.

Families should receive clear reasons for decisions, particularly where requested support is refused or reduced.

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- **Unable to access assessed support-** Families have contacted us as they are unable to find a PA suitable for their child/ young person- this includes a shortage of PA's, PA's not willing to work for the hourly rate set, PA's not skilled enough to meet the child/ young persons needs.

Where the local authority has agreed to provide support to meet a child's assessed needs, families can ask it to review the arrangements if the Direct Payment is not enabling that support to be delivered.

Remember: Receiving a Direct Payment does not necessarily mean that responsibility for meeting assessed needs rests entirely with the family.

Under Section 17 (Children & Families ACT), local authorities have duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need, including disabled children, by providing an appropriate range and level of services.

Where respite has been assessed as necessary and agreed as part of a child's support plan, the council must consider how it will fulfil its responsibilities when the agreed arrangements are unavailable. The exact legal duty to provide a particular service depends on the child's needs, assessment and relevant legislation.

[Contact- Support](#)

[Short Breaks](#)

[Short Breaks- Statement](#)



Health

What are families telling us?



- **Waiting times for assessments-** Families have contacted PaCC as they are concerned about the time they are waiting for an Autism and/ or ADHD assessment. Many of these children and young people are in crisis, which impacts Parent Carers Mental Health.

The majority of support in Shropshire is based on needs, not diagnosis. A lot of families that contact us are not aware of this.

Practitioners are not always aware of wider system support and what families can access in the community.

When a referral is accepted by CAMHS you should receive a letter explaining this and the current wait time. Those that have been waiting a long time should also receive a call from CAMHS signposting them to support.

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SEND SUPPORT IN SHROPSHIRE *YOU DON'T ALWAYS NEED TO WAIT FOR A DIAGNOSIS*

Support available without a diagnosis

- EHC Needs Assessment
- SEN Support in nursery, school or college
- Early Help and Family Hubs
- Parenting Team support
- Children's Occupational Therapy
- Sensory advice and resources
- SENDIASS
- Children's Social Care Assessment
- KIDS Shropshire Autism Support Service
- PaCC

Waiting for a diagnosis doesn't mean waiting for support.



- **Mental Health Support-** Families have told us that they are unable to access support for their child/ young person's mental health. Often referrals are made and rejected, in most cases families have told us the reason is due to a lack of evidence. Many of these children and young people are in crisis, which impacts Parent Carers Mental Health.

CAMHS (previously BeeU) have increased their support offer for children and young people with SEND in Shropshire.

“Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) provide early help for children and young people by delivering evidence-based interventions for mild-to-moderate mental health needs. They work with schools and colleges to strengthen whole-school approaches to wellbeing, offer timely advice to staff, and liaise with specialist services to ensure children and young people receive the right support at the right time.”

Crisis and Home Treatment Service provides intensive support for children and young people experiencing heightened risk, suicidality, acute psychosis, severe emotional distress, or significant functional decline. The team also supports those leaving or requiring Tier 4 hospital admission.”- CAMHS Shropshire. Telford and Wrekin.

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[Complaints process/ Feedback](#)



Social Opportunities

What are families telling us?



- **Limited opportunities for children & Young people with complex needs-** Families have contacted us looking for social opportunities for children and young people that have high level support needs.

If a child/ young persons needs mean they cannot access community activities, families can request an assessment from Children's Social Care. An assessment can consider the child's needs, the barriers preventing them from accessing activities and whether additional support is required.

Social Care support is not just about giving Parent Carers a break. It can also help children develop friendships, independence and opportunities to participate in their community.

Families should check whether their child/ young person's social care plan identifies needs relating to:

- Social opportunities and friendships.
- Accessing community activities.
- Developing independence.
- Participating in activities outside the family home.

If these needs have been identified but the child still cannot access suitable activities, families can request a review.

[Disabled Childrens Team](#)

[Short Breaks](#)

[Local Offer](#)



- **No SEND holiday clubs-** Families cannot access suitable child care/ holiday clubs for their children/ young people in school holidays.

For families of children with SEND, finding suitable childcare during school holidays can be particularly difficult. Some children need specialist support, trained staff, smaller groups or additional supervision that ordinary holiday clubs cannot provide.

[Family Information Service](#)

[All In](#)

[Specialist Holiday Club](#)



Families are being inappropriately signposted to PaCC's Healthy Lives Programme.

The Healthy Lives Programme is PaCC's Holiday offer. Healthy Lives offers a variety of activities to support physical and mental wellbeing, providing young people with SEND with opportunities to catch up with friends and be active.



Healthy Lives is not a holiday club. Children and young people must attend with a parent carer, family carer or Personal Assistant (PA) who is responsible for supporting them during the activity.

Year 1 All-age Navigator Service Reflection

One of the most concerning findings from the Navigator data is that many of the themes remain unchanged from our previous Navigator Service.

Families continue to describe the same barriers around communication, timeliness, accessing support and navigating services. Although improvement activity is taking place, families tell us that this is not consistently translating into a different experience on the ground.

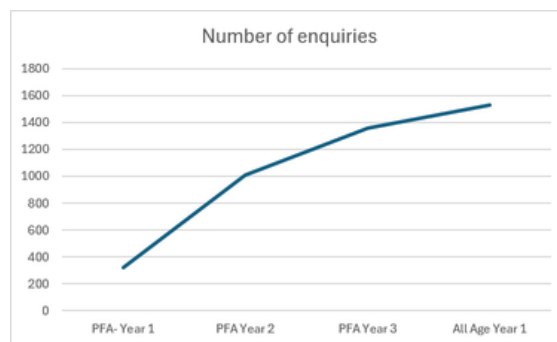
There is growing frustration among families who feel they have repeatedly shared the same experiences through surveys, engagement activity, complaints and conversations with services, but have yet to see meaningful or sustained improvement.

This risks creating engagement fatigue and reducing trust. Families need clear feedback about what has been heard, what action has been taken and, importantly, evidence that this action is making a difference to their experience.

Growing reach and demand

Over the last 12 months, the Community Navigator Service has continued to provide personalised information and signposting to Parent and Family Carers of children and young people with SEND across Shropshire.

The service has seen continued demand from families navigating education, health and social care. The move towards an all-age offer has also provided a broader picture of the challenges families experience throughout their SEND journey, rather than only during Preparation for Adulthood.



The nature of enquiries is changing

The data suggests that families are increasingly contacting Navigators about complex system-navigation issues, rather than simply asking where to find information.

Some of the biggest and most consistent themes include:

- EHCP quality and Annual Reviews
- mental health support
- communication with practitioners
- accessing Personal Assistants and support
- social opportunities
- post-16 education and Preparation for Adulthood
- benefits, housing and adult social care.

The first year of the all-age offer also indicates that challenges previously seen within the PFA service are not confined to transition into adulthood. Issues relating to EHCPs, communication and accessing appropriate support are being experienced by families at different ages and stages.

Families are telling us that navigating the system takes considerable effort

A strong theme running through Navigator conversations is the amount of responsibility families feel they carry for coordinating and progressing support themselves. Families describe having to repeatedly chase professionals for responses, updates and agreed actions. They often tell their story again when they encounter a new professional or service and can find themselves trying to coordinate communication between education, health and social care. Families have told Navigators that they want professionals to know their story, use information that has already been provided and communicate proactively, rather than relying on families to continually follow things up.

Timeliness remains an important concern

Families continue to raise concerns about waiting.

This includes waiting for assessments and services, but also delays within statutory processes such as EHCPs and Annual Reviews.

Families describe the impact as being more than simply waiting for paperwork. Where decisions or plans are delayed, the child or young person may also be waiting for appropriate provision, support or clarity about what happens next.

Quality is as important as timeliness

The Navigator data suggests that families are not only concerned about how quickly processes happen, EHCP quality has become one of the most significant themes.

Families report plans that do not accurately reflect their child or young person's needs, information becoming generic rather than individualised, and they experience difficulties getting plans updated when circumstances or needs change.

This suggests that improving timeliness alone will not necessarily improve families' experiences. Families need processes to be timely, accurate, person-centred and meaningful.

Communication is a cross-cutting theme

Communication does not sit neatly within one service area. It appears across education, health and social care enquiries.

Families describe difficulties knowing who is responsible, who to contact, when they should expect a response and what is happening next.

Mental health is becoming increasingly prominent

Enquiries relating to the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people have increased considerably.

The data also shows demand relating to Parent Carer mental health and wellbeing.

This is important because it demonstrates the wider impact that navigating SEND services and supporting a child or young person with additional needs can have on the whole family.

Preparation for Adulthood remains significant

The Navigator Service continues to see substantial demand as families navigate the transition towards adulthood. Questions increasingly span several systems at once: post-16 education, adult social care, Personal Assistants, benefits, supported and independent living, mental capacity and decision-making.

This reinforces the importance of Preparation for Adulthood being considered early and holistically, rather than beginning when a young person is approaching the end of education.

What's Next?

Navigator enquiries provide an important source of lived-experience intelligence for PaCC. Individual enquiries are anonymised and brought together to identify recurring themes, emerging issues and areas where families may need clearer information or where systems may need to change.

These themes inform PaCC's information resources, engagement activity and strategic participation, helping ensure that the experiences of Parent and Family Carers influence conversations about SEND services in Shropshire.

Over the next 2 years, PaCC will continue to develop the Navigator Service in response to what families tell us.

This will include improving accessible information and resources around the issues families most frequently raise; identifying emerging themes earlier; strengthening links with relevant services and organisations; ensuring families understand their rights and options; and using anonymised Navigator evidence to inform PaCC's strategic work.

Most importantly, the service will continue to provide families with a place to make sense of information, understand their options and identify their next steps without replacing advocacy, legal advice or the responsibilities of statutory services.

COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR SERVICE

LISTEN • UNDERSTAND • INFORM • SIGNPOST



Someone to help you navigate the SEND system

You'll be offered an initial 30-minute phone or Teams call with a Navigator.

Our Navigators are parent carers themselves and bring lived experience alongside professional knowledge of SEND in Shropshire.



What can we do when things go wrong?

When things go wrong within Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support, it's important to take steps to address the issue, which may involve informal communication, formal complaints, and potentially mediation or appeal depending on the specific situation and procedures.

Informal communication- Start by contacting the professional involved. Use email to document the conversation and set a time for their response.

Formal Complaint- If the informal approach doesn't resolve the issue, you may need to make a formal complaint. This will often involve writing a statement outlining the problem, your concerns, and the desired outcome.

Mediation or Appeal- Mediation is a process where an independent third party, the mediator, helps parties involved in a dispute reach a mutually agreeable solution. Appeals, on the other hand, involve formally challenging a decision made by an authority

Judicial Review- When the complaints procedure would not be a realistic and effective way of solving the issue

Ombudsmen- Ombudsmen are independent bodies that can help resolve dispute particularly when formal complaints processes haven't yielded satisfactory results.

Knowing when to make a complaint and who to contact can be difficult to navigate. Below are some of the most common complaints processes we have signposted families to through our navigator service.

Local Government and
Social Care Ombudsmen

[CLICK HERE](#)

Care Quality
Commission

[CLICK HERE](#)

NHS- Patient Advice and
Liaison Service (PALS)

[CLICK HERE](#)

Feedback and complaints
about an NHS Service

[CLICK HERE](#)

Children and Young
Peoples Complaints-
Shropshire Council

[CLICK HERE](#)

Adult Social Care
Complaints- Shropshire
Council

[CLICK HERE](#)

Complaints, Compliments
and Feedback- Shropshire
Council

[CLICK HERE](#)

Ofsted Complaints
procedure

[CLICK HERE](#)