

## **Topic of Importance – Preparing for Adulthood and Education**

More parent carers are coming forwards with a range of issues, questions and concerns relating to what could broadly be termed 'Preparing for Adulthood' (PfA). PfA covers the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged between 14 and 25 and is based around moving between childhood and adulthood towards independence. Areas often focussed on are employability, independent living, health and community participation. Recently work has been around developing strategies for Parent Carers and SEND children around at a much earlier stage in their lives prior to age 14, including PfA work within early years settings, under the Earliest Years (PfA Review).

Over and above this issue was a core issue relating to information sharing and support which follows through in concerns raised about Education. Further to this is an increase in the level of issues relating to mental health being raised especially at transition points.

### **What are parents telling us?**

Mainly from contact with parent carers via social media (FVP Chatroom) and email, phone contact to the main charity office similar themes are being raised by a range of parent carers.

1. There are concerns over changes to benefit, primarily the DLA ending and the related concerns over:
  - a. Whether a young person will qualify for PIP
  - b. How to apply for PIP
  - c. Lack of understanding over appointeeship
2. There are also corresponding concerns on the impact on household finances, especially where a young person is in the family home aged between 16 – 18 and 18 – 25.
3. Parent carers reporting being unprepared for the changes between children's and adult services.
4. Lack of information at transition points.
5. Anxiety and fear over what the future may hold for the young person, including where they will live and who will look after them.
6. A lot of telling what the issue/ concern is more than once, leading to feeling overwhelmed and not being heard.

### **Where we get our evidence from**

1. Contact with parent carers via Facebook
2. Email/ phone requests from parent carers for signposting, information and advice
3. Attendance at external and internal Forums and Workshops
4. Feedback from training and other activities
5. Responses to surveys

### **How have FVP responded**

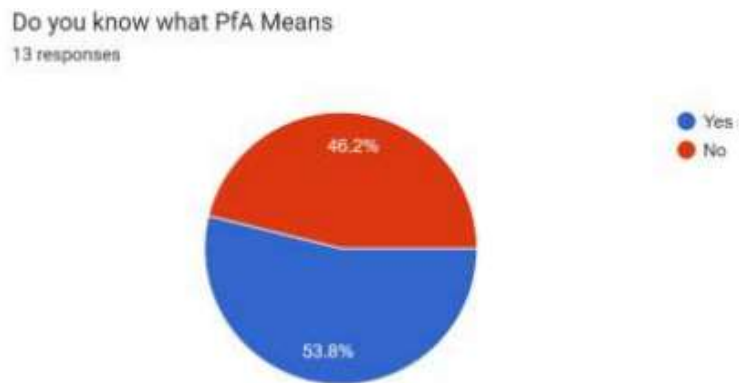
After seeing some of the issues coming through in Facebook Discussions and from signposting requests, it was decided to conduct a couple of small scale surveys designed to gather wider views on the themes being picked up. Two surveys were conducted and reported on covering PfA and Education separately in which it became clear there were interlinked issues. The full report can be read via the reports page of the FVP website.

<https://familyvoice.org/participation-reports/>

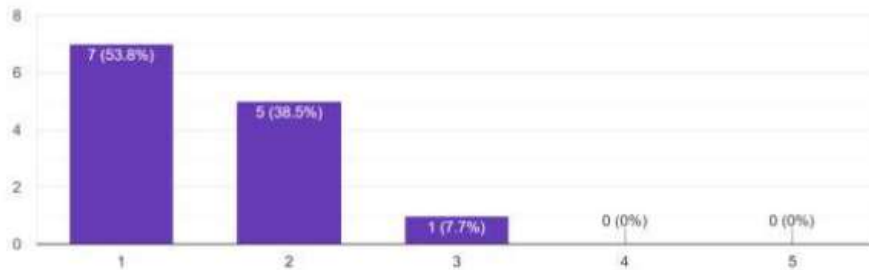
The issues raised were:

Primarily information or lack thereof leads to an increase in anxiety and difficulty managing transition points.

In the PfA survey parents reported that they did not have enough information about what PFA actually entails, and informed us that they felt ill prepared for their child's transition to adult life.

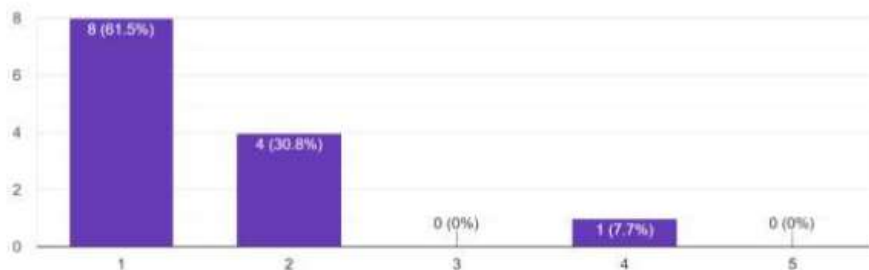


On a scale of 1 (not prepared) to 5 (fully prepared), how prepared do you feel your child is or was to integrate themselves into the wider community?  
13 responses



**Fig.4 Being prepared for community life**

On a scale of 1 (not prepared) to 5 (fully prepared), how prepared are/were you for your young person to move towards adulthood?  
13 responses



From the Education survey parents had the following to say, which shows the importance of good communication:

“For my 5-year-old. Process too rigid. I worked extremely hard to get my child an EHCP before he started school which contributed to me having burnout. Had my child have started school without an EHCP this would have been disastrous. Researching the process extensively demonstrated there are no legal reasons for refusing to assess on the reasons given. The LA were quite willing to allow my child and family to reach desperate measures before they agreed to assess. I had to research and provide my own report to get the LA to agree to assess. I did not provide any additional medical evidence. I had to ask the nursery to create behaviour reports and log more observations. It was difficult because due to funding there were certain things, they could not do i.e provide 121 PECS until my child had an EHCP and I could see my child struggling but the LA would not agree to assess. The nursery provided limited admin time to devote to my child's ehcp. For my 19-year-old, I don't think college do anything much at all to support her outcomes. Educationally they help her to achieve, but no support for personal, social, emotional, independence skills. Very disappointed with lack of independence building or preparing for adulthood outcomes.”

“It's suitable for me and my child it helps setting plans for his future”

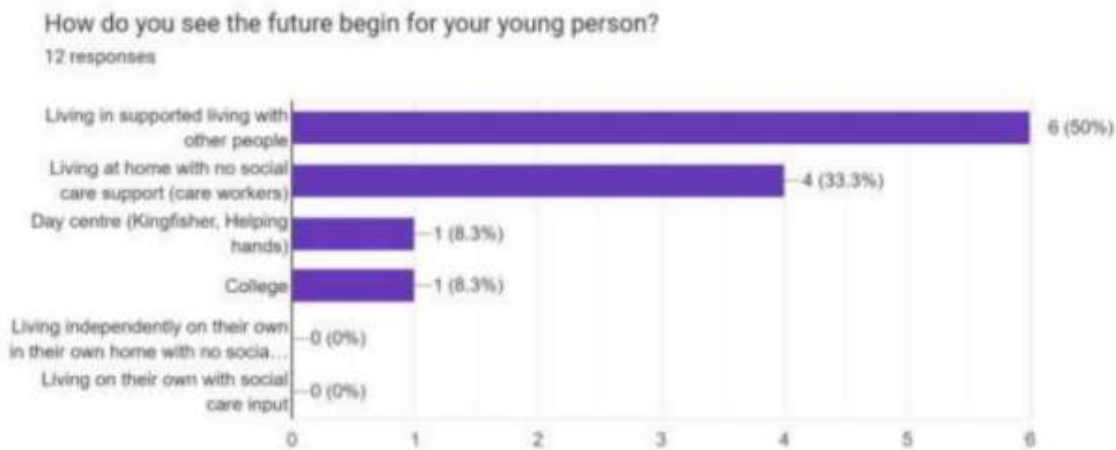
“, the ehcp process is fairly easy, however, not a lot of support for a post 16 provision, for a semh student in Peterborough, as currently, there isn't any.

Too long, too woolly. Research suggests that everything is turned down by LA as a matter of course, hoping parents will give up and go away, or as a time-wasting exercise to delay opening the purse strings.”

“Not good enough support for parents”

“Too many Unnecessary departments involved, too many unnecessary parties, too much documentation (goes against Inclusivity and basic definitions of E and D by being overly and unnecessarily complex to instigate, adapt and / or end / complete. This can be distressing for children, YP's and YA's. Carers can also become confused and / or overwhelmed. As they already have way too much to address Every day, as is. Also, many carers have Intersectionality's. For instance, little understanding of English, different cultural heritage, LGBTQIA and / or their own learning disabilities and / or other disabilities).”

The survey results were mixed, as there was also some positive feedback from parents regarding education however preparing for adulthood raised themes which pertain to future planning which comes with natural anxiety for both parents and young people.



**Fig.7 How the future is seen**

## Where FVP have shared this talking point

1. FVP Website
2. FVP Social Media Channels
3. FVP E-News
4. Peterborough City Council Decision Makers

## Next Steps and Areas for Consideration

1. FVP to feedback these concerns at PfA Steering Group and appropriate sub group meetings.
2. Regular updates on the progress of PfA policies and initiatives to be shared with parent carers via FVP media channels.
3. LA to consider concerns/ issues/ views of parent carers and work with commissioned services to facilitate parent carer input into the transition process.
4. LA to share PfA guide already developed more widely.
5. LA to look at key concerns such as changes to household income and explore ways to help parents prepare.

## Timescales

1. PCC to provide a response within three months of this being presented to the SEND project board
2. This ToI to be posted on the Local Offer and FVP website within one month of production