

FURTHER EDUCATION

Post 16: Further Education

Further education (FE), from age 16 onwards, helps young people with SEND to prepare for their adult life and wherever possible, equip them for employment. Whatever the young person's adult destination, further education colleges have a duty to provide well rounded programmes that address young people's special educational needs and help them attain the outcomes set out in their EHC Plans.

There are different types of further education placements available for young people with SEND: mainstream programmes in general FE Colleges with additional levels of support, supported learning programmes in FE Colleges, independent specialist providers (ISPs) offering day provision and residential ISPs. The majority of SEND learners aged 16-24 in Kingston and Richmond attend local mainstream FE Colleges. Out of borough residential placements are appropriate for a minority of young people whose special educational (and social care) needs cannot be met elsewhere.

Independent advice and guidance on post 16 destinations should be provided in schools from Year 9, through SENCOs and/or careers staff.

In line with families' feedback as a result of the AfC's SEND review in 2014, AfC is committed to supporting young people with SEND to routes to employment, where this is a realistic aspiration for young people. This could be a supported internship, a traineeship or an apprenticeship. Vocational programmes in colleges also provide a route to employment and we will expect colleges to demonstrate how the learning programme they offer will help each young person to transition into the world of work.

See more on employability provision in the Opps Pack in Appendix 12.

We also expect colleges to work to our commissioning principles for high needs learning – these principles include the requirement that colleges offer high quality programmes that offer stretch and progression and (if appropriate) work experience. We would also expect to see strategies employed to address the young person's individual special educational needs.

How the funding works

The funding for post 16 placements that require a high level of support, above the £10,000 threshold for high needs learners, is provided by AfC. This is known as 'top up' or 'Element 3' funding and comes from the high needs block of AfC's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Additional support funding per learner which is below £6,000 over the year is claimed by the college direct from the Skills Funding Agency.

AfC's 14-19 team includes a manager, a 16-19 funding officer and a 14-19/high needs co-ordinator, who are responsible for managing the 'top up' funding for post 16 high needs placements and for convening the Panels that agree the funding to enable the support as set out in the EHC Plan. There is a Panel in place for each borough and they are chaired by AfC's Associate Director for Commissioning. Each one has representatives from 14-19 team, Preparing for Adulthood and adult social care for the local authority. Colleagues from health (clinical commissioning groups) also attend.

The Panels meet monthly from December through to June and endeavour to agree all placements for September by the end of the academic year. Once the Panel has signed off the placement and the funding, a letter is sent to families, copied to the provider (college), to confirm the funding for the next academic year.

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More information

More information on funding and the post 16 FE commissioning process, contact details for 14-19 and the appeals procedure, can be found in our funding protocols for 2016/17 on the Local Offer, and in Appendix 12.

The 14-19 team work closely with Preparing for Adulthood on the EHC Plan process to ensure that that they can sign off the funding for placements as quickly as possible prior to the start of the next academic year. This means that the college has time to put the right provision and associated support in place and that young people and their families are assured of their College place.