



Supported Living and Employment in Shropshire

10th February 2020

'A Sense of Purpose and a Home of my Own'



SHROPSHIRE **Parent
And
Carer
Council**

'A Sense of Purpose and a Home of my Own' 10th February 2020 (Central Baptist Church)

AIMS:

1. To introduce the new draft Shropshire SEND Strategy and to support parent carers to respond to the planned consultation on this document.
2. To explore what the outcome measures actually look like in reality to parent carers, to inform how the implementation of the strategy will be measured and what steps need to be in place to achieve success.
3. To inform parents on local housing options
4. To begin conversations with families about their loved ones leaving home and living independently
5. To hear examples of good practice and what can be achieved.





Sharing Information – The Shropshire SEND Strategy

Vision:

“We want Shropshire children and young people with SEND to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect, the same opportunities in life as other children and young people. We will achieve this by understanding what children and young people need, working in partnership and with children and young people to meet that need, and measuring our success by whether we achieve a “dream life” for children and young people with SEND”

A Dream Life

Children, young people and families told us that the following are important to them

- having a job or vocation
- having friends and being able to play a full part in their community
- being independent and living in their own home
- having a voice on how they live their lives
- having access to good and consistent support, especially in times of transition





Measuring Success

- More young people with SEND in paid employment or voluntary roles
- Young people with SEND are more active in their community and spend more leisure time in friendship groups
- An increase in the number of young people with SEND who express satisfaction with their accommodation arrangements
- Children and young people with SEND are able to actively participate in decision making both on an individual and strategic level
- Children and young people with SEND and their families receive good quality support, especially at transition points, including early intervention
- A reduction in health inequalities experienced by children and young people with SEND

The Shropshire Offer

Presentation were shared from;

Adult Social Care - introducing the approach to supported living in Shropshire

Enable – introducing employment support services and Supported Internships

Both presentations are available on the PACC website – www.paccshropshire.org.uk



Family Voices

- Intentional Communities, Caitlin's Experience – *Maureen Morris*
- Ellie and Work Experience: Getting Ready for Employment – *Annie Taylor*
- Finding Tom a Home and a Community – *Marion Langford*

The stories shared by these parent carers are available on the PACC website

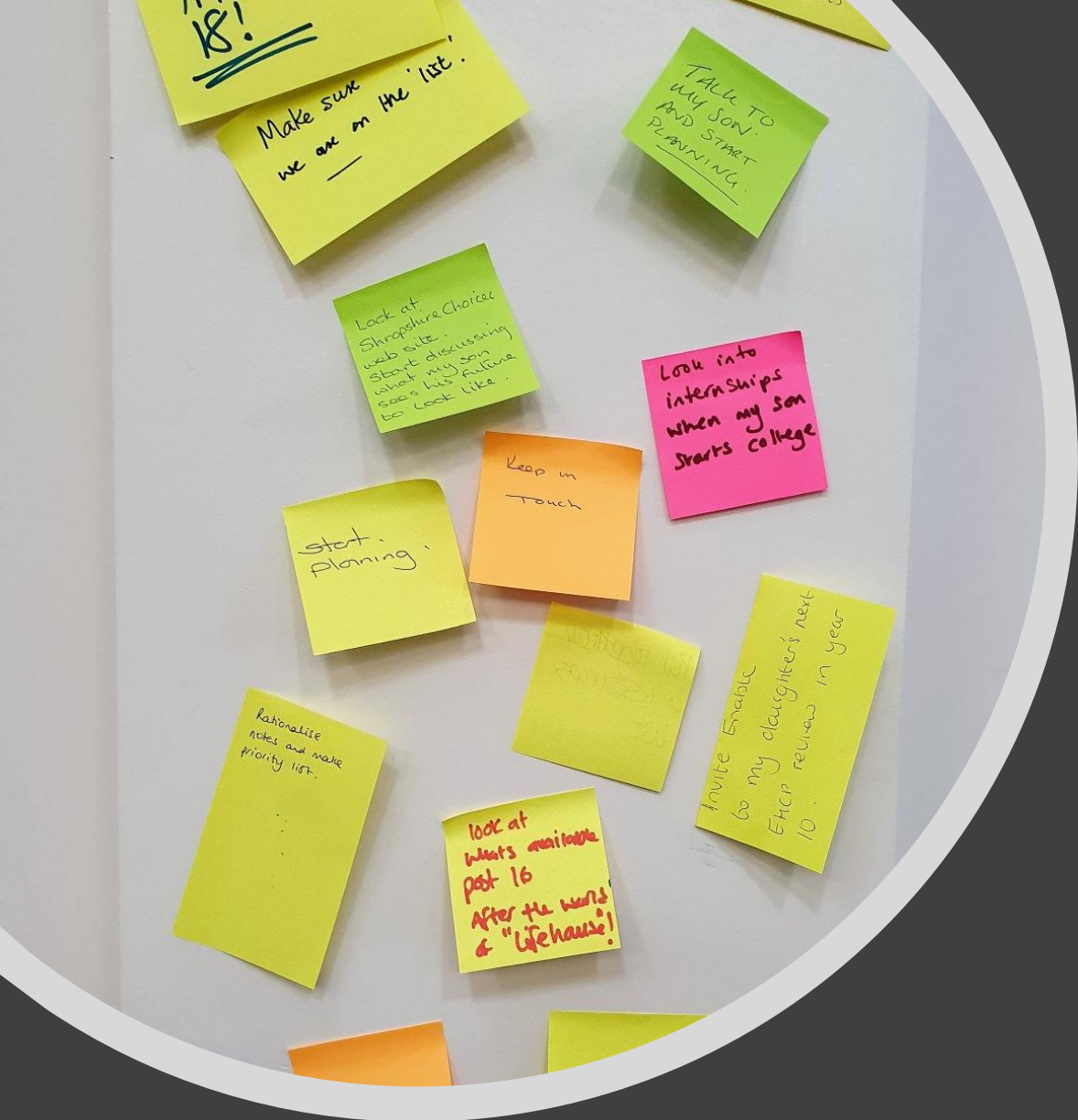
www.paccshropshire.org.uk



Questions to speakers

Employment

- On average how long does someone with a learning disability or autism or both stay in an employed role?
- How much does each Enable Service cost?
- Enable – What are the safe guarding strategies for voluntary work placements?
- Enable – most employers seem to be the council etc. How many commercial businesses are actually employing SEND people?
- Enable – What training is given to job coaches? How long does a job coach work with a person?
- Does Shropshire Council keep data on young people who fall through the net? And identify why that happened?
- How do you arrange work experience for a young person who can't access a supported internship or an apprenticeship?
- Enable – How do you inform the SENCO's in mainstream school about what you offer?
- Enable – How long can supported permitted work last?
- Enable – How long is the waiting list for your service?
- How many Supported Internships can you do?
- Enable – do you have any data to show how many people are actually in paid employment as a result of work by Enable?
- What is access to work and who finances it?



Questions to Speakers continued

Independent Living

- Is public transport provision assessed before a house for supported living is commissioned?
- Do young people get support with making the decision to live independently?

General

- Where are the Dads – how do we hear from them?
- What provision is there for severe needs please?
- Where is complex needs representation today?

Discussion Activity

In the second part of the workshop parent carers were asked to discuss 3 questions;

1. What is important to you and your child for leaving home?
2. What barriers and challenges may you and your child face in living independently – finding work and having their own place to live?
3. What ideally would Independent Living look like for you and your young person?

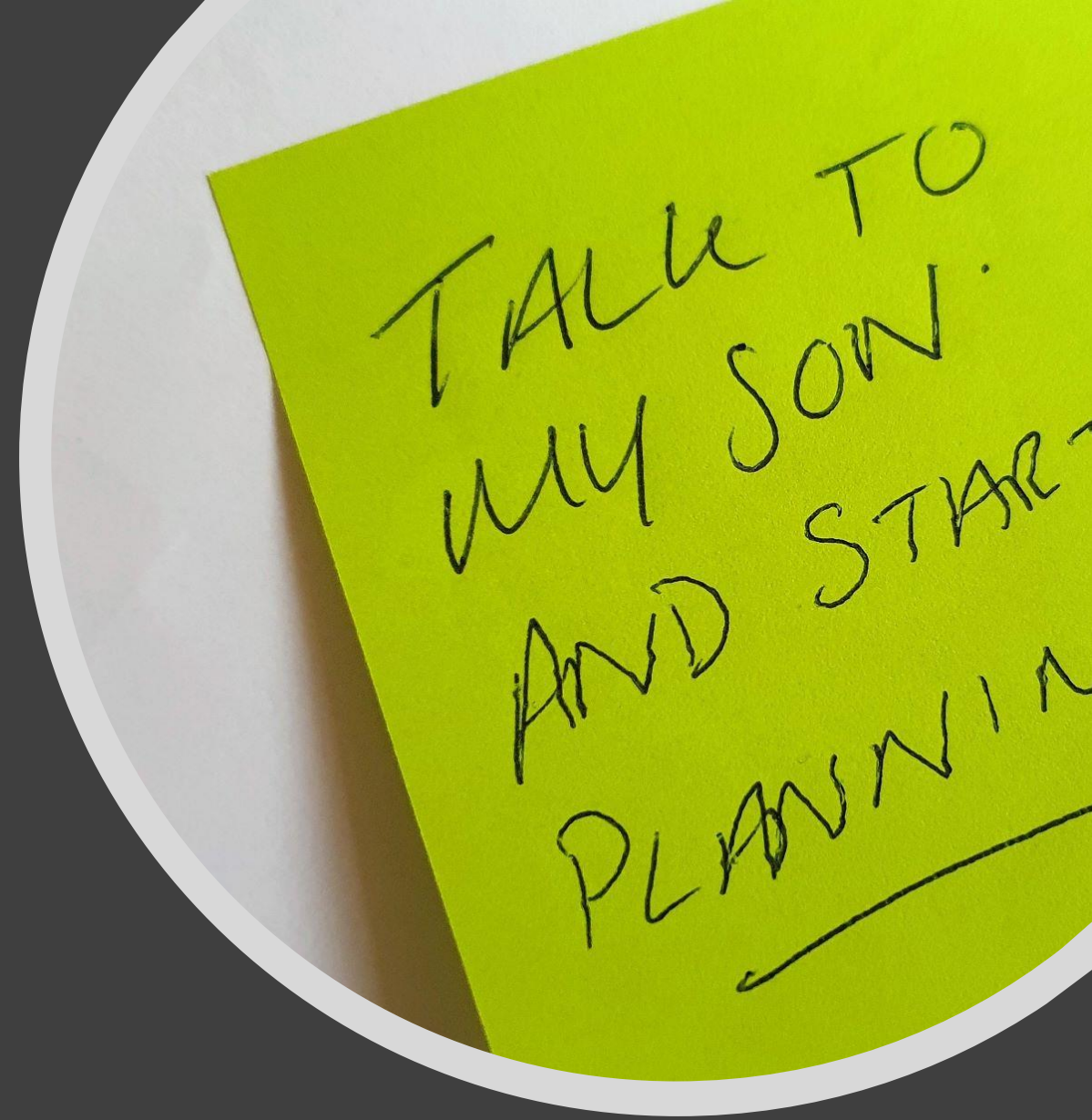
The key themes from these discussions are captured on the following pages.



1. What is important to you and your child for leaving home?

The Same Opportunities as Others:

It is important to parent carers that their child with additional needs has the same opportunities as other young people, that is to have a life that is independent from their family, where they can live safely, with access to friends, activities and occupation. It is also important to parent carers that young people with SEND are given the chance and supported appropriately to have a say in how they live their lives. Parent carers recognise that this may be more possible for some young people with SEND than other, but clearly feel that young people with additional needs must be given the skills and opportunity, wherever possible to actively participate in decision making about their lives.





Look into
internships
when my son
starts college

The Right Move at the Right Time:

A well - planned transition, that starts early and results in young people moving away from their families at the right time for them was identified as key by families. Transition should be something that happens gradually and not rushed, with the potential of poor or uninformed decisions being made. Both parent carers and the young people themselves need time to adjust to what is a major change in how they live their lives. There should be opportunities for young people to experience living away from home for short periods via Short Breaks and when a new home is agreed time must be allowed for everyone to adjust to the new arrangements.

Hearing from Others and Knowing What is Possible:

Parent carers value hearing from other families about their experiences and what worked or didn't work for them. Knowing that others in a similar situation to you have made this change and while they may have encountered challenges along the way, have successfully supported young people to live lives that are independent from their family is important and powerful. This isn't about just saying that "if we have done it you can", and the difficulties of this process should always be recognised, but it is important to share what is possible.


A Continuation of Life not Starting a Totally New One:

Transitioning into adulthood and growing up is an ongoing process, it isn't about one life finishing and another starting. Young people preparing for adulthood should be supported to build on and maintain existing relationships and interests. Young people will remain part of a family even when they move into their own home and any support provided should recognise this and enable on going contact and involvement in family activities. Likewise, any existing interests and activities should be maintained to provide a sense of security and continuity for young people.



Hands Up - Who's Worried About The Future

- ◆ A cliff edge post-16?
- ◆ Nothing to do in the days he's / she's not at college?
- ◆ Nothing to put in her / his CV?
- ◆ Is employment ever going to be a reality?
- ◆ All the transition stuff ?
- ◆ No-one to help you?



Information - Support - Understanding



PACC
unlocking doors together

Giving a voice to families of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs in Shropshire

Facebook icon: [facebook.com/shropacc](#)
Twitter icon: [@shropacc](#)

Understanding the Cost and having Financial Security:

Parent carers want to understand how young people's support needs will be paid for and how to ensure that they are financially secure. The funding system for housing, supported employment, travel and day to day living expenses is complex and totally new to most parent carers. Having a clear understanding of financial responsibilities will help with planning and the effective use of resources.

write Enable
to my daughter's next
EHCP review in year
10.

Put together
a resources
list.



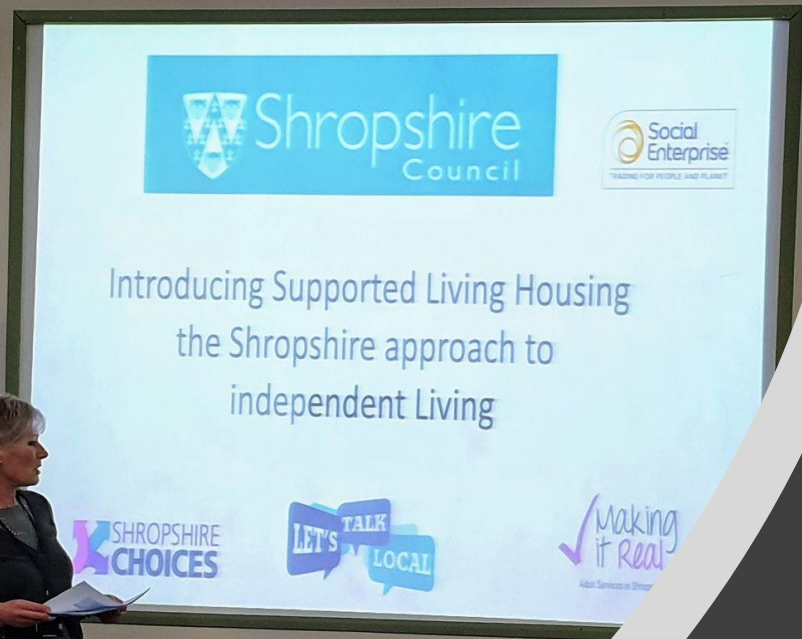
Having an Active Life:

Families are particularly concerned about how young people will spend their time when they move away from the family home. Many young people with SEND need a structured day to thrive and to prevent behaviours of concern developing and families are worried that insufficient support will be provided to support this. Young people should continue to learn and develop new skills and interest during this stage of their lives

Being Safe and Receiving Good Quality Support:

Being confident that young people are safe, healthy and well supported by appropriately skilled staff is important to parent carers. Families want to understand what steps are in place to address any specific risks associate with individual young people and how core health needs will be met. Families having a good and positive relationship with the staff that support their young person is essential.





2. What are the barriers and challenges to Independent Living?

Getting the Right Information from the Start

Parent carers report finding it very difficult to find the information that they feel they need when thinking about their child's future. The system feels complicated, with no clear pathway. In addition, families feel that they often receive conflicting information and there is no one person who acts as a lead contact for this process. Getting information or help in understanding the financial processes is a particular challenge, with families having to support young people to claim new benefits, and to take on new financial responsibilities such as paying rent and bills. Families also are not clear about what the options are available to their young person and so do not feel that they or their son/daughters, are being supported to make informed decisions.

What Next?

It is too often not clear to parent carers what is available in terms of either housing, employment or volunteering opportunities. While parent carers understand and value the need for a personalised approach, the lack of a clear 'offer' during transition creates a particular challenge for families. Families feel that it is too often left to them to identify next steps and to take the process forward. This reliance on families to lead the system creates inequalities, since not all families are able to do this for a young person.



Time and Energy

The reliance on parent carers to instigate and lead transition activity mentioned previously, can have a significant impact on parent carers health and wellbeing. During the transition period parent carers are often suddenly faced with learning a whole new system and language, alongside a significant increased demand on their time to attend meetings or to visit new settings. This might be happening at a time when parent carers, particularly mothers, may have returned to work as they had adjusted to life with caring responsibilities and when young people might start to feel particularly unsettled. For any parent it is an emotional time when a young person leaves home or enters the wider world through employment or residential study, but for parent carers this can be a very worrying time. It is difficult to trust your vulnerable child to the care of others, especially after years of the responsibility mainly sitting with you. There is a lack of recognition of how difficult this period is for parent carers and a lack of support to prepare them for and help them to adjust to this change.





What will they Do?

Parent carers feel that there is insufficient focus on ensuring that young people lead full and active lives when they move away from home. It is appreciated that finding the right housing option and effectively matching any young people who may share a home is essential, however long term the most important things is having a plan about how young people will spend their day and this doesn't seem to be given the same priority. It is recognised that for young people with Learning Disabilities, Autism or both a structured timetable of activity, that provides consistency, opportunities for ongoing learning, employment or volunteering, as well as time for fun and relaxation is essential for their health and wellbeing. Many of the young people who require support as adults, do not of the ability to structure their own lives in this way and will slip into poor lifestyle choices if not supported to make more positive decisions, which can result in them developing behaviours of concern and have a significantly negative impact on their physical and mental health.

Making Sure Young People are Well Prepared for Adult Life

A lack of a join up and co-ordinated approach to transition is reported by parent carers. There is also a concern that the need for preparation for adulthood is not sufficiently embedded in schools or colleges. Annual Reviews are not effectively used by services to identify wider learning needs and opportunities are not taken to focus on the development of core life skills, such as young people being able to; communicate their thoughts and wishes, be as independent as possible in self care skills, understand the need for exercise and healthy eating, be able to maintain relationships etc Parent carers report the need for more joint working between schools and other services, with a focus on delivering an holistic support packages and good whole life outcomes for young people.

3. What Ideally Would Independent Living Look Like?

Being part of a Community

Many families expressed a preference for young people to live in clusters of accommodation so that they had friends close by. This was likened to the retirement village model, but also reflects the communal living experience that many young people chose when they first move away from home, to go to University or into shared accommodation. This would offer a first step experience that would enable a young person to make more informed decisions about where they would like to live long-term. Very few of us stay in the first home that we move to, when first moving away from our family home, yet young people with support needs are expected to choose their 'forever' home straight away.

Parent carers also felt that this 'cluster' approach would also help with issues around limited transport options in rural areas, with less time spent on travelling, with the opportunity to walk to see your friends. It would also provide an opportunity to share resources and to spread the cost of certain activities, if young people choose to. Being close to family and the community that they grew up in was also highlighted by parent carers as important, so that existing relationships can be maintained.



One Size Doesn't Fit All

While some parent carers expressed a preference for certain types of accommodation, all parent carers highlight the need for there to be a personalised approach, that recognises individual need and preferences. Young people need a space to call their own where they can be themselves, express their personality and be supported in the way they prefer. Young people should be safe but not restricted and will have a say in how they are supported and how they live their lives.



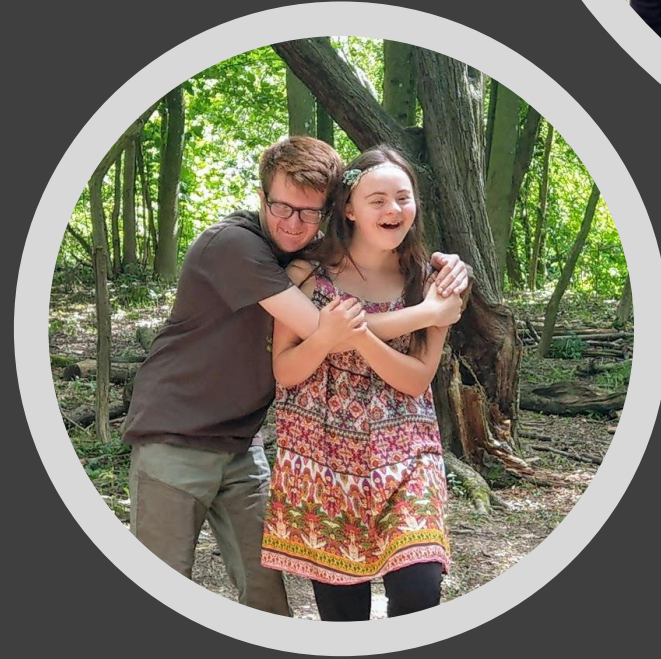
Supported to Make Informed Choices

Parent carers want to see their young people being respected and being given the opportunity to self-direct their lives as much as possible. They also highlight however, the importance of ensuring that young people are properly supported to make informed decisions and that those supporting them need to have a good understanding of the Mental Capacity Act and how to provide supported decision-making activities. Choice should not be unfairly limited by a lack of support and decisions about activities will in the main, not be based on the availability of support, but the needs and wishes of the young person.



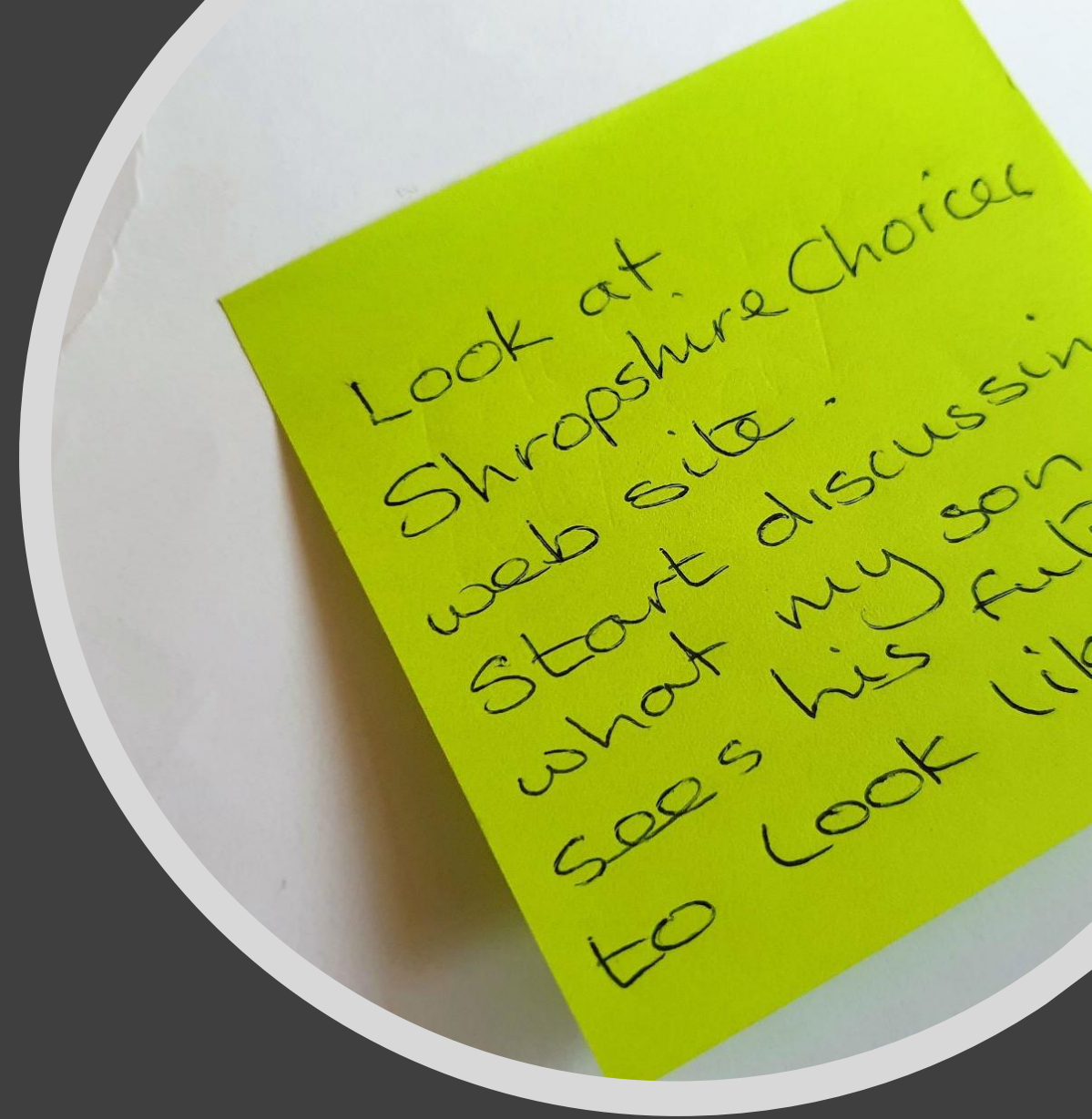
Busy and Meaningful Lives

Parent carers want to see young people leading busy and meaningful lives, that provide opportunities for continued development and enables young people to be active in the community. While parent carers hope that young people with SEND will achieve paid employment wherever possible, there is a recognition that voluntary work is likely to be more realistic for some. Parent carers want to see young people being supported to access a structured programme of activity on a daily basis, so that they have clear commitments and responsibilities, as well as time to relax and access social activities. This should include learning new self-care / home-care skills, time committed to maintain and developing relationships and contributing to the community in whatever way is possible for each young person.



What I will do next:

- Keep in touch
- Start planning
- Look at Shropshire Choices website and start discussing what my son sees his future to look like
- Look into internships when my son starts college
- Talk to my son and start planning
- Make sure that we are on the 'list'
- Ring Shropshire Council to ask what is available for my son re independent living
- Think past 18!!
- Contact Enable again
- Rationalise notes and make a priority list
- Look at what is available post 16 – after the world of special school
- Put together a resources list



Recommendations from PACCC based on feedback from this event:

1. Co-produce an Introduction to Transition training course for parent carers of young people in year 9. Provide opportunities for catch ups as parent carers travel through the transition process. These should be based in local communities and offer a chance to bring families of young people of similar ages together to support future matching process
2. Actively collect personal stories of transition to Independent / Supported living and employment / volunteering from both parent carers and young people themselves to share on the Local Offer
3. Coproduce a transition guides for parent carers and for young people, specifically including information on; financial management, who to contact when, volunteering opportunities, introduction to housing and support options, management of medication on transition to adult services, annual health checks and screening programmes, introduction to employment support options. This should also form the basis of the PFA section of the Local Offer
4. Develop a centralised database of volunteering opportunities in Shropshire as part of the Local Offer – to support young people with SEND to experience work environments



Recommendations Continued...

5. Co-produce a base line survey to gather feedback on the experience of transition in Shropshire. Repeat survey on an annual basis to evidence progress towards achieving a good transition experience for families and positive outcomes for young people in adulthood
6. Work with parent carers to develop a housing development strategy for supported living accommodation, identifying opportunities for cluster builds and key locations for supported living accommodation
7. Work with schools / colleges to develop the use of the EHCP Annual Review to plan preparation for adulthood activity and explore the development of a 'Transition Passport' which will detail the steps across Education, Health and Social Care services needed



Thank You!

We would like to thank all the speakers who supported this event, along with the parent carers who attended and shared their experience, knowledge, and their hopes and wishes for the future



SHROPSHIRE **P**arent
And
Carer
Council