



Disability Advice & Welfare Network

Autism Education Leavers Passport

in association with




and

funded through

**The Baring
Foundation**

Foreword by Sean Kennedy

Sean Kennedy is a barrister and co-founder of Talem Law, alongside his colleague Mandy Aulak, a solicitor. Both have extensive experience in disability, employment and SEND law. Sean also supports the charity Anna Kennedy Online.

Mandy and Sean bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in guiding parents and young people to achieve the right outcomes. They are committed to promoting true equality and inclusion for children and young people in education. This includes authoring the soon-to-be-updated “**Disability Law in Education No-nonsense Guide**,” available on the website  www.supportsendkids.org, along with other resources such as the renowned “**Noddy Guide to SEN Law**.”

Buckland Report

The Buckland Report 2024 states that there are only 3 in 10 autistic adults in work. Yet the benefits autistic people bring to the world of employment are remarkable.

Just some of the benefits employing an autistic person are; punctuality, fewer days sick, more likely to come up with solutions, dedicated, incredible eye for detail and task orientated.

The Autism Education Leavers Passport has been developed and produced with the help of a group of autistic young people, families and carers, The Baring Foundation, FIAS, the Suffolk Law Centre, DAWN (Disability Advice and Welfare Network), Sean Kennedy of Anna Kennedy Online, Kim Mayhead and Jo Dunne.

EHCP's (Education Health and Care Plan's)



When you reach year 10 the transition team will hold a meeting with you and your family where you can discuss your aspirations and career goals, which should be paramount at this transition meeting.

You will be given information on apprenticeships, work experience, college, university and additional career advice. You should come away with a clear idea of how you will be supported. The transitions team will meet with you again in year 11.

An EHCP does not have to end when you leave school. The EHCP can continue up to the age of 25, provided you are pursuing education, have Special Educational Needs (SEN) or have a disability, and it is necessary for you to receive special educational provision only available through an EHCP.

The pursuit of formal educational qualifications is not required to have an EHCP however, an EHCP is not available to students in higher education, where another support framework called Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is available.

To be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA), you must be an undergraduate or postgraduate student, including those studying with the Open University or through distance learning. Additionally, you must qualify for student finance from Student Finance England and be enrolled in a course that lasts at least one year.

The DSA can provide you with extra funding and academic related support costs, which will not affect any benefits you are entitled to and you don't have to repay it. Some ideas the DSA can help you with are, a mentor, extra travel, items you need to study and specialist equipment.

Disabled Students' Allowance application forms and notes for full time students

 <http://tiny.cc/rx15zz>

A LA (Local Authority) must not simply end (or cease to maintain) an EHCP when you, the young person, reaches the age of 19. In such cases, some LA's will typically evaluate whether your outcomes have been achieved. This very narrow approach is incorrect, and guidance is often not helpful in this regard. The correct approach is far more detailed. In the view of the authors, the achievement of outcomes may only suggest that you no longer need support as specified in an EHCP.

However, the relevant legal framework does not automatically mean an EHCP can be ended when outcomes are achieved. The decision depends on various factors, including the young person's educational goals, the reasons why the outcomes were achieved, and whether their special educational needs have changed with maturity. There is a connection between the criteria for ending an EHCP and the criteria for creating and maintaining one. To make a lawful decision to cease the EHCP, the LA must have updated information on the young person's required provision, whether it is educational, and if it can be provided without the EHCP.

You should be aware that if a LA decides to stop maintaining their Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), you have the right to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

Until the appeal process is completed, the EHCP must continue to be maintained. This is an important right that young people often overlook. Furthermore, if you are over 18 years old, you may be eligible for legal aid for the appeal.

To check eligibility, you can call 0345 345 4 345

Financial Information



Money matters can sometime be hard to understand so talk to an adviser about anything you are not sure about.

Your National Insurance Number

If you want to work, claim benefits or receive a student loan you normally need a National Insurance Number (called a 'NINO').

In most cases, a NINO is sent to you automatically around your 16th birthday and is made up of 2 letters, 6 numbers and a final letter, for example, 'AA 123456 Z'.

Having a NINO ensures you pay the right tax and contributions toward certain benefits including your state pension.

**Look here for more about NINO's:
National Insurance EXPLAINED! | UK | 2020**

 [youtube.com/watch?v=yVjd5cYuCrM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVjd5cYuCrM)

Appointees

An appointee is a person who looks after your money if you receive benefits but cannot look after it yourself. The government must agree that you need an appointee.

An appointee will help you apply for benefits, fill in government forms to make sure you receive the right benefits and use your benefits to pay for your bills and any care you receive.

An appointee cannot make choices about money you have saved up or choices about where you live.

You can request an appointee if you find it difficult to look after your money but the government always checks to see whether having one is right for you.

Getting money to help you pay for things

Whether you are in or out of work you may be able to claim benefits.

To check whether you can, it's important to ask for free advice from an agency like Citizens Advice or DAWN because sometimes the rules can be hard to understand.

To find out more about what benefits you are entitled to and who to contact in your area click on one of these links:

 www.advicelocal.uk

 www.moneyhelper.org.uk

Bank Account

You need to be 16 to open a bank account, but some banks say you must be over 18.

There are lots of trusted websites where you can find the best bank for you. Also, you can use these websites if you are thinking about a credit or store card.

 www.moneyhelper.org.uk

 www.moneysavingexpert.com

 www.uswitch.com

You will need photographic evidence and proof of where you live.

If you do not have any ID, such as a passport or driving licence, you can apply for a Citizen Card which carries the PASS hologram (Proof of Age Standards Scheme) which has been endorsed by the Home Office.



Help to apply for jobs

Your local Job Centre Plus can help you look for a job and pay for things to make it easier if you need support in a job, like equipment and transport costs.

Talk to a Work Coach at your local Job Centre Plus about the support they can provide you with. This could include talking to a Disability Employment Adviser at your local Job Centre Plus. They can offer advice and support in finding a job for you.

Access to Work can also provide money to pay for things once you have found a job.

Some helpful Government websites include:

 www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job

 www.gov.uk/access-to-work

 www.gov.uk/looking-for-work-if-disabled



Writing a CV

- Before looking for a job, it is a good idea to write a CV outlining your skills, experience and qualifications. Adjusting your CV to each role increases your chances of success.
- This is an employer's first impression of you so make sure it is easy to read by using a clear font, headings and bullet points.
- It is a good idea to ask someone to proofread it, to double-check spelling and grammar.

What to include in your CV:

1

Personal details:

Include your full name, contact information (home address, phone number, email address.)

You can leave out any personal details that you're uncomfortable sharing, for example, your age and gender.

2 Personal statement or what inspires you:

Write a brief paragraph highlighting your skills, experience, and career goals. Your personal statement must be unique to you.

Adjust it to the specific job you're applying for. For example, if you are applying for a job as a film camera person, tell them about drama at school, when you made an amateur film, send in a portfolio of a small 2 minute reel).

3 Education:

List your educational qualifications, including schools, colleges, and universities attended. Mention any relevant certifications or courses.

If you were unable to take GCSE's, don't worry. Instead, focus on other stuff, like your interests, skills and any experiences you have. Use these to show how you would be an asset to the company.

4 Work experience:

Detail your work history, including job titles, company names, dates, and responsibilities.

Provide a summary of what your job role involved, focus on skills and achievements rather than just job duties.

5 Skills and abilities:

List your skills and strengths, such as technical abilities, time management, and problem-solving.

6 Volunteer work and non-education activities:

Mention any volunteer work, community involvement, or hobbies.

Highlight skills gained from these experiences.

7 References:

You could include the contact details of two references, or state to the prospective employer that references are available upon request.










Choose references who can support/evidence your abilities and reliability.

If you do not have an employer reference, you can put someone in a professional position, who knows you well.

Check first that they are happy to complete a reference for you.

Looking for a job

There are lots of websites that you can sign up to for job alerts, here are a few:

-  [Totaljobs.com](https://www.totaljobs.com)
-  [indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)
-  [reed.co.uk](https://www.reed.co.uk)
-  [jobsite.co.uk](https://www.jobsite.co.uk)
-  [monster.co.uk](https://www.monster.co.uk)
-  [fish4.co.uk](https://www.fish4.co.uk)
-  [charityjobs.co.uk](https://www.charityjobs.co.uk)
-  [diversityjobsgroup.com](https://www.diversityjobsgroup.com)
-  [exceptionalindividuals.com](https://www.exceptionalindividuals.com)

Apprenticeships are not usually advertised on job websites.

You can find out more about apprenticeships and how to apply on Find an apprenticeship - GOV.UK

 www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

When signing up, you can include the type of job you are looking for and how far you are able to travel, the further your search radius the more jobs that will be available. You will receive emails with job adverts relevant to your criteria, you can then read the job description and decide if you want to apply.



LinkedIn is a professional social media platform where lots of employers post jobs, which you may be able to apply for.

- **Create a profile:**

Choose a profile picture that looks professional.
Showcase your experience, skills, and education.

- **Job search:**

Find the right job or internship by browsing job listings.

- **Networking:**

Connect with people you have worked with or follow organisations you are interested in working for.

- **Skill development:**

Access learning resources to enhance your skills and professional development.



Completing an application form

1 **Make sure it is easy to read:**

Complete it online if possible or use black ink and block capitals if it is a paper copy.

2 **Highlight your strengths:**

In the section where you describe your qualifications and experience, focus on your strengths.

Provide specific examples that match the job requirements. Be concise and clear about how you're a good fit for the role. Use the personal specification and job description as a guide if available.

3 **Proofread carefully:**

Check for spelling and grammar errors. If possible, ask someone else to review your application for any mistakes. Attention to detail matters.

4 **Include a cover letter:**

Unless the job posting specifies otherwise, include a cover letter. Use it to express your enthusiasm for the position and explain why you're a strong candidate.

Remember that you might not be successful when applying for a job and often you will not receive a response to a job offer. We know that this can be frustrating, but unfortunately it is something many employers do.

Interviews

Preparation for a job interview is key.

1 **Job description:**

Complete it online if possible or use black ink and block capitals if it is a paper copy.

2 **Highlight your strengths:**

Consider why you're interviewing and how your qualifications/experience match the position.

3 **Research the company and role:**

Understand the company's background, culture, and the specific role you're applying for.

4 **Practice common interview questions:**

Be ready to discuss your experiences and skills. Use the **STAR*** method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your answers.

5 Practice speaking and body language:
Practicing out loud helps you to feel confident on the day.

6 Prepare questions for the interviewer:
Show your interest by asking thoughtful questions about the company, team or role.

7 Mock interviews:
Practice with a friend or record yourself to refine your responses.

8 Print hard copies of your CV:
Bring extra copies of your CV to the interview.

The STAR method

*The **STAR** method is a structured approach to answering interview questions. It helps you provide clear and concise responses. Here's how it works:

Situation: Start by describing the context or situation. What was the scenario? Be specific and concise.

Task: Explain the task or challenge you faced. What were your responsibilities or goals?

Action: Describe the actions you took to address the situation. What steps did you follow? Focus on your role and contributions.

Result: Share the outcome. What happened because of your actions? Highlight any positive impact or lessons learned.

Disclosing Autism

Telling a prospective employer that you are Autistic can help you right at the beginning of an employment opportunity, and ensure that any reasonable adjustments can be put in place. However, it is your decision to disclose that you are Autistic.

Here are some tips:

Timing: Decide if you want to disclose and if so, when. You can mention it in your cover letter, during an interview, when you have the job or not at all. Choose what feels right for you.

Positive Framing: Emphasise your strengths. Explain how your unique perspective can benefit the organisation. For example, attention to detail, problem-solving skills, or creativity.

Reasonable Adjustments: If you require reasonable adjustments, it might be best to be clear about how these adjustments will help you perform at your best.

Focus on abilities: Highlight your abilities rather than limitations. Share examples of how you've overcome challenges.

It is estimated that fewer than 10% of people with moderate to severe learning disabilities are in any form of employment (HM Government valuing employment now).

Individuals with autism and a learning disability can still have dreams and aspirations, which can be met through, volunteering, supported paid employment, day centres, farms etc.

Local authorities and health services should inform individuals with severe needs, their families and carers about personal budgets (including personal health budgets) and direct payments. They will tell you if you are eligible, and how to apply, including what you can use the payment for. You can find out more about personal budgets from NHS website.

**Personal budgets and direct payments -
Social care and support guide - NHS.UK**

 <https://tinyurl.com/ymnc2y9d>

Know your rights



The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. It sets out personal characteristics that are protected by law – one of which is disability.

Disability

What is called a Neurodiverse condition can be classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 if it satisfies the definition of a disability contained within the statute; it follows that neurodiverse conditions are not automatically considered to be a disability. This means that employers and public bodies, such as the DWP, hospitals, schools, and the police, all have to consider your disability and how they can prevent you from being discriminated against because of your neurodiversity/disability.

You can be treated differently because of your disability but you cannot be treated worse than someone who does not share this characteristic with you.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a requirement for employers and service providers called the duty to make reasonable adjustments. A reasonable adjustment should be personal to you, and allow you to avoid being put at a disadvantage because of your disability so that you do

not face difficulties in the workplace. An example would be a request for a quiet space when needed if you felt overwhelmed whilst at work because of sensory difficulties you have. Your employer would have a duty to consider your request and implement what they felt was reasonable.

In a new role of employment, it is important that reasonable adjustments are discussed with your employer to help you overcome any disadvantages you may face. An adjustment could be (depending on the disadvantage you face) to allow for a work buddy or mentor in the early stages of employment, additional software, your own workspace or extra training which you may require etc. Adjustments are considered reasonable in terms of their cost, effectiveness and their potential disruption.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments also extends to the process of gaining employment. This means that an employer has a duty to consider your disability during the selection and interview process and must make appropriate adjustments for your disability so that you are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled applicant. This could be giving you the interview questions in advance or having dimmed lighting in the interview room. The potential employer would need to know you are disabled.

Harassment

The Equality Act 2010 also protects disabled people from harassment in the workplace. This is where a colleague

or an employer does something you do not want them to do, such as saying something about your disability which makes you feel picked upon and bullied.

Discrimination arising from disability

It is also unlawful to be discriminated for anything arising from your disability if this cannot be justified. This also covers behaviour, for example, if you received a formal warning from your employer for being absent from work, but you were suffering from autistic burnout, this could amount to harassment. In such cases the employer should make sure all reasonable adjustments have been made and that they have considered a less difficult sanction, which would achieve the same result.

If you suspect that you have been treated differently in some way because of your disability – this could be discrimination – and you have protection by law under the Equality Act 2010.

Please feel free to contact Suffolk Law Centre to discuss your issue and we can assist and represent you where possible.

 office@suffolklawcentre.org.uk

Link to the Equality Act:

 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Autism Act Summary



The Autism Act 2009, which is the only act dedicated to improving support and services for people affected by one disability, requires the Secretary of State for Health and Social Services, for the purpose of securing implementation of the Autism Strategy:

- to issue guidance to local authorities about the exercise of their social services functions and to NHS bodies and NHS foundation trusts about the exercise of their functions concerned with the provision of relevant services; and
- to produce and regularly review an autism strategy; the first ever strategy for autistic adults in England, entitled 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives', was published in 2010 with a commitment to review the strategy three years later.

In 2013 the Government sought feedback from adults with autism, parents, carers and professionals about how well the 2010 strategy had been implemented. This resulted in a new strategy, entitled 'Think Autism', being published in April 2014, which builds on the themes in 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives'. This adult autism strategy explains the different things that the Government will help to do and tells local authorities and Health services how they can help autistic people.

There are three new key proposals in the 'Think Autism' strategy, in addition to the existing duties of the 2010 strategy:

- 1 Autism Aware Communities** – 'Think Autism' community awareness projects to be established in local communities with pledges/awards for local organisations to work towards.
- 2 Autism Innovation Fund** – funding for projects that promote innovative local services and projects, particularly for lower-level preventative support.
- 3** Better data collection and more joined up advice and information services, including a new way of social care staff recording someone's condition as autism, and a commitment to make it easier for people with autism to find information online about how their local authorities are performing.

The Government allocated £4.5 million towards the Autism Innovation Fund and the Autism Aware Communities programme. The Think Autism strategy reinforces the expectations and actions for local authorities and local NHS bodies, set out in the 2010 strategy. There are some significant developments including:

- local authorities need to report on data about people with autism for the first time

- the Royal College of GPs has made autism a priority for training and awareness over the following three years
- autism awareness training will be made available to all mainstream healthcare professionals
- the hope that new autism training would be rolled out to all Disability Employment Advisers at Jobcentres
- the Government committed to reviewing the autism strategy again within five years
- 'Think Autism' reaffirms the importance of the five areas for action identified in the 2010 strategy aimed at improving the lives of adults with autism:
 - making sure that more people understand about autism
 - making it easier for adults to get a diagnosis of autism
 - making it easier for adults with autism to choose how they live and get the help that they need to do this
 - helping adults with autism to find jobs
 - helping local councils and health services to write plans so that the adults with autism who live in their area get the help that they need.

The updated strategy states that all of the existing duties and recommendations from the 2010 strategy still apply to local authorities and NHS bodies, namely:

- improved training of frontline professionals in autism
- the recommendation to develop local autism teams
- actions for better planning and commissioning of services, including involving people with autism and their parents/carers
- actions for improving access to diagnosis (93% of areas in England now have a diagnosis service and the Autism Strategy has been extended to include children) and post-diagnostic support
- leadership structures at national, regional and local levels for delivery
- proposals for reviewing the strategy to make sure that it is working.

In March 2015 new statutory guidance was published in relation to the Autism Strategy (replacing the existing guidance from 2010), which tells local authorities, NHS bodies and NHS Foundation Trusts what actions should be taken to meet the needs of people with autism living in their area.

The new statutory guidance clearly states that local authorities and the NHS:

- should provide autism awareness training for all staff
- must provide specialist autism training for key staff, such as GPs and community care assessors
- cannot refuse a community care assessment for adults with autism based solely on IQ
- must appoint an autism lead in their area
- have to develop a clear pathway to diagnosis and assessment for adults with autism
- need to commission services based on adequate population data The 2015 guidance includes new chapters on:
 - Preventative support and safeguarding
 - Reasonable adjustments and equality
 - Supporting people with autism and complex needs
 - Employment
 - Criminal justice.

Also, some of the duties have been strengthened to things that local authorities and NHS bodies “must” do because of new duties being brought in by other laws (particularly the Care Act 2014). This is particularly true of duties in relation to training, which have been improved to give much clearer guidance on which professionals should have what levels of training.

A statement from the National Autistic Society says that the Department for Health and Social Care requires local authorities to report on their progress through a self-assessment exercise and the information collected through this is available online for each local authority.

If your area is not showing progress, you could follow these steps:

- 1** In accordance with the strategic objections of the act Check that your local authority and NHS know about their duties. Your local authority should have an “Autism Lead” who should oversee planning for autistic adults in your area.
- 2** Complying wherever reasonably possible. Compliance should be the exception rather than the rule. Where this does not happen the relevant public body should be able to provide coherent evidence-based justification. Meet with key people in your area including your Autism Lead and local politicians to highlight the statutory guidance.

- 3 Your area should have a partnership between the council, the NHS and autistic people (this might be called an Autism Partnership Board), which you might be able to join. If you do pursue this opportunity, you can emphasise the skills and experience you would be able to bring to this partnership.
- 4 If your council or NHS are making decisions that go against the statutory guidance, you might be able to take legal action, after taking appropriate advice.

Useful stuff:



- **UK DID Card (Disabled ID)** The aim of the National DID Card is to remove the need for individuals to carry paper documentation. You will need to send evidence such as PIP or medical evidence.

 www.did-card.co.uk

- **UK Citizen's Card** is a national ID that will prove your age and identity, and it displays the PASS (Proof of Age Standards Scheme) hologram endorsed by the Home Office.

 www.citizencard.com

- **CEA Card** The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed for UK cinemas by the UK Cinema Association (UKCA). The card enables a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them when they visit a participating cinema.

 www.ceacard.co.uk

- **Stop It Now** is run by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, the only UK-wide charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse. We are here for anyone with concerns about child sexual abuse and its prevention.

Tel: 0808 1000 900

 www.stopitnow.org.uk

- **Young Minds** help with different areas of mental health.

 www.youngminds.org.uk

- **Papyrus** Offers confidential advice and support if you're struggling with suicidal thoughts, and information about how to make a safety plan. Its helpline service - **HOPELINE247** - is available to anybody under the age of 35 experiencing suicidal thoughts, or for anyone concerned that a young person could be thinking about suicide. Opening times: 24/7 every day of the year.

Tel: 0800 068 4141 Mobile: 07860 039967

pat@papyrus-uk.org

- **Shout** is a free, confidential 24/7 text messaging service for anyone in the UK who needs support.

To start a conversation, text “shout” to 85258

 www.giveusashout.org

- **Autism Voice** supports mainly global majority communities open Mon-Fri 9am-7pm.

Tel: 0845 8605547

- **The Traveller Movement** advocate and work with Gypsy, Roma and Irish travellers. There is lots of useful information on their website.

Tel: 020 7607 2002

 www.travellermovement.org.uk

- **PIC Training** offer bespoke training exploring autism and ADHD.

 www.pictraining.co.uk
jo.dunne@pictraining.co.uk

Mobile: 07946 271536

The Autism Passport



The DAWN Autism Passport is a useful resource when visiting courts, police stations, GP's, hospitals, Job Centre's, job applications and interviews, and much more. It supports the autistic individual by informing what reasonable adjustments are required in order to help with communication.

**For further information please
visit the DAWN website**

 www.dawnsupport.co.uk



Patron of DAWN – Anna Kennedy



Anna Kennedy is an international stalwart of the autism world and Patron of DAWN. Anna is an avid campaigner who has worked to provide improved education and other services and support for children and adults who are autistic.

Anna has an international following of over 100,000 and she has appeared on many TV documentaries. Anna was a participant on Strictly Come Dancing (People's Strictly for Comic Relief), and Team Manager Gamesmaker at the 2012 Olympics.

This year marks 14 years of “Autism’s Got Talent” which features amazingly talented performances by individuals with autism, showcasing their fabulous capabilities.

 www.annakennedyonline.com

 www.dawnsupport.co.uk



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