



**The 14-25 Network** was established in Plymouth in recognition of the need to promote the Preparing for Adulthood agenda. Since June 2014, the forum has become established as the primary mechanism to both grow and share best practice amongst stakeholders from across the city.

Three network events run each year and representatives from the parent/carer forum; young persons' forum; special schools, Post-16 providers, school SENCOs as well as representatives from charities working with young people and youth services attend the events. The event is hosted at the local college of further education and approximately 50 people attend.

## Priorities

As providers enter and exit the marketplace and the needs of young people change, we have found it helpful to revisit the same core priorities as a local area. These priorities are:

1. *Reviewing and writing outcomes (SEN Support and those with an EHC plan)*
2. *The city employment picture*
3. *The voice of the young person*
4. *Work experience*
5. *Working with families*

## Impact

A significant benefit of the network approach is how feedback is now being used to drive forward local area strategy. Following each meeting, a multi-agency 'core group' review the briefing and feedback, discuss key themes and look at how the city agenda can be shaped. Often this can include updates to the local offer; conversations with individual providers about specific examples of good practice or updates to planning following the identification of specific challenges.

Organisations who attend regularly tell us they value the forum and as well as how their practice will change as a result. Typical comments include:

*“ I found this session valuable, especially for networking, as I am a mentor for Empowering Enterprise. It was a great opportunity to see other projects ”*

*“ Great to see the young man from Youth Ascends - good to have the young person's input at the meeting ”*

In addition to this, the briefing has facilitated the development of co-production by ensuring that the voice of young people and families are heard. Across the summer, a central resource that provides example outcomes from across each preparing for adulthood aspect will be produced. Once finished, this will be accessible from the Local Offer.

## Outcomes

Through the Network we have seen relationships with post-16 providers develop across the city. This has brought a number of benefits including:

- *increased clarity about transition processes*
- *a better understanding of funding arrangements and the panel process*
- *increased confidence in relation to annual reviews and routes into employment*

The Network is also an excellent forum for sharing good practice between providers. This has meant that mainstream, special schools and post-16 providers are able to develop improved communication and common ways of working.

## Next Steps

It has taken some time to engage providers and schools from across the city in order to develop a wide range of provision. Further work is required to support the sustainability of pathways including those offered by smaller niche providers.

We have found that there should be no assumption of prior knowledge. Through the Network it quickly became apparent that the marketplace of providers was fragmented and that there were significant gaps in knowledge and understanding. As a result, we will continue to revisit the key priorities.

Within the local area competition is healthy: young people have choices. Network meetings have provided a safe environment for discussion and new collaborations have started as a result. This success will continue to be built upon. It is also important that we increase the input from young people into Network meetings so that providers continue to understand the impact of planning for good outcomes on individual lives.