

# **national transition support team**

working together to improve transition  
for disabled young people

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## **‘How to’ guide: How to develop a transition protocol**

### **Introduction**

**This is a guide to developing a protocol that sets out the roles and responsibilities of all agencies in a local area that support disabled young people and their families in their transition to adulthood**

### **What is a protocol?**

A strategic transition protocol is needed to ensure that services are brought together, with a clear and transparent commitment to making the transition process work. For the purpose of this guide we have called this a protocol, however in a number of local authority areas other terms are used to describe a document with the same purpose.

Developing a clear, strategic, multi-agency, agreed protocol on how local services work to meet the needs of disabled young people in transition to adulthood can transform the effectiveness of local support. A protocol should be developed with all partners involved in transition, including disabled young people and their families to ensure that it is relevant and realistic, and that partners will take ownership and responsibility for the part that they play.

There is sometimes confusion about who should take the lead in developing the protocol, however this should be decided at an early stage, to ensure that one, multi-agency protocol is agreed, and not several single agency documents. The overall responsibility for transition lies with the Director of Adult Services, and the Director of Children’s Services, and they should therefore ensure that a protocol is developed.

A strategic health lead should also be involved in the development and implementation of the protocol. It is essential that a protocol has senior level agreement, and that senior managers ensure that staff understand the importance and relevance of the protocol. A protocol should be reviewed regularly, with input from young people and their families, and from professionals to ensure that it is addressing the needs of the local community.

**“A protocol should be developed with all partners involved in transition, including disabled young people and their families to ensure that it is relevant and realistic, and that partners will take ownership and responsibility for the part that they play”**

## How to use this tool

This tool has been developed to support you in thinking about your transition protocol. The first section of the tool identifies areas that should be taken into consideration prior to developing a protocol. The second section looks at what needs to be included in the protocol. The third section looks at what needs to happen after the protocol has been developed. The fourth section looks at how a transition pathway should be developed and how it should reflect the commitments in the transition protocol.

The information in the tables is to support you in thinking about your own protocol and what the priorities for your authority may be. The table also gives an example of what best practice might look like, however this information is not exhaustive, and local authorities should use the information provided in whatever way best supports them.

## Key Principles

The tool should be considered in a multi-agency setting, and be used to look at the processes already in place in an authority. It is an opportunity to look at what is working and what needs developing. The protocol should be developed in partnership with all agencies, ensuring that each is able to take ownership of the part that they play.

- Young people and their families are involved in the development and review of the transition protocol.
- A range of professionals and organisations are involved in the development and review of the transition protocol.
- Senior managers and council officials sign up to the protocol, and ensure that the resources identified are provided.
- The protocol is multi-agency, covering the roles and responsibilities of all involved.
- The protocol addresses transition for all young people with a statement of special educational need, and clarifies eligibility criteria.

## Section 1 – What needs to happen prior to the development of a protocol?

What needs to happen?	How?	Best Practice
<p>The Director of Children’s and the Director of Adult’s services identify key stakeholders in the transition process and invite them to attend the Transition Steering Group.</p>	<p>Identify all agencies that have statutory responsibilities in the transition process.</p> <p>Identify other areas where young people may need support to move on, and invite professionals from those areas to the steering group.</p> <p>Consider how to involve young people and their families in the process of developing the protocol.</p> <p>It is the strategic Transition Steering Group that will lead the development of the protocol, and be responsible for implementing and reviewing it when it is complete, so it is essential that steering group members have influence at a strategic level.</p>	<p>The Directors of Children and Adult’s services take the overall responsibility for developing the protocol, however it is likely to be the Strategic Transition Lead who takes it forward.</p> <p>The Transition Steering Group should include:-</p> <p>Adult Care Services (including services for those with Physical Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, and Sensory Disabilities)</p> <p>Children’s Services (Social Care and SEN departments)</p> <p>Connexions/IAG provider</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Leisure services</p> <p>Youth services</p> <p>Parent representatives</p> <p>Community Health Services</p> <p>LSC</p> <p>Transport</p>

## Section 1 – What needs to happen prior to the development of a protocol?

What needs to happen?	How?	Best Practice
Decide who will take the lead in developing the protocol.	<p>Transition Steering Group to consider who is best placed to co-ordinate the development of the protocol.</p> <p>This is likely to be a person who is solely focussed on transition, giving them an expertise, but also time to focus on the task.</p>	The professional who has the main lead for transition. If this is not a strategic role it is essential that this is done closely with a senior manager.
Bring together any strategies/protocols/ procedures already used by organisations.	Some organisations will already have protocols that they are working to. It is important to ensure that these are reviewed as part of developing the protocol, to develop areas where transition is already effective, and to change areas where it is not. Each protocol should be considered by the Transition Steering Group, and key areas drawn out.	All current strategies/protocols are considered for what is working and what is not, so that current good practice is acknowledged and developed.
Identify all key legislation and guidance on transition, particularly the responsibilities of all agencies.	All statutory organisations are governed by legislation and guidance, and it is important that these responsibilities are covered in a protocol. Each organisation should have an awareness of the legislation that it works to, and should therefore be able to provide that information to the Transition Steering Group.	<p><i>A transition guide for all services</i> (DCSF 2007) contains a list of relevant legislation and guidance. The guide can be downloaded from the policy and guidance section of the Transition Information Network website: <a href="http://www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk">www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk</a></p>

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What needs to happen?	How?	Best Practice
<p>Identify parent groups who are willing to feed into the development of the protocol.</p>	<p>Identify groups of parents that already meet, such as parent forums or support groups. Attend meetings with them, and identify parent representatives to sit on the steering group.</p>	<p>Parent representatives sit on the transition steering group, and act as a two-way source of information, presenting the views of a wider group of parents to the steering group, and feeding back developments into a wider group of parents.</p>
<p>Identify groups of young people who are willing to feed into the development of the protocol.</p>	<p>Identify groups of young people that already meet, and gather information from them. This could be in a variety of settings including schools, colleges, youth clubs and self-advocacy groups.</p>	<p>Young people with a variety of needs, and from a variety of backgrounds are invited to contribute. This should include both young people who are at special schools, and those that are at mainstream, as well as young people going through transition, and those that have been through it.</p>
<p>Ensure that mechanisms are in place to allow the voices of young people and their families to be fed into the Transition Steering Group.</p>	<p>Parents representatives often sit on the Transition Steering Group, however it is important that these parents represent the views of a wider group. It is the ideal that Transition Steering Groups are accessible, and young people are able to attend, however when this is not possible a professional who works closely with the identified groups of young people, should attend the</p>	<p>Representatives from groups of young people and parents attend the transition steering group, and are supported to participate in whatever way necessary.</p>

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What needs to happen?	How?	Best Practice
	steering group on their behalf. Issues raised and addressed at the Transition Steering Group should be reported back into the Learning Disability Partnership Board, and the Children and Young People’s Board.	
Talk to groups of young people who are going through or who have been through transition, to gather information about what works and what does not.	Young people need to be invited to participate in the development of the protocol, prior to it being written. Young people should be provided with accessible information about the need for a protocol, and why it is important. Young people could be engaged in focus groups looking at transition. Person-centred tools could also be used with young people, to look at what is important to them, and this could then be incorporated into the protocol.	Young people are given the opportunity to input into the development of the protocol at regular intervals.
Gather information and feedback from all key stakeholders, including frontline staff, parents and young people.	Meet with a wide range of people who have some experience of being involved in the transition process. This should include professionals involved in the process, as well as those that support young people and their families through the process. Ask them to think about their experiences and consider what works and what does not, and how they think that transition could be developed.	Stakeholder events explaining the purpose of the protocol, and asking for experiences of stakeholders, forms the basis of developing a protocol, and ensures ownership by all from the start.

## Section 1 – What needs to happen prior to the development of a protocol?

What needs to happen?	How?	Best Practice
<p>Decide which groups of young people the protocol will be for, and what age range it covers.</p>	<p>Statutory responsibilities for transition incorporate all young people with a statement of special educational need, so it is logical that the protocol covers this entire group. Some authorities extend their protocols to those on School Action or School Action Plus, and some have a protocol for all vulnerable young people. It is likely that the protocol will detail more than one transition pathway, the key difference between pathways being those that are eligible for social care services and those that are not.</p>	<p>Protocol covers all young people with School Action, School Action Plus, and a statement of special educational needs. The protocol covers young people aged 14-25.</p>

## Section 2 – What does the protocol contain?

What does the protocol contain?	Why?	Best Practice
<p>The protocol should contain a brief overview of the legislation and guidance that govern the organisations.</p>	<p>This gives those looking at the protocol information about why it has been developed, and why organisations undertake different tasks.</p>	<p>The overview of legislation sets the context for the development of the protocol.</p>
<p>The protocol should contain a brief overview of any local policies that influence the transition protocol.</p>	<p>This ensures that those involved in transition are aware of local policies that influence the way that they work.</p>	<p>Local policy sets the context for how the protocol is influenced locally.</p>
<p>The protocol should contain information about what good transition looks like, based on the information gathered from the young people and their families.</p>	<p>Identifying what good transition looks like locally provides an ongoing evaluation tool. Basing these on what young people have identified as their priorities ensures that the protocol is developed on the needs of the local community.</p>	<p>Effective transition processes should be evaluated on the basis of outcomes for young people; therefore this information should be based on what local young people have said that they want.</p>

## Section 2 – What does the protocol contain?

What does the protocol contain?	Why?	Best Practice
<p>The protocol should be explicit about which groups of young people it covers.</p>	<p>Being clear about which young people are covered by the protocol ensures that professionals can be clear about whether this incorporates the young people that they are working with, and gives young people and their family's realistic expectations. Having a protocol that covers all young people with a statement of special educational needs ensures that transition planning is carried out for these young people.</p>	<p>The protocol covers all young people with SEN, disability, and considers the needs of those on School Action and School Action Plus.</p> <p>The protocol covers young people aged 14-25.</p>
<p>The protocol should identify where young people will need to meet an eligibility criteria to receive support, and outline when decisions about these criteria should be made.</p>	<p>To ensure that this is addressed early enough for transition planning to be realistic about the support on offer.</p> <p>To ensure that disputes over eligibility are dealt with prior to young people requiring a service.</p>	<p>Eligibility for adult services established by the age of 16 to ensure that planning is realistic.</p>
<p>The protocol should contain details of what role each professional will take in the transition process.</p>	<p>Information is given in the protocol about who will take what role in the transition process, and this ensures that all professionals take responsibility for their part, and that there is minimal overlap between the support and services provided.</p>	<p>Roles should include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connexions/IAG</li> <li>SEN department</li> <li>Schools</li> <li>Advocacy</li> </ul>

## Section 2 – What does the protocol contain?

What does the protocol contain?	Why?	Best Practice
		<p>Housing Leisure Youth services Adult social care Children’s services Health services Colleges</p> <p>Roles are clearly defined and overlap and repetition is minimal.</p>
<p>The protocol should contain details about how information will be gathered and used to support strategic planning for young people.</p>	<p>The needs of young people change over time and it is important that commissioners take account of these needs prior to commissioning services.</p>	<p>Planning groups that look at the needs of young people approaching adulthood and commission accordingly.</p>
<p>The protocol should contain information about how disputes will be dealt with, and who will deal with them.</p>	<p>The protocol should identify how and when decisions are made about who will fund the support that a young person requires. The protocol should also include information about how funding disputes will be addressed, and who will make the final decisions.</p>	<p>Initial agreements about who will fund support for a young person should be made from the age of 14, however this should be reviewed regularly as this may change, as a young person’s</p>

## Section 2 – What does the protocol contain?

What does the protocol contain?	Why?	Best Practice
		needs change. If it is clear that a young person needs support, and meets generic criteria, then the protocol should contain details about how the support the young person needs will continue, whilst the funding dispute is taking place.
In developing the protocol it is helpful to consider all ages and stages of transition, what support is available to a young person at these stages, and what needs to change.	The protocol should begin with the planning for a young person's year 9 transition planning review, and then other key milestones in a young person's life, including leaving school, starting college, starting work, accessing community services, alongside additional support needs such as access to leisure or transport services.	The protocol identifies milestones in a young person's life, and then details who can support them at that time, and how.
The protocol should identify how and when a key worker or lead professional will be selected, and how young people and their families will be involved in this transition.	The key worker or lead professionals will ensure that all other professionals are undertaking their role in the transition process, will coordinate the process, and act as a main point of contact for a young person and their family. It is important that they are identified early in the transition process to ensure that a young person is being effectively supported.	A key worker or lead professional is identified with the young person at the age of 14. This is likely to be the person that the young person has most input from, and has a good relationship with. The key worker or lead professional can change as the needs and wishes of the young person change.

### Section 3 – What needs to happen when the protocol is written?

What needs to happen when the protocol is written?	Why?	Best Practice
The protocol needs to have senior level approval and sign up.	Agreement at senior level shows a commitment to both the protocol and the resources identified in it. Senior managers therefore take responsibility to ensure that their staff are working to the protocol, and that they receive the training and support that they need to do so.	Protocol agreed to councillor level, and signed off by strategic managers in all departments.
Implementation action plan needs to be drawn up.	The implementation action plan ensures that the protocol becomes a working document, and ensures that tasks that need completing have an allocated person to do so.	Action plan is broken down into small achievable goals, that gradually develop the transition process, and ensure that the implementation of the protocol is manageable.
Evaluation plan needs to be agreed.	Regular evaluation of the protocol ensures that it is meeting the needs of young people, their families and the professionals that support them. The protocol should be regularly updated following evaluation.	Evaluation is outcome based.
Drafts to be shared with young people, their families and professionals to ensure that it is reflective of their input.	This means that young people and their families can agree the protocol before it is finalised, and have ownership of it.	Young people and their families are invited to contribute to the development of the protocol at regular stages in the development.

### Section 3 – What needs to happen when the protocol is written?

What needs to happen when the protocol is written?	Why?	Best Practice
<p>Training and information events for professionals to ensure that they are aware of the protocol, and what their responsibilities are.</p>	<p>These events ensure that professionals are aware of their responsibilities in transition and are supported to achieve them. It ensures that all staff are aware of the protocol.</p>	<p>Senior managers launch the protocol to professionals to show the commitment behind the document. The launch targets a multi-agency group, which enables professionals to meet, and understand each others roles.</p>
<p>Development of the transition pathway, which clearly lays out the transition process, and makes the protocol accessible.</p>	<p>A transition pathway clearly maps out the transition process, so that a young person and their family can see who is responsible for supporting them, at different ages and stages of transition. The pathway enables the young person and their families to hold professionals accountable.</p>	<p>The transition pathway reflect what is actually happening in transition to ensure that expectations are realistic. The transition pathway is updated as the protocol effects change.</p>
<p>Information events for young people and their families.</p>	<p>To ensure that young people and their families are aware of the transition process, and have realistic expectations of the support that they can expect.</p>	<p>Launch event for young people and their families, giving them the chance to ask questions. Information about the protocol should be widely available, through schools, information centres, Connexions, social care services. The protocol should be produced in an easy-read version.</p>

## Section 4 – What does a transition pathway contain?

### The Transition Pathway

A strategic protocol needs to be translated into something everyone concerned with the transition process can understand and act upon. Some areas have developed a transition pathway to do this, often in diagrammatic form. A pathway gives the protocol operational detail and is very effective in mapping out how local services and individuals within them can work most effectively together to support disabled young people and their families. In some areas a Transition Pathway has been developed first, and is then expanded on to form the strategic Transition Protocol document.

The pathway ensures that young people and their families are aware of who has a responsibility to support them at what stage, and enables them to hold professionals accountable for delivering the service.

This part of the tool can be used to ensure that the Transition Pathway contains the appropriate information. The tool is split into school years, and gives suggested questions that should be answered to develop the Transition Pathway. The tool gives information about the statutory requirements, and also suggests best practice. The tool gives guidance on what should be included in a Transition Pathway up to the age of 25. It also details some questions that should be considered in the pathway, that are not put into a school year band, as this will be dependent on local policies. They should be added to the Transition Pathway at the appropriate banding. This tool has been designed to prompt local areas to consider all of the appropriate questions when writing their pathway.

For examples of Transition Pathways see the Transition Information Network website:

[www.transitioninforonetwork.org.uk](http://www.transitioninforonetwork.org.uk)

### Key Principles

- The Transition Pathway should reflect the commitments in the transition protocol, be accessible to young people and their families, and set out what they can expect, when, and who is responsible for each activity.
- The Transition Pathway reflects how things actually work, is regularly reviewed and is kept up to date.

## Section 4 – What does a transition pathway contain?

<u>Statutory</u>	<u>Best Practice</u>
<b>Year 8</b>	
Who in the local authority will be responsible for informing the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service of all of the young people on School Action Plus or with a statement of SEN? When will this be completed?	Who will provide information to young people and their families about the transition process and the opportunities available to them?
	Who in schools informs IAG services of all young people on School Action, who may require additional support?
	How has the local authority compiled information about young people with SEN to inform future planning?
<b>Year 9</b>	
The head teacher is responsible for calling a transition review, to review statement and draw up transition plan.	How and when are person centred approaches used to support a young person in transition planning?
Who will be invited to the year 9 review? How will this be decided?	When will the Health Action Plan be completed? Who will take the lead?
IAG adviser must attend Year 9 review.	How and when will a lead professional/key worker be identified to support the young person through transition?
How will it be decided if a social worker will attend the transition review?	Who will coordinate the multi-agency person-centred transition planning process, that leads to a single multi-agency transition plan?

## Section 4 – What does a transition pathway contain?

<u>Statutory</u>	<u>Best Practice</u>
How and when will the local authority establish if the young person has a disability and if they may require continued support from the local authority into adulthood?	How will the local authority continue to monitor information about the population of young people with SEN?
<b>Year 10</b>	
The head teacher is responsible for arranging the review of statement and transition plan.	Who will take the lead to review the health action plan?
	When will the IAG adviser attend the year 10 review?
<b>Year 11</b>	
The head teacher is responsible for arranging the review of statement and transition plan.	Who will lead the review of the multi-agency transition plan?
Who will complete the S140 plan, building on the transition plan? (For those leaving school at 16.)	Who will take the lead to review the Health Action Plan? Who will support young people with health needs through the transition to adult health services?
Who will support the young person and their family to look at the options available to them when they leave school?	Who is responsible for ensuring that eligibility for adult care services is established where necessary?
	When will the IAG adviser attend the year 11 review?
	When can young people expect to be introduced to colleges, adult providers etc. (for those leaving school at 16)?

## Section 4 – What does a transition pathway contain?

<u>Statutory</u>	<u>Best Practice</u>
<b>Year 12-14</b>	
The head teacher is responsible for arranging the review of statement and transition plan, for those still in school.	Who will take the lead to review the Health Action Plan?
	When will the IAG adviser attend SEN reviews?
	When will the young person receive support from adult social care services (if eligible)?
	When can young people expect to be introduced to colleges, adult providers etc.?
<b>Post-School to 25</b>	
Who is responsible for providing IAG support to disabled young people up to the age of 25?	Who will ensure that the multi-agency plan is updated and a working document until the age of 25?
	What support can a young person expect when leaving college? Who will provide this support?
	What support can a young person expect to get a job? Who will provide this support?
	Who will take the lead to review the Health Action Plan?

## Section 4 – What does a transition pathway contain?

<u>Statutory</u>	<u>Best Practice</u>
<p><b>Other areas to be addressed in the Transition Pathway</b></p>	<p><i>(The age range for these will differ dependent on local policies).</i></p>
	<p>When will health services transfer care between children and adult's services?</p>
	<p>When will a referral be made to the local authority housing list (if appropriate)?</p>
	<p>When will supported living services engage in the transition process?</p>
	<p>When will disabled young people receive support from supported employment services?</p>
	<p>Who will ensure parents/carers receive a carers assessment, to look at expected changes once the young person finishes school, and when will this be completed?</p>
	<p>Who will provide young people with advice on benefits and income?</p>

**Produced by the National Transition Support Team**

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To find out more about the National Transition Support Team and the Transition Support Programme:

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[www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk)



**Council for  
Disabled  
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