

national transition support team

working together to improve transition
for disabled young people

Case Study: Dorset People and Places

Introduction

A person centred planning tool that is web based and can be used to support young people through transition. The tool is designed to also support social networking in a safe way.

Overview

This is a project which set out to improve the engagement of young people and their families with the services they receive through the use of person centred planning tools and an online internet social networking site called **People and Places**. Not only did this improve the partnership working between families with services and their communities, but it also empowered and energized staff because they began to feel the effort they were putting into these very crucial transitional years were not going to be 'lost' when they 'passed their pupils over to' traditional adult services. This attitude of **handing over of responsibility of care** like a baton in a relay race, was lifted as the young person and their family, through person-centred reviews, began to take up the reins, started giving direction and purpose to the delivery of the curriculum, and became 'customers' holding the services around them accountable for helping them to achieve their life goals. **People and Places** has many functions one of which is a learning platform in which a young person can learn the skills needs to be safe on line. The social networking tools are a natural medium today but they can also be very useful and empowering towards someone's independence and success.

Main transferable learning points

- Involving young people and their families early in transition planning can increase aspirations
- Transition needs to be a shared responsibility that puts the young person and their family at the centre of any planning process
- Using a web based tool can support young people with social networking, and is an exciting and relevant medium for young people
- Service development is most relevant when young people and their families are included both on an individual and strategic level

Background

We were looking for a way to support families to think beyond school and play an active part in the next stage of their son/daughters life and to also be partners in planning both for the future and the here and now. It seemed that parents and carers perceived school as knowing best and they had little understanding of the curriculum and how they could have an impact on their son/daughters learning from home.

There was also a feeling that young people were handed over between services with no-one seeming to be accountable or able to support a transition that the young person and their family wanted.

A positive transition seemed impossible to achieve if families have not been empowered and encouraged to look to the future as early as possible to identify their aspirations for life, when they seemed resigned to only a traditional day care being the future.

Aims and Objectives

People and Places was providing the young person, their families and the services around them the medium in which to change these conversations. To enable young people and their families through person centred planning to identify not only their aspirations for the future and what is possible, but what the immediate barriers were to improving their daily lives. Traditionally having those goals identified once a year at a person centred review and written up in a file in the office has proved ineffective at keeping families engaged, so an on-line **Home link book** called People& Places has been introduced into schools [and some colleges] to keep the outcomes alive.

The Aim is to positively encourage families to reinforce the skills being taught in school in the home environment, by keeping them regularly up to date with their child's progress and encourage participation on a 24/7 approach. The major objective being to allow the young person and their families to regain control and 'direct' the services they receive to give them the confidence and skills to do similarly when in preparation for possible personal budgets and direct payments.

The first benefit the project will achieve is enabling the families to realise they need to keep hold of the responsibility they have for their child [something special schools sometimes wear away]. It is an opportunity for

the young person in the context of school curriculum, to have a voice about their own future and work together with the school to evidence to their parents 'what is possible' in many different mediums on the **People and Places** site. We want young people and their families to share their experiences and help each other to raise aspirations.

Short term goals are to see an immediate improvement in:

- The relationship between young people and their family.
- Partnership working between families and the services they receive. The delivery of Health and other primary services being person centred and outcome led. Now that the young person and their families have ownership of their person centred plan in a central place, they are in a position to share this with the relevant services whereas before protocols between services discouraged this.
- Person centred plan outcomes driving Health Action Plans, Individual Education Plans, Section 139a, and SAPs enable families to hold these services accountable. Having the person centred plan outcomes and all the services all in one place [**on People and Places**] allows each service to see and build on the progress of the others. There is no waiting for an annual review to share this.
- Measuring success is easy! The Planning tool within **People and Places** will automatically collate all the picture, video and diary entries in the home links under the person centred plan outcome headings. It will be evident where progress is being made, where more focus needs to be made and which service might need to be approached to do things differently to fall in line with the

collective approach.

- The financial benefits are both short term and long term. The use of **People and Places** and its collation tools allows a person centred review to be run 24/7/365[anytime]. There is no staff time collecting the evidence in preparation for the review. We anticipate less staff off sick with stress as their role becomes more rewarding.
- Long term, the more prepared, inspired, skilled and positive a young person comes through into adulthood, their choices are wider and the less reliant on Adult social care funding for their support. Dorset County Council is already introducing **People and Places** for Adults with learning disabilities whether they hit FACS criteria or not.

This means that those young people who are used to using **People and Places** in school and college, will continue to do so through out their adult life, giving them and their circle of support, access to their friends who perhaps continue into services. This prevents isolation and falling into mental health services.

Approach

Aim of **People and Places**

- Enhancing communication between young people and their peers both during and after school
- Enhancing communication between young people and professionals during and after school in relation to their transition arrangements and managing their plan
- For young people to share their plan and invite all the people they want to engage with and support the outcomes and goals on their plan
- **People and Places** is a communication

tool and we know that better communication achieves better outcomes for young people which can help them to reach their full potential

Process

- Provide an information storage and information sharing web site
- Train young people and their parents/carers how to use the site
- Use the site as part of the person centred review
- Input information onto the site
- Train professionals (mainly school and short break provider) to use the web site

Outputs

1. **Number of young people (and their families) who are using the web site:**
Up to 206 young people will be logged onto the site and assisted to create their own site.
2. **School (and short break provider if applicable) are using the web site to communicate with the young person and their family.**
5 special schools and transition team will be trained.
3. **The web site holds transition information and person centred plans.**
Potential 206 transition plans can be inputted.
4. **Young people are using the web site to communicate with other young people.**
A number of young people using the web site to communicate with other young people.
5. **The young people (and their family) are sharing progress they are making against the plan.**

Dorset LA, NHS, Connexions, Adult Learning.

6. Young people and or families area using the web site to join up purchasing capability.

Number of young people and families that are joining up purchasing capability.

Outcomes

- 1. Young people and their families are clear on their plan and know how to monitor it on *People and Places***
- 2. Young people are able to maintain their friendships out of the school environment**
- 3. The young person and their family feel more supported**

Monitoring

- We need to make a judgement if outcomes of young people have been achieved on their plan
- Full potential has been achieved e.g. transferable skills, maintaining social relationships

Key people

- Special Schools, Colleges, Connexions, Children's services, Adult services, Health/PCT
- Young people their families, circle of support, key local community leads

Finances

To ensure the ***People and Places*** tools are FREE to Young people and their families, CDSM[software company] requires sponsorship of the site and the use of its tools by the services around that family.

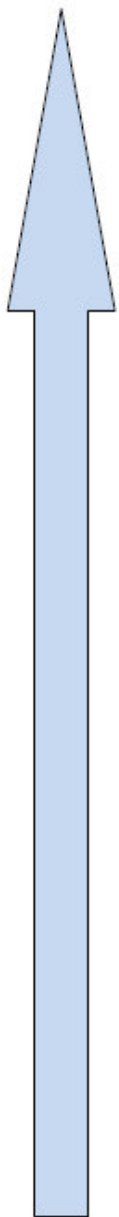
The fees are £10 per head per year. [this equates to 1.5hrs of LSA time – which the tools

easily saves the school in preparation time for an annual review alone]

Example 50 students = £500.

This provides the school with their own styled Landing/log-in page www.mountjoypeople.co.uk, as many closed class or year groups as needed, additional groups for support such as Parent's forum, Student forum, resource sharing, events streams and sharing of school media.

Description of planning process.



Link the parents up with Carers in Adult services who are using the PAP tools in a different way than they have been in school context.
Arrange for Adult learning to deliver training sessions for Parents
Decide if the students will have training delivered through the ICT curriculum
Arrange for tutors to have PAP training
Arrange to meet the parents and introduce the benefits and concepts (especially in preparation for adult hood)
Arrange to meet the students ideally through an ICT lesson
Identify the school/college ICT and internet requirements
Identify the key person who can drive this forward with in the school
Introduce the concept and the benefits of the PAP tools to the school/college

Who was the target group of young people;

Transitional aged young people in all special schools/colleges across Dorset 14+

How the project was managed?

A project coordinator led the engagement with all the participating stakeholders and ensured each school was aware of what the other was doing. Once engaged on **People and Places**, they could do this themselves through the forums set up.

Challenges

- **What problems did you encounter?**

Schools finding the time to get involved initially. There was some anxiety about an online social network for vulnerable young people and whether it would be safe enough. What the consequences of having access to social networking tools would have in the out of school hours. Some schools and parents were averse to taking such a risk with a social networking site. Some parents were reluctant to engage and had some reluctance to pick up the reins and take control by families until they really had to!

- **How did you overcome/deal with them?**

Reminding the schools and parents alike that the outcomes for these young people can be different if they engage early. The lack of choice available at 18 only comes when services are forced to guess what is needed. Explaining that the more skilled someone was when they reached adulthood, the more choices they had. The more 'collective' information they could give as a community to services years ahead, the greater chance scarce resources would have been spent preparing for them.

- **What would you do differently next time?**

This is a new concept for families and schools to take on board and quite a culture change. Person centred reviews are beginning to help us change the 'conversations' we are having with families but it is happening years after they have 'signed over' responsibility for that period in their lives. It would be good to have **People and Places** tools from the beginning in early years so those conversations start from Day one.

Successes

- **What were the biggest contributors to these successes?**

The attitude of those schools, who have understood the purpose of this project and its very real links with the **People and Places** pilot in adult services, has been excellent. Those parents who quickly saw a positive advantage to using **People and Places** were able to support their school. They also were instrumental in explaining by example to other families who struggled with this role.

Feedback from young people and their families.

It is very early days, but those parents who have engaged with **People and Places** see its great potential.

The pupils are very excited about the 'awesome site' and enjoy the modern, practical medium in which they are learning literacy, PHSE and numerous other curriculum targets without knowing it!

- **Future potential benefits.**

The future of **People and Places** in adulthood is huge. **People and Places** is introducing **get2gether** tools to enable people with or without a personal budget to meet up and maintain friendships.

There are new Time banking tools being introduced, where young people can develop and harness their unique gifts and skills not only for the world of work, but for immediate benefit of their local community – the long term outcome being that their **community currency** identified and built up during school/college and day opportunities, will give them the ability to exchange it for sustainable support from their local community rather than relying on ever shrinking social care funding.

Those using T **People and Places** are becoming a contributing member of a community rather than a dependent receiver of social care.

Acknowledgements

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National Transition Support Team (NTST)

NTST is working alongside the National Strategies and the Child Health and Maternity Partnership to coordinate the delivery of the Transition Support Programme.

NTST is based at the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector in England. CDC is hosted by NCB. www.ncb.org.uk/cdc

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