

national transition support team

working together to improve transition
for disabled young people

Case Study: Shropshire

Introduction

This case study concerns multi-agency working, participation and joint assessment in Shropshire.

Overview

Parents and carers of disabled children often tell us they have to repeat their story to multiple professionals. This case study looks at how Shropshire County Council used a Joint Summary Record approach to support multi-agency working and joint assessment. This approach had been used previously to ensure information could be collated in a way that supports an outcomes plan and was designed to also capture past history information about a disabled child and their family.

Main transferable learning points

- Having a record of a child's history can prevent a family from having to re-tell their story
- A joint summary record can support multi-agency working and help with strategic planning

Introduction

Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin PCT are the main organisations involved in this case study. The key organisations involved are social work teams in Children and Adult Services, the Head of Service for Adults and Learning Disability, the Head of Service for Disabled Children (a post jointly funded by the PCT/provider organisation and the Local Authority) and the Adult Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Team.

Shropshire Early Years Team developed a "joint summary record" (JSR) to enable multi-agency information to be collated using the domains of the assessment framework. A multi-agency outcome/needs plan was created as well as documenting the significant events in the life of the disabled child.

A parent worked with the team to identify whether a similar approach would be beneficial at 13 years of age prior to the transition plan being developed. It would collate information over time from Health and Social Care to ensure that Education professionals and Connexions colleagues would be fully aware of the history of the family prior to transition. This would mean that families would not need to repeat their story.

Outcomes would be identified that would look at the development of the child as well as parenting skills, the family and the environment.

Background

Prior to the development of the joint summary

record (JSR) there was no one place where the significant events in a child's life were recorded. The aim of the project was to provide a concise summary of key events in a single document and provide continuity from Children's to Adult Services and beyond.

Sharing information between agencies was time consuming and often a duplication of effort. The project was set up to maximize the transfer of information in an effective manner. It was also important to summarise key areas that were significant to parents and young people themselves in the transition plan prior to the development of the Young Person's transition plan.

The JSR was developed with parents who wished to support Shropshire Council in the development of effective transition pathways and they felt that this was an effective document. A multi agency group of professionals involved in the operational transition group for learning disability acted as a consultative body for the development of the record. Additional resources were provided through the Transition Support Programme grant to enable further development of the concept.

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the project was to establish a mechanism to produce a multi-agency outcome focused plan. This would enable the transition plan to be built on a wealth of information over time and take account of the assessment framework to ensure a holistic view of the family.

Approach

An initial pilot of the joint summary record was carried out based on the work already achieved in the Early Years' Services. Wide consultation with a range of partners took place at all levels of the organisation including parents and the record was tried with one parent who found it extremely valuable.

The Adult CAF team joined the work of the project and developed a virtual record using

Care View technology. The JSR was then piloted with a range of families to ensure that the final product could be mainstreamed. Resources used to fund the work included TSP innovations fund and cost effective use of a key worker already in place.

The key people involved on both a strategic and operational level included;

- The strategic transition group
- The operational transition group
- Parents Carers Council

The target group of young people included those with three agencies involved who were at risk of poor outcomes following transition and where no lead professional had been identified.

The project was managed through a separate sub group of the transitions group involving the Adult CAF team and JSR worker plus IT teams and the Head of Service for children with disabilities team.

Challenges

Gaining access to the files from Health and Social Care in order to make joint summary record presented challenges, however these were overcome through parent letters which confirmed their agreement to share the information. Also, as the service is jointly funded and managed across the PCT and the local authority, this facilitated effective support from line managers in each agency and helped to unblock the problem.

Successes

The JSRs in Children's Services are valued by parents and help to ensure multi-agency working.

The Adult CAF Team is looking to create a virtual record that will enable all agencies to access the record electronically. This software has already been put into effective use to share information across agencies and will remove the need to send multiple hard copies.

Major contributors to the success of the work included;

- Strategic group support to managers.
- The operational transition group being supportive of the concept.
- Parents and carers support of the concept.
- Willingness to change work to meet other targets.
- The ability to keep the vision and be determined to trial the idea.

The main benefits of the project have been the ability to share information in a safe IT environment and provide a single multi-agency summary of information to facilitate effective transitions planning with the school, transitions and Connexions workers. Feedback from young people and their families has been positive recognising that this will reduce duplication of effort and means they will not have to repeat their story to different professionals over and over again.

Conclusion

The process of producing a joint summary record for disabled children and young people in Shropshire has brought professionals from health, education and social care together across adults and children's services. The record has been developed in response to requests from parents to have a single summary of significant events and important information, avoiding the need for them to repeat their story to a range of different professionals.

The aim is that this process will be rolled out to all children with disabilities from early years upwards to ensure a single record is maintained and developed. This information can then be shared with commissioners to support joint strategic needs assessments for disabled children and inform future service provision. Key lessons learned from the project include the need to work with parents to design the documentation and identify what information is

important. It is also essential to have support from senior managers across children's and adult services in health, education and social care plus effective IT support.

Key policy and legislation

Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability: A consultation (2011)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZtSazXzqnyY>

Organisations and websites

Children&youngpeople@shropshire.gov.uk

www.shropshire.gov.uk/isa.nsf

www.shropshire.gov.uk/chilcare.nsf

Useful resources

Transition Protocol for young people with disabilities – a parent's view

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAvfQsEza90>

A transition guide for all Services: Key information for professionals about the transition process for disabled children (2007) Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health.

Transition: Moving on well (2008) A good practice guide for health professionals and their partners on transition planning for young people with complex health needs or a disability. Department of Health.

Campbell-Hall, V., Coulter, A. & Joyce, L. (2009) *Parental experience of services for disabled children*

<http://education.gov.uk/publications/eorderingDownload/DCSF-RR161.pdf>

Aiming High for Disabled Children: Transforming services for disabled children and their families, DCSF (2008)
Nottingham: DCSF Publications

Acknowledgements

The National Transition Support Team would like to thank the staff at Shropshire Council for their assistance with this case study.

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

National Transition Support Team
Information line: 020 7843 6348
Email: tsp@ncb.org.uk
www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk

