

national transition support team

working together to improve transition
for disabled young people

Case Study: Southampton City Council

Introduction

This case study describes a project which sees the beginning of the development of transition processes for vulnerable young people in Southampton.

Introduction

Southampton is the largest City on the South coast with a population of approx. 230,000, of which 20% are estimated to be under 19yrs. The Local Authority serves 79 schools: 1 nursery; 20 Infant; 15 Junior; 26 Primary; 10 secondary; 2 Academies and 5 Special Schools. There are also 2 pupil referral units. There is a high level of commitment in the Local Authority to working collaboratively with our partner agencies. There are joint commissioning strategies for Disabled Children/Children with Complex Needs, Children in care, SEN provision 14-19 strategy, Targeted Youth support. A number of services have already been developed where resources have been aligned to improve outcomes. In particular, Jigsaw, a multiagency service for children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the Behavior Resource Service, a multiagency service linked closely to Safeguarding to support the City's most vulnerable young people.

This project was commissioned by Children's Disability Services in response to a survey, conducted by the national transition support team, of Southampton City's Transition arrangements for children moving to adult services. Excellent practice was identified, particularly within the Transitional Operational Group within the Jigsaw service and the

identification of a Transition Lead Nurse. Other areas of good practice included the use of PCP and the involvement of parents. However gaps were identified within the strategic management of transition processes and the number of children being reached who do not have access to specialist services.

In response to this survey, the children's disability service, in conjunction with commissioning services for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, commissioned a discrete piece of work to provide the background research needed to move the agenda forward.

Aims and Objectives

1. To set up a sub group of the children's disability strategy group to:
 - i) Ensure robust and responsive strategic planning for all vulnerable young people transitioning between children and adult services,
 - ii) Be a commissioning group which makes resource decisions that translate into service provision in a manageable and flexible way.
2. To write a development paper, incorporating a strategic plan, to support the development of a multi-agency transition strategy.
3. To write terms of reference for the sub group.

Scope

16 days work was commissioned to address the

following:

- To define the needs of the young people that we are targeting,
- To identify the services currently used by young people in transition and those services that are less engaged but should be,
- To identify issues from the perspectives of children's and adult services including those where current policies and practice expectations conflict with each other,
- To identify areas of compliance and non-compliance with national expectation and guidance,
- To identify representation gaps at a strategic level,
- To bring the Strategic Group together and to facilitate the development of terms of reference and a Strategic Plan,
- To define the appropriate reporting structures.
- To identify areas of good practice from other areas.

Goals

The short term goals of the project were to use the information gathered from above to inform and develop:

- A project Summary,
- A project development paper, with recommendations,
- A Strategic Plan,
- A Transition Strategy Sub group of the Children's Disability Strategy Group with a suitable range of representatives,
- Terms of Reference for the group.

The organization wished to ensure that the membership of the strategic steering group was appropriately inclusive, that the action plan was based on national legislation, regional guidance, and represented the views and concerns of strategic and operational staff working in Southampton City within the fields of disability and learning difficulties. It was important that the strategic group was a primarily a commissioning group and that the outline of what needed addressing was available for them from the outset so that they could work in a timely and effective way.

The long term goal is to develop a single multiagency transition protocol and pathway that appropriately reflects the needs of the young people and families involved in transition from children to adult services. It needs to incorporate the following:

- The recent changes in structure in both the LA and the Health Service,
- An expansion of the number of young people who are receiving appropriate transition planning,
- Identification of young people who will benefit from adult services as early as possible,
- Identification of appropriate commissioning streams to develop services to support those that do not meet the criteria for specialist services,
- Ensure greater understanding and knowledge of transition practices into universal and targeted services,
- Ensure Director level signatories and links to City targets to ensure sustainability processes,
- Higher level of family and young person involvement in monitoring and planning services,
- Engagement with regional and national developments.

Approach

This work was completed over a 3 month period and included:

- Developing a semi-structured interview based on the scope outlined above,
- Meetings and discussions with relevant personnel, nationally, regionally and locally,
- Identifying relevant legislation,
- Comparing current practice with national guidance,
- Identifying gaps, duplications and confusion in areas of service delivery,
- Considering current issues in line with local re-structuring and initiatives,
- Taking account of family perspectives,
- Preparation of a development paper, a strategic plan and terms of reference to support the transition strategy group,
- Preparation of a Project summary for

information to other services.

It was agreed that the first meeting of the steering group should take place before the end of July. The deadline for the work was therefore bounded by this.

The project was financed by Transition funding.

The project was line managed by the manager of children's services for children with disabilities and complex health needs. Support was also available from regional and national forums.

Challenges

1. Personal feelings, cultural differences and a lack of willingness to part from known/historical ways of operating and delivering services. More specifically this included:

- Service cultural differences, particularly between children and adult services,
- Service structure and practice,
- Service criteria/thresholds and age of access,
- Different use of language and labels e.g. pathways and plans,
- Differences in definitions e.g. "vulnerable", "disabled", "complex,
- Anxiety about funding,
- Anxiety about service capacity,
- Differences in priorities/targets across the services.

2. The lack of appropriate data bases in order to scope the scale of the provision needed.

3. The recent restructuring of Children's Services in Southampton into 3 localities for universal and targeted services.

4. Time.

Overcoming problems

The following helped me to overcome the challenges encountered:

- Understanding the cultural differences in terms of how they had arisen and why, i.e. core functions, training, legislation, guidance

and conceptual differences,

- Identifying the conflicts in the legislation and guidance that had led to the major conflicts,
- Exploring how to encourage the cultures to meet and overlap rather than dismissing one or the other,
- Encouraging others to think about mainstreaming transition work rather than seeing it as a specialist function,
- Considering the possibility of a single assessment and pathway and how that could incorporate the benefits of differences and alleviate the conflicts,
- Breaking the project into small chunks and prioritising them in a personal action plan, including what needed to be done by when in order to reach the time boundaries,
- Engaging a wide spectrum of professionals, practitioners and service managers in order to establish common beliefs and values.

What would you do differently?

In hindsight I think the following would have been helpful to improving the course of this work:

- Contacting regional forums earlier in the project in order to understand some of the issues more quickly.
- Exploring the available data bases in more depth.
- Booking regular supervision dates with the project manager to monitor progress more effectively, might have saved some blind alleys!

Conclusions

What has been achieved?

1. The first meeting of the Steering group was very well attended. The membership of the group was widespread and covered the major areas of need;

- Commissioners from adult Services, LA and Health,
- Commissioners from children's services, LA and Health,
- Operational managers of children with disabilities, vulnerable children, LAC, SEN,

- Inclusion of leisure, youth and community, housing and 14-18 strategy commissioners,
 - Parents,
 - Schools,
 - CAMHs.
2. 14 recommendations were developed into a strategic plan which was well received.
 3. The client group was extended to consider vulnerable young people including those:
 - With long term complex and long term needs who are not statemented,
 - With long term emotional, social and behavioral difficulties,
 - In the Youth Offending system,
 - Who are high functioning ASD young people,
 - Care Leavers,
 - Who have learning difficulties and are socially vulnerable but who do not meet the threshold for specialist services.
 4. Ways of addressing the cultural differences were considered.
 5. More involvement from young people was highlighted.
 6. Areas of good practice were celebrated.
 7. Gaps in service provision were highlighted.
 8. Reporting structures and sustainability of the project was considered.

Benefits that have been realized

There is heightened awareness of the issues that need addressing around transition, and a willingness to engage in the process.

There is a clear forum for problem solving and the development of service provision.

There is a clear plan to work to over the coming year.

Future benefits

The steering group will be responsible for transition at a strategic level and will also be a commissioning group which makes resource decisions. It will provide multi-agency strategic leadership to ensure robust and responsive planning for all vulnerable young people, and

their families, transitioning between children and adult services.

The steering group will take overall responsibility for the development of the protocols, policies and procedures connected with issues related to transition. It will:

- Provide a joint planning and funding process,
- Respond to unmet needs,
- Review existing services,
- Redesign existing services to meet the needs of the client group,
- Identify quality standards to enable effective performance management,
- Define measurable outcomes in order to ensure value for money,
- Implement effective audit tools to gauge efficiency and effectiveness of processes e.g. National transition Support Team (NTST) audit tool.

This project has been the beginning of the development of transition processes for vulnerable young people in Southampton. The recommendations are for consideration by the Strategic group and form a synopsis of this piece of work rather than a comprehensive and exhaustive list of actions needed.

The Strategic Plan is based on the work above and forms a structure for debate rather than a guidance document.

The success of the project will depend on the sustainability of the project, whether or not the systems become fully embedded in practice and the importance of establishing roles, responsibilities and accountability for the development of the work.

How to...?

Key issues and principles

Keep the child and family's needs uppermost, many service policies, practices etc are based on service needs.

Talk to the most senior person that will see you – start from the top!

Ensure you are balancing adult and children

commissioners equally.

Have clear outcomes for your work and don't get pulled into irrelevant issues.

Barriers

Personal agendas

Political agendas

Historical certainty

Lack of clarity of thought

How to turn it into good practice

Practical ideas

Try to find added ways that engagement in this work would help the individual and service e. g effective transition processes should reduce NEET numbers, effective transition processes could support keeping young people in education or training until they are 18.

Ensure the work links to as many Children & Young People's Plan targets as possible.

Find and concentrate on common ground for multiagency partners, rather than focusing on differences.

Identify a common vision that all parties can sign up to then problem solving can return to basics when necessary.

Key policy and legislation

National

- Growing Up Matters: Better Transition Planning for YP with Complex Needs. CSCI 2007
- Transition: Moving on Well. DoH 2008
- *National Framework for Ch. and YP's Continuing Care. DoH 2010
- Ed. And Skills Act 2008: What does it mean for Transition?
- Joint Planning and Commissioning Framework for Ch. YP and Mat. Services. DfES and DoH 2006
- Aiming High for Disabled Children: Transition Support Programme, Transition Guide. HMG 2006
- Transition Planning and Development Tool. National Transition Support Team, 2008
- A Transition Guide for ALL Services. DfCSF

and DoH 2007

- Improving Life Chances of Disabled People 2005 (cabinet office)

*See also Annexe C – legal framework for supporting papers/evidence.

Tools

- Moving on well App.C audit format
- Nat. Framework for Cont. Care Annexe B – pathway
- Assessment list Annexe C (above)
- NTSP – Transition Planning and Development Tool 2008.

Organisations and websites

- www.speakingup.org – Cambridge service which offers 1 to 1 advocacy for young people to represent their peers.
- www.surrey.gov.uk – transition Info. pack
- www.lbwf.gov.uk - transition info pack
- www.essex.gov.uk – unified person centred transition plan used for all agencies
- www.plymouth.gov.uk/independenttravel - independent travel training for young people from 14-19
- www.plymouth.gov.uk – “ A natural Journey Into Adult Life”, a multiagency transition pathway for young people with additional needs
- www.n-somerset.gov.uk “Children and Young People's needs Assessment”
- www.sunderland.gov.uk – City Equals – a young group of disabled people who advocates for others, including links into Youth Parliament.
- www.bristol.gov.uk – DVD made by young people with disabilities re transition.

Organisations

- NTSB
- SE Regional hub

This case study was written by

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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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