

national transition support team

working together to improve transition
for disabled young people

Case Study: Swindon Borough Council

Introduction

This case study describes how Swindon Borough Council and NHS Swindon are working together to develop an integrated multi-agency database for disabled children and young people, to assist with transition and inform the planning and commissioning of services.

Overview

Swindon council have recognised the need for quality data on young people moving through transition in order to support planning both on an individual level and on a strategic and commissioning level. This has led them to develop a database that can provide information from a number of different sources and store it in one place. The database is still in development and is due to go live from 1st April 2011.

Main transferable learning points

- When considering developing a comprehensive database establish support from senior managers before moving forward
- Identify early on the sort of information you need to capture and how you are going to do this
- Ensure there is a designated person to continue to update the data as it could soon become out of date

Consider who will have access to the system once it is up and running. It could be a shared system that provides important information to a range of agencies.

Introduction

A Transitions Steering Group was established in Swindon in 2009 to provide strategic oversight of transition for disabled young people as they move into adulthood. A number of key areas for development were identified including the need for a robust system to collect and store information about the needs of young people in order to inform future planning and commissioning decisions. The database development is well underway and will provide the opportunity to produce detailed reports to inform commissioning of services for disabled children and young people.

Background

Over the past few years in Swindon new ways of working have been introduced through integrated working processes. This has helped to bring staff together to improve information sharing, reduce duplication and shift systems, behaviours and attitudes towards prevention. From 1st April 2011 most community based services for children and young people previously provided by the NHS will be provided by Swindon Borough council as part of Integrated Services for Children and Young People. There are also plans for the whole of Adult Services to become a Social Enterprise in the near future and will then need to be commissioned by the local authority.

However, like many areas, it has proved challenging for Swindon to plan and commission services strategically across

children's and adults services based on any form of needs assessment in relation to disabled children and young people. Consultation with parents and young people in 2008 reinforced the need to take a systematic approach to supporting young people and their parents through transition and ensuring that appropriate information was being shared early enough. In response to this Swindon Council decided to use funding from the transition support programme to develop a multi-agency database to collate information in one place which would then directly inform strategic planning and commissioning decisions.

Swindon Parents and Carers Advisory Group have been working in partnership with Swindon Borough council and NHS Swindon to plan and develop better services for disabled children and young people in Swindon, ages 0-25.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of establishing the database was to support the needs assessment process and pull together information on individual children and young people from many different sources into one place. This would then provide the mechanism to commission services at an individual child level if necessary, in addition to local authority, regional and sub-regional commissioning. In order to assist schools in preparing for transition reviews, pre-populated forms will be provided by the local authority and the additional information provided by the school will be added to the system.

Approach

The decision to prioritise this area of work was taken jointly with parents at the strategic transitions management board. A data analyst was recruited for a time limited period (6 months) to provide the additional capacity required to design and set up the database along with colleagues from the Aiming High for Disabled Children's team. This would include all disabled children in Swindon. The provider for the system is Capita One.

Phase one (6 months) of the project was to establish a baseline of known disabled young people across Education, Health and Social Care. This was a complex process as it required drawing down a range of information from different agencies from different systems

and is almost complete. Phase two (6 months) will involve inputting all open cases onto the system. The deadline for this phase is October 2011 as the NHS system will be discontinued at this point as they integrate with the local authority.

For transition a special electronic form has been developed. This will provide a pre-populated form with mainly quantitative information about a child's attainment, Special Educational Needs and attendance etc. which will be sent to the school prior to a statutory transition review meeting. The school will then add in further qualitative information manually and return it to the local authority to input the information onto the system. This information will then be built upon year on year. Should resources become available for Phase three in the future, a system which could manage all the data electronically and allow schools to access and input information directly would be advantageous and save time and resources. Whilst this would be desirable there are no plans in place currently to move to phase three. It will be important to ensure data is accurate and current and in the initial stages it will be helpful to quality assure this from one single point.

Challenges

It was important to gain support from senior managers at the strategic transitions board along with parents, to take this work forward. Previous attempts had been made and failed due to blockages in the system. Examples of these blockages included the need to identify an umbrella coding system which required significant negotiation between the different agencies. Each agency used codes differently and it was necessary to agree a single system and reach a common understanding. ... Initially there were difficulties in overcoming concerns about information sharing and consent on an electronic document. It has also been a challenge to establish who will pre-populate the form and input any new qualitative information from the form on to the database.

There was a general consensus around the end product, but people had different ideas about the means by which to achieve it. As the organisations were going through a period of change and restructure, with NHS staff being

transferred to the local authority, people were clearly working in a turbulent environment which added further challenges. However, having such major change and integration happening at the highest levels in the organisation also helped to overcome the challenges, including the planned closure of the NHS data system.

Successes

With a move to a fully integrated service between the local authority and the NHS a common data system for disabled children will facilitate information sharing and streamline systems. Overcoming barriers between agency systems and processes has been an important part of the journey. Building up single records on individual young people will avoid the need for parents to repeat their stories to a range of professionals and ensure all significant information is held in one place for professionals to access as required.

Having an electronic form for the transition review will assist schools in preparing for the meeting and ensure that everyone who needs to can access the specialist information they need to help make decisions, including parents and the young person themselves.

The system will enable reports to be run to aggregate information at different levels. This will inform the joint strategic needs assessment and aid commissioners in designing service specifications for post 16 provision and other adult social care and health provision.

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>
- Commission for Social Care Inspection (2007) *Growing up matters: better transition planning for young people with complex needs.*
- Every Disabled Child Matters (2010) *Disabled Children: an agenda for the new Government*
<http://ncb.org.uk/edcm/agendafornewgo>

[vernment.pdf](#)

- www.swindonparentsandcarers.org.uk

Useful resources

- Swindon Transitions Protocol
www.swindon.gov.uk

Acknowledgements

The National Transition Support Team would like to thank the staff at Swindon Borough 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.transitionssupportprogramme.org.uk

