

national transition support team

working together to improve transition
for disabled young people

Case Study: Warwickshire

Introduction

Strategic multi-agency transition steering group draws from forums and transition meetings, and feeds into decision making.

Overview

A greater responsiveness to individual needs and better use of resources are the main benefits of Warwickshire's multi-agency structure for transitions. An improved flow of information between the transitions strategy group, local forums and meetings held at school and agency level is used to inform strategy, commissioning and delivery of services to disabled young people when they move into Adult Services.

Main transferable learning points:

- Structures which promote effective multi-agency working improve understanding between services and improve planning and delivery.
- Structures which encourage two-way communications are more responsive and flexible.
- Better data from the improved flow of information provides the evidence of gaps in services and highlights where resources can be best deployed.
- Planning ahead enables a smoother transition process with better and more cost effective provision in place when a young person reaches adulthood.

Introduction

Warwickshire Adult Services have improved their decision making for disabled young people by improving the information flow from schools and Children's Services. A structured transition process overseen by a multi-agency transitions steering group co-chaired by a manager from each of Children's Services and Adult Services underpins the improvement. Multi-agency working has resulted in greater clarity about roles and responsibilities and a culture shift within both Children's and Adult Services.

Background

Three years ago Warwickshire's Adult Services experienced a number of unplanned transitions leading to problems. At the same time some young people became invisible as they left school, only turning up when there was a crisis, sometimes serious enough to result in young people being sectioned or requiring residential care. This in turn created unexpected demands on budgets in Adult Services and a growing number of complaints from families about the lack of services and a lack of consistency about what people could expect.

Children's and Adult services decided that to improve the information flow and improve transition for young people, they needed to work more closely. Although they decided against a co-located dedicated transitions team, the services now work together on transitions through a number of structures. In particular, a **multi-agency transition group** which provides

a strategic overview of transition work across the county. The group is chaired jointly by the transition leads from Adult Services and Children's Services, and managers from key agencies involved in the transition process attend the bi-monthly meetings. Parent and carers are represented and young people's views are sought via a link with the Wacky Forum – a forum for disabled young people. This group reports to the Learning Disability Partnership Board, Children within Adult Services, the Young People Strategic Partnership Board, the Integrated Disability Service Parents' Steering Group and the Wacky Forum.

As a large county, Warwickshire has a number of **locality transition groups** centred on a special school in each area. The groups are aimed at practitioners, and focus on information sharing and networking. Events for parents e.g. transition workshops and information events, are also based on locality group areas because it is often very difficult for them to attend a meeting at county level when they live some distance away. The groups take a multi-agency approach and are chaired by representatives of different agencies including Connexions, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and a school. This group takes part in joint training and provides feedback to the multi-agency transition group on a range of issues.

Children's Services have an **Integrated Disability Service** (IDS) with a senior leadership team made up of managers from a range of backgrounds: social care, voluntary sector, Connexions, education and health. This integrated working provides a platform for multi-agency working within transition. It represents a single front door for parents to access services and practitioners are better able to understand each others' responsibilities.

Aims and objectives

- To improve the experience of young people in transition and their families
- To reduce crisis management and financial strain in Adult Services when disabled young people became their responsibility without much notice
- To plan provision for disabled young

people as they moved from school and Children's Services into adulthood.

Approach

Planning for transition begins in Year 8 in Warwickshire when a transition co-ordinator, line-managed by the IDS Service Development Manager, meets with school SEN co-ordinators, the authority's SEN officers; children's social care and Connexions at each of the county's secondary and special schools. The co-ordinator post is now a permanent, three days a week post to deal with the administration involved. As well as considering every young person in Year 8 with a statement, the meetings also identify young people receiving help at School Action Plus if their school feels they will need significant support with transition. The lead agency for each young person is agreed and the meeting decides who needs to be invited to Year 9 transition review. The information is analysed and fed into Adult Services' commissioning arrangements. Parents receive a transition pack following the Year 8 meetings and before their child starts Year 9. Young people being educated out of area, whether in special or mainstream schools, are also part of the process.

Transition case planning meetings are held six monthly to plan the transfer of individual cases from IDS to adult services. They involve managers from the different adult teams (Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities, Mental Health) and involve the learning disabilities nursing team, Connexions, children's social care managers and leaving care managers. Although consideration of the cases of young people who may meet Adult Services' criteria begins when they reach 14, more detailed planning takes place when they are 16+. Children's and Adult Services now begin joint assessments as a young person reaches sixteen and a half. This means cases are picked up early and services can be prepared to meet their needs when they become adults.

The quantity of information now coming through the transition structures makes for more effective planning. In some cases, this may involve getting local provision in place to prevent a young person with high needs needing residential care when they leave

school or other placements. Thinking ahead in this way means that Adult Services is less likely to be caught unprepared and be forced into a high cost solution when that young person reaches adulthood.

As well as identifying the needs of individual young people in transition, the process also identifies the needs of groups of young people and highlights problems and gaps. In one example, described in another Warwickshire case study, (LINK) a group of young people with autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) who did not qualify for an assessment under the Fair Access to Care criteria, were nevertheless found to require services. Changes to services were made as a result.

Challenges

Multi-agency working has involved a big culture shift for many of the agencies involved and the speed of change varies from individuals and agencies.

Different methods of costing provision between the IDS and Adult Services and the fact that professionals have to operate within very different legal frameworks are challenges to multi-agency working.

Parents too have to deal with different legislation. Moving from being a parent to being a carer, in terms of their legal status, can be difficult to come to terms with. Clear pathways developed for transition, information events held in localities, and a transition path for the family of each young person identified after the Year 8 meeting, are among the ways the authority tries to help families adjust.

Successes

The two way flow of information leading to changes in services and service delivery is the big success story in Warwickshire. Examples include:

1. Changing the way young people are identified for transition support

2. Better decision making because of better information

As well as revealing the need to extending support to young people with low level needs,

the quality of information about young people with high level needs in transition means that Adult Services can plan a more personalised service, at the same time they experience fewer 'surprises' resulting in rushed decision making and strains to the budget.

3. Better communication with families and schools

As well as a series of transition information events held in each area for parents of disabled children in Year 9, there are small social groups in place which feedback on services. One of the issues raised at locality group level was the transition between children and adult respite provision; because of funding arrangements, it had been difficult for young people under 18 to get to know their new provision beforehand. As a result funding was provided to enable the adult respite provision to work with a young person before they reached 18.

With a reduction in statementing in Warwickshire schools, the need to include young people on School Action Plus in transition planning was identified by Sencos at the Year 8 meetings. As a result statements are now no longer used as a single identifying factor. Services are now able to prepare for the large group of young people receiving help at School Action Plus who are beginning transition. In the past they may have been invisible to Adult Services but now with concrete figures and real case histories, the steering group has powerful evidence to take to elected members for introducing and improving services. (See ASC service broker case study).

4. Better communication with practitioners

The locality groups are ideal forums for sounding out new ideas and ways of working. For example, practitioners are given information on person centred planning which raises awareness and prepares the ground for incorporating it into each agency's procedures.

5. Policies and procedures more responsive to local concerns

The multi-agency transition group ensures the transition protocol is responsive to emerging concerns. It keeps the protocol under constant review, making amendments as necessary. For example, children's practitioners had concerns

about the vulnerability of some children who may have been subject to child protection plans as they moved into adulthood. As a result the protocol now includes an extra section on the database for safeguarding issues.

How to enhance decision making through structures which improve information flow

Key principles and issues

The following are critical aspects of this case study:

- Multi-agency working
- Information flow – in particular two-way communications which helps inform practitioners and strategic leaders and empowers young people, parents and carers
- Person centred planning which informs future provision for individual young people but also strategic planning
- Information alone is not enough: strategic bodies need to be responsive to the data and use it as evidence for change
- Earlier planning enables a smoother transition process with better and more cost effective provision in place when a young person reaches adulthood.

Barriers

- Different cultures, legislation and financial arrangements between agencies and services can hamper understanding and slow down processes.
- Services moving at different speeds or with varied levels of commitment, so progress can be uneven.

Practical ideas

- A transition co-ordinator post is vital to ensure that the administration involved in setting up the range of meetings runs smoothly.
- Each service should share the role of chairing strategic groups and forums to enhance multi-agency working.

- Data collated on individual young people can be compiled to be used as evidence for elected members considering how to develop services and focus resources. Individual cases also make powerful examples of how services need to be improved or changed.

Key legislation and guidance

<p>Department of Health (2004). National service framework for children, young people and maternity services</p>	<p>Standard 4: Growing up into adulthood.</p> <p>Standard 8: Disabled children and young people and those with complex needs.</p> <p>Standard 9: Promoting the mental health and psychological well-being of children and young people.</p>
<p>Learning and Skills Act 2000 Section 139A</p>	<p>Local authorities are now responsible for ensuring learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are assessed in their final year of compulsory schooling</p>
<p>The Children Act 2004</p>	<p>provides the legal underpinning for the transformation of children's services as set out in the Every Child Matters: change for children programme.</p>
<p>The Education Act 1996 and the Education (SEN) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001</p>	<p>LAs required to review statements of special educational needs annually; the review in Year 9 is the transition review which looks to the young person's future post 16.</p>
<p>SEN Code of Practice</p>	<p>describes support for pupils at School Action/Plus; and LAs' responsibilities for maintaining statements of SEN.</p>
<p>The NHS and Community Care Act 1990</p>	<p>requires LAs to make a decision as to the services required under Section 4 of the Disabled Persons (Services and Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.</p>
<p>The Disabled Persons (Services and Consultation and Representation) Act 1986</p>	<p>requires LAs to decide whether the needs of a disabled person call for the provision by the LA of any services in accordance with the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.</p>
<p>Fair Access to Care Services and the Duty To Provide</p>	<p>Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) provides councils with an eligibility framework for adult social care following a community care assessment.</p>

Key policy

- **The care and support Green Paper**
The care and support Green Paper, **Shaping the Future of Care Together**, published in July 2009, consulted on a range of options to reform the existing social care system and other forms of support, to create a new system for people who need it. The Green Paper sets out the importance of self-directed support and the personalisation of future services.
- **Commission for Social Care Inspection (2007)** Growing Up Matters: Better transition planning for young people with complex needs
- **Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC): better support for families**, launched in May 2007, is the transformation programme for disabled children's services. AHDC is jointly delivered by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Department of Health.

Organisations and websites

- **National Transition Support programme**
www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk
- **Department for Children, Schools and Families: Aiming High for Disabled Children website**
www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/healthandwellbeing/ahdc/AHDC/
- **Every Child Matters site on multi-agency working:**
www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/delivering-services-1/multi-agency-working/multi-agency-working/
- **Department of Health Personalisation**
www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/Personalisation/index.htm
- **Mencap** Guides to transition for families
www.mencap.org.uk/page.asp?id=150&gclid=CN66ooK0z6ECFYJi4wodfDYOlw

Resources

- **Putting People First:** personalisation toolkit, 2008, Department for Health
- **Transition guide** CDC, 2007, a transition guide for all services: key information for professionals about the transition process for disabled young people

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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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