

# national transition support team

working together to improve transition  
for disabled young people

## Case Study: West Sussex

### Introduction

Developing information on transition that makes sense to parents and carers.

#### Overview

Access to relevant information advice and guidance is crucial to enable disabled young people and their families to have positive support during transition. West Sussex County Council undertook a piece of work to consult with parents and carers to develop accessible information that could support them and their sons and daughters with their transition to adult life. This information has included the development of a web based tool - ***Moving On: Planning for the future***

#### Main transferable learning points

- Providing parents and carers with up to date information both about the transition process and the support available can reduce anxiety and ensure parents and carers are able to offer advice and support to their sons and daughters
- To ensure information is kept up to date it is important to think about the format you are going to produce as well as who will have responsibility for regular updating
- The process of developing information in itself can support professionals to understand roles and responsibilities and have a greater awareness of local provision

- The development of information can also support professionals to come up with shared language and criteria for support and services, and have some clarity around what they do

#### Introduction

This case study illustrates the work West Sussex County Council has undertaken in developing accessible information on transition for parents and carers. It describes the process of consultation they undertook with parents and carers, the training they have undertaken with professionals and the agreements they have reached about how information will be communicated in a consistent manner to families throughout the transition process.

#### Background

Transitional arrangements for young people moving from children's to adults services have received a high level of focus in West Sussex. A multi-agency Transition Planning Group has been in place for a number of years and has been responsible for:

- developing and implementing a multi-agency transition protocol;
- designing and putting in place a planning model to improve transitional arrangements;
- sharing good practice;

- producing accessible information on transition for young people and their families.

The first piece of work completed by the Transition Planning Group was the production of a multi-agency transition protocol for services working with young people with special needs and disabilities moving into adulthood. It details roles and responsibilities of services working with young people from year 9 through to adulthood. Its purpose is to improve the smoothness of transition by clarifying **who** should be taking **what** action and **when**. The protocol is under-pinned by a set of principles that encompass various aspects of good practice and describe **how** agencies in West Sussex will work with young people and their parents/carers.

In 2006, a joint Task Force was set up, drawing Members from Children & Young People's and Adult Services Select Committees. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also represented and a parent joined Members for part of the project.

At the start of their work, the Task Force sought feedback from parents of children in transition, aged 16-21, who were known to the Child Disability Teams in Health and Social Care Services. One of the key messages was the need to improve information on transition available to parent/carers.

The Transition Planning Group sought further feedback on the format and content parent/carers wanted to see in relation to information on transition and it became clear that views varied. The Group also reviewed information that had been produced by other areas and discovered a wide array in terms of both format and content. This created some uncertainty about the best way to proceed.

During this period, the National Transition Support Programme was launched and West Sussex decided to use some of their consultancy support time to help them move this forward.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of the work on information for parents were to:

- Respond to the feedback provided by parents and carers by providing the information they require to help with decision making during transition;
- Inform parents and carers about the key points in the transition process and what should happen at each stage – during school years 9, 10, 11, 12 and adulthood;
- Empower parents and carers to be informed about what input their young people should receive through the transition process;
- Explore any changes needed in the transition protocol to ensure it reflected the information being provided to families;
- Develop a 'tool for the job' for professionals to ensure consistency in the messages parents and carers were receiving about transition.

### **Approach**

In conjunction with West Sussex Parents Forum and the Transition Support Programme, West Sussex consulted with a number of parent/carers through workshops and questionnaires between September and December 2009.

Three key questions were asked:

- If you were speaking with another parent or carer about transition, what information would you tell them?
- What are you having to think about and/or ask about that isn't included in the information about the statutory processes?
- Looking back what information, hints or tips would you liked to have known that you know now?

Overall, feedback was obtained from 51 parent/carers and 49 attended workshops.

Valuable feedback was received on what to consider at each stage in the transition process. This included a variety of views on format that

influenced the decision to provide hard copies of the 'transition journey' (see below).

This consultation process heavily influenced the development of **'Moving On: Planning for the future'**. Web based tool. This provides information on a range of topics of interest to parent/carers during transition, including:

- Finance
- Roles of professionals
- Support for parents
- What to do if you are not happy with the way things are going
- Glossary of terms and abbreviations

The key section is about the 'transition journey'. Reflecting the transition protocol, the journey

goes through each school year from year nine to adulthood. As well as telling parent/carers what will happen, it gives them ideas about what to do and think about.

Two workshops were held with a total of 38 professionals to agree the accuracy of the information.

'Moving On: Planning for the future' is not only informative for parents and carers, but is also an effective tool for professionals to use in practice. Training days for professionals across both child and adult health and social care services have been organised to help them use the information effectively. Professionals have been advised where the document is located and how it should be used to support young people and their families through transition.

West Sussex County Council have formalised a process whereby all parent/carers of young

## Year 10 (14–15 Years) Thinking about the future: looking at what is possible

Year 10 is about looking in more detail at the possible learning choices discussed in the previous year. It is also the time to start thinking about other practical arrangements for your child when they become an adult.

<div style="background-color: #333333; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">What will happen...</h3> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p><b>For the annual review of your child's statement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local authority will ask the school to send you information about the process.</li> <li>• The school will invite you and your child to the meeting.</li> </ul> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p><b>The review will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the action agreed in the Transition Plan and agree any changes.</li> <li>• Look in more detail at the education options available and the support your child will need.</li> <li>• Consider whether transport is needed.</li> <li>• Consider health support for the future.</li> </ul> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Connexions will start putting together the <b>Moving On Plan</b>, which details the exact support your child will need if they are moving to a college or training provider. When completed this is sent to the college/training provider.</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p><b>If you and your child receive social care support</b>, your son/daughter may be entitled to support as an adult. Your social worker will be able to tell you more about what form that might take and how it differs from support in Children's Services.</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #333333; color: white; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>• If your child is at a special school, specialist centre attached to a mainstream school or being educated out of county please also see additional online information about the way professionals will work together to plan from year 10.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #006633; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">What to do and think about...</h3> </div> <div style="background-color: #e0ffe0; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you clear who will be at the review meeting and their roles?</li> <li>• If your child is leaving their current school at age 16, have the decisions been made about their next steps? Ask at the review meeting if you do not understand how decisions will be made about post-16 options available.</li> <li>• Has anyone mentioned work/employment opportunities, including work experience?</li> </ul> </div> <div style="background-color: #e0ffe0; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you had the chance to comment on the Moving on Plan?</li> </ul> </div> <div style="background-color: #006633; color: white; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the time to start thinking about your child's future housing needs. The District Council needs to know early to allow for planning time both in relation to available housing and adaptations.</li> <li>• Have you thought about whether your child will stay with you when they become an adult or would they like to live more independently? Ask about what options may be available.</li> </ul> </div>
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Example page from 'Moving On: Planning for the future'

people with statements will receive a hard copy of the 'transition journey' section of *'Moving On: Planning for the future'* from the SEN team in advance of the year 9 Review.

### Challenges

- Ensuring contributors remained focused on the goals set for the consultation process.
- Maintaining a balance between enabling a discussion on broad issues associated with having a child with a disability and those issues specific to the transition process.
- Agreeing a final document format that suited all and was cost effective and sustainable.

Maintaining the momentum against competing priorities and changes in service structure

### Successes

- Development of accessible information which is sent to all families of young people with statements.
- Reduced confusion for parents, carers and professionals alike on the transition process.
- Parents and carers have a 'checklist' to work through so they can see if they have missed anything.
- Encouragement of partnership working between parents, carers and professionals.
- Professionals across agencies working from one document to promote consistency in messages given to families.
- Development of a common language in documentation provided to parents, carers and professionals alike to maximise effective collaborative working.

- Developing accessible information proved to be a useful way of checking if the processes outlined in the multi-agency transition protocol were accurate and up to date. Alterations to the protocol were made in light of feedback received.
- Publishing the document on the internet means that it is easily updated and therefore cost effective and sustainable.

### Contact

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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](http://www.ncb.org.uk/cdc)

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