

# **national transition support team**

working together to improve transition  
for disabled young people

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## **Emerging Evidence from local areas**

Emerging good practice from local areas is set out below under the five overarching themes that are the focus of the Transition Support Programme in Year 2. Detailed good practice examples will be posted on the national transition support team's website over the next few weeks.

This paper includes information from: Birmingham, London Borough of Redbridge, London Borough of Richmond, Cornwall, Devon, Nottingham City and Suffolk, Oldham, NE Lincolnshire, North Tyneside, and Leicester City.

### **1. Participation of disabled young people and their families**

#### **Development of Information Leaflets**

In **Birmingham** disabled young people were involved in the development of Person Centred Transition Pathway: Information Advice and Guidance Leaflets. Four new leaflets were produced and will be distributed through schools and professionals and will be accessible through the "Birmingham Brighter Futures Website".

#### **Self Advocacy Groups**

The **London Borough of Redbridge** has commissioned Speaking Up to support them in the setting up self advocacy groups of disabled young people. They will provide initial training and support for professionals who will be responsible for the development and ongoing support of the groups and also provide initial skills training for disabled young people interested in becoming group members. There are plans to recruit two older disabled young people to work alongside professionals in supporting the running and facilitation of the groups.

These groups, one for children aged 5 -13 years, and the other for young people aged 14+, will focus on ensuring that disabled young people are involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Aiming High programme in Redbridge. This is seen as essential in ensuring that the Aiming High Programme is responsive and flexible in meeting the self assessment requirements of disabled young people. The group of young people aged 14+ will particularly focus on the development of the transition programme and ensure that all service developments and new services commissioned take account of young people in the process of transition, views and requirements. Links from these groups into Redbridge youth council are being explored to ensure that disabled young people's views are included and taken account of in a wider mainstream youth agenda.

In **Cornwall**, with funding from the Transition Support Programme, Cornwall People First, a self-advocacy group of young people who have already been through the transition process, were commissioned to run a number of discussion groups with disabled students across the county to explore their aspirations for the future. It was recognised that the skills of young adults who had already been through the transition could be utilised to support disabled young people, from Year 9 onwards, to think about self-advocacy, their rights and choices for the future.

'Thumb cards' were used as a communication tool to support the participation of all students who were then able to express their aspirations using words or pictures. Ideas expressed by the young people included working in a zoo, working in a shop, becoming a writer, learning to cook, preparing for the 2012 Olympics, going to the beach and working at the Eden Project for a summer, have my own house. Cornwall People First will also work with disabled young people to produce a DVD exploring their dreams and post-16 options that will then be used as a training tool for staff from all agencies involved in transition planning.

### **Transition Theatre Experience Workshops**

In **Birmingham** a group of disabled young people engaged in a theatre experience week, within a real theatre, where they were facilitated to share their experiences, views and aspirations regarding transition. Disabled young people felt supported to share their views in an accessible way to them, developed confidence and friendships through the process and built better relationships with professionals. The Local Authority was able to gain an insight into the wishes and feelings of disabled young people and integrate this learning back into the planning process. The experience also provided a short break for disabled young people where they gained a new experience that would not ordinarily be available to them and developed additional skills and positive self esteem

### **DVD featuring parents experiences of Transition**

In **Cornwall** consultations with parents highlighted concern that little work had been undertaken to explore the feelings of parents going through the transition process and how their feelings may impact on their son or daughter. The County's Parent Carer Council has been commissioned to produce a DVD of parents experiences which can then be shared with other parents/ carers and staff. In addition to the insights highlighted in the DVD the work will also survey experiences of the specific services involved in transition and their views on the effectiveness of the transition protocols. The DVD, in addition to the full report will be available for training purposes and inform future planning.

## **Development of a Health Transition Protocol**

Acting on consultation with disabled young people and their families a focus on transition planning within health services was identified as a priority in **Cornwall**. The Transition Support Programme enabled Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Primary Care Trust to initiate a project to work with young people and health care providers to identify and improve the awareness of their needs as they moved on into adult services. A mapping exercise and case studies were analysed to understand the current local situation with the aim of developing good practice and clear pathways in health services. Part of this work also involved the development of an easy read booklet on health services for young people.

When completing the TSP SAQ **North Tyneside** identified advocacy as an area that needed developing. An independent advocacy service was established to provide provision over 2 years, 20 hours per week. This service, in partnership with North Tyneside, will develop self-advocacy, peer advocacy and case advocacy. The service will be monitored and outcomes evaluated.

## ***2. Effectiveness of personalised approaches***

### **Person Centred Planning**

**Oldham** had identified that a high proportion of young people with special educational needs were being excluded from mainstream schools, particularly in respect of schools feeling unable to manage their challenging behaviours. This clearly causes concern as permanent exclusion for young people with SEN leads to very poor outcomes for young people transitioning into adulthood.

As part of their work on transition, Oldham piloted utilising person centred planning processes with young people with SEN in Year 8 who were identified as at risk of exclusion, from six mainstream schools.

Staff were trained in solution focussed brief therapy and person centred planning tools in order to involve young people in identifying areas of concern and developing a personalised learning approach that helped them feel valued, involved and in control of their own learning. Parents were also engaged in the process as trainers in Building Positive Reputations and developing training materials for other parents.

The impact of the pilot on all schools involved has been evaluated as being very positive, notably on the continued presence and increasing participation of the young people in their school life. Despite the challenges of schools of finding enough time in existing schedules to ensure that the person centred approach could be implemented, the schools that took part in the pilot are committed to continue to develop the work and embed the approach within their schools. There are plans to extend the work by

offering the training to other High Schools in the Borough of Oldham and also in transferring the project into local special schools.

**North-East Lincolnshire** have jointly funded training on person centred approaches that has been delivered to a large group of practitioners working within education, health and social care with vulnerable young people. Another three day course in person-centred transition review training started on 6<sup>th</sup> March attended by practitioners from children's and adult services and linked agencies such as Connexions. A TA from a special school has been trained to facilitate PCTRs and is working alongside the PCP Co-ordinator in adult services on a short-term secondment to support newly trained facilitators in social care and mainstream schools to implement person centred approaches. The aim is to utilise person centred approaches within transition planning across health, education and social care.

### **Person Centred Planning – Integrated Children's System**

The **London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames** are developing their person centred planning form so that it is part of their Integrated Children's System, RICS. This will ensure that it can be inputted directly onto children and young people's electronic case files and outcomes can be easily tracked in terms of assessment completion dates, numbers of assessments completed and transfer dates to adults services. This will ensure that the LBRuT are able to performance monitor and manage the transition process and identify areas of good practice and areas for further development.

### **Individualised Budgets – supporting building and maintaining friendship groups**

The **London Borough of Richmond** are piloting a project using individualised budgets to promote friendships and develop wider social networks and activities. A project worker, based with *Richmond Users Independent Living Scheme*, will facilitate the process. Disabled young people in the identified group are, in partnership with their families, developing job descriptions in order to employ personal assistants to support them in their chosen activities with their chosen friends. There have been some initial challenges in ensuring that Disabled Young People's resource allocation and individualised budget is finalised in a timely manner so that effective planning can be completed. However, during the process young people have stated that they do feel more in control and grown up about being able to organise the activities that they want to do without their parents and with the support of a worker that they have chosen and recruited. The project will continue to be reviewed in terms of effectiveness in outcomes for young people and to see if sharing of workers and pooling of budgets is cost effective for disabled young people and is workable over a longer term.

### **The Citizenship Model**

All young people at the **Ellen Tinkham special school** attend their year 9 transition review. The school are piloting the Citizenship Model with these young people to support them in planning their next steps with the school, Connexions and Adult

practitioners in an entirely person-centred way. The model has already informed the school's curriculum and the provision in Adult services. Adult workers shadow each young person, their family, and the school, and their future placements are being planned in light of their person-centred plans. This will result in a pathway that can be a basis for good practice across all special schools, and adult teams, with learning for mainstream education.

Already it is clear that staff training is essential and that no pathway will work effectively unless those involved understand it, have the skills to deliver it and have a willingness to do so. A programme of training has started that includes facilitator training of key special school staff who will undertake a development role within their schools, person centred transition training in 25 mainstream schools and Young Devon have been working with schools and other agencies to better understand the role of youth services and the voluntary sector in transition.

A key feature of the pilot is the development of a 'core promise' which comprises of 5 key elements –

- Person-centred transition reviews and action plan
- One-page profile
- Communication chart
- Decision making tool
- Personalised home/school agreement.

A key aim is to provide all of the information that adult services and providers need to design and commission services that best meet the needs of this young person. It will also inform the school and children's services of what currently works for young people and what needs changing or developing. Work is on-going to collate this information so it can directly inform commissioning and service design, as well as understanding how the 'core promise' can be adapted to all young people with additional needs who may not receive a package from social services .

### **Person Centred Planning**

In Year 1 of the Transition Support Programme, **Suffolk** developed a project that aimed to embed person centred approaches in all special schools. Suffolk commissioned and delivered a range of courses including; Train the Trainers; Person Centred Reviews Facilitators; and Support Planning. This resulted in a pool of accredited trainers, facilitators and support planners being developed within the local area to push forward the personalisation agenda and ensure that disabled young people are at the centre of planning during different stages of their transition.

Suffolk plans to build on this foundation in year 2. They will invest further in a rolling programme within special schools; piloting the approach within a Pupil Referral Unit; and developing a programme of training parents and carers as person centred planning

facilitators. Suffolk will concentrate this training pilot on the parents and carers of year 9&10 pupils, this will ensure that a group of well informed parents and carers empowered to participate in person centred review process. The plan is that person centred planning will be universal for disabled children by 2012. In working towards this target Suffolk is in the process of identifying a Person Centred Approaches Champion in each of their specialist schools.

Suffolk have recognised that if young people and parent/carers are to be engaged in the planning process they need access to independent support and advice from an early stage. Therefore all young people in transitions and their parent/carers will have access to the advocacy service should they require or request it.

### **3. Joint assessments processes within children's trusts and adult services**

#### **Joint commissioning planning for disabled children with complex needs placed outside of the Local Authority**

As part of their work to develop support for young people in transition, **Birmingham City Council** employed a data analyst to investigate the placement of disabled children with high complex social, health and education needs, who are placed in specialist provisions outside of the local area. The data analyst collated comprehensive information that was presented to Transition Action Planning Forum. The analysis of this identified key strategic issues and challenges for all agencies in ensuring a safe and improved future planning and transition for this vulnerable group.

#### **Single transition assessment process**

**Nottingham City Council** have developed a single transition assessment process. This document encompasses all legal requirements for each agency's respective assessment processes and replaces the three previous single agency assessments and plans including: Section 139a Assessment, Health Assessment and Health Action Plan and Social Care Transition Assessment/ Pathway Plans. This ensures that all information about a young people's transition is held in one document with lead professionals from a number of agencies being trained to complete these assessments effectively. There have been some challenges in respect of needing to store this one assessment on each agency's separate respective client electronic file as the IT systems are not shared and are incompatible. However, this has not adversely impacted on disabled young people and their families who now experience a single assessment process co-ordinated by a member of the transition team. Further work is being completed in ensuring that this document remains in line with adult services assessment processes as they move towards Self Directed Support systems.

#### **4. Realistic post 16 opportunities for living life**

##### **Individualised Budgets:**

The **London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames** conducted a pilot programme with a group of 5 disabled young women aged 16 -20 years in order to identify what types of activities and services disabled young people and their families would wish to purchase, what support would families require to source these and whether these activities and services did exist and were inclusive and accessible.

The young people were reported to have really enjoyed completing activities independently from their parents and carers and planning the activities themselves. There were some challenges in services offering good inclusive experiences and one of the outcomes from the pilot is that work with these agencies to improve access and inclusion will take place.

##### **Innovative Short Breaks**

The **London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames** undertook a project in order to identify how funding could be provided to support disabled young people have fun short holiday breaks away from home that enabled friendships to be built and maintained and for young people to have more age appropriate short break experiences.

Three short breaks (either one or two nights) took place involving a total of 12 disabled young people. Disabled young people, 3-4 at any one time, stayed in a log cabin based in the woods and accessed a range of activities including camp fires, cooking and eating together, playing games and theatre trips. Young people involved in the trips felt that this was a very positive experience and they enjoyed building friendships and spending time with their peers doing activities that they had chosen. Young people had been able to maintain these friendships on return from the trips and continued to meet and do activities together. By involving parents in transporting young people, parents were able to meet and exchange details and have supported the ongoing relationships of their young people. The project identified that this short break model increased satisfaction levels for disabled young people and their families and proved to be cost effective. The local area aims to expand the project over the coming two years by utilising additional resources from Aiming High Short Breaks and offering this service to a wider range of young people.

**Suffolk** is working across the different strands of Aiming High for Disabled Children to ensure that disabled young people in transition have access to short break opportunities that offer choice, control and independence. They have developed a website "No Limits" that will transform the way disabled children and young people will be able to access and book their short break and leisure opportunities. It will provide comprehensive information regarding the opportunities young people may want to access and through

young people choosing their preferences has the additional outcome of enabling the Local Authority to collate data that will help predict needs and inform commissioning activity in both Children and Adults services.

### **Development of Employment opportunities**

The **London Borough of Richmond** is a Valuing People Getting a Life (GAL) site and therefore has a clear focus on developing employment skills and opportunities for people with learning disabilities (paid and voluntary) and with TSP support has piloted two employment projects for disabled young people. On one such project they work closely with Richmond Furniture Scheme, a charity that recycles second hand furniture, to train and provide paid part time employment for a small number of young people. There has been a great deal of learning from the project including how to make information about the job and interviews accessible, how to help young people open bank accounts, and how young people can take part time work without income being adversely affected through loss of benefits by completion of “better off” calculations.

The second project is a joint initiative between Connexions and a local special school to help young people with learning disabilities develop a gardening project. Tools for the work were purchased through TSP support, land provided by Strathmore Special Educational School and a volunteer gardener recruited to support young people. Another local business has expressed an interest in becoming involved and this had led to an opportunity to sell some of the produce grown through a local green grocers.

### **Employment Preparation Pathway**

**Birmingham** has developed an Employment Preparation Pathway document that identifies a range of new viable and accessible employment options for disabled young people. This document sits within the Disability Employment Review in Birmingham and has been welcomed by the Disabled Children’s Board and Not in Employment, Education and Training Group (NEET) as well as forums in Adult Social Care. This report will now be presented to Local Councillors and the Chief Executive of the City Council for further sign up and resources to be released for implementation.

### **Youth Support Service**

**Leicester City Council** have done some work to influence the development of the Youth Support Service for young people with disabilities – particularly in relation to a model of support for young people in transition. They have concentrated on exploring how they can influence the developments of the Youth Support Service to address the support needs of young people with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities. As a result of our experiences/learning from the Person Centred review programme we have

negotiated an agreed support role for the Connexions Personal Advisers within the process. This learning has informed the proposal for a 'Transitions Brokers role' to clearly outline the role of the Connexions Personal Adviser in the process.

## **Housing**

In response to the range of housing needs identified through the transition planning process **Cornwall County Council** and partners have used Transition Support Programme funding to take forward the Amber House project. A collaborative initiative between adult social care, children's services, housing and independent sector providers, Amber House is a clear demonstration of post-16 opportunities for living life and multi-agency partnership working.

Addressing the needs of young people who require low level support to move from their family home to live in local community the project will provide 2 two bedroom flats and 1 one bedroom flat accommodating up to 4 young people between the ages of 17-25. Support is provided in the morning and evenings, with a sleep in member of staff. If the young people at Amber House develop their independence to the level where they no longer need additional support services it will be possible for them to remain in their home and the support workers move on to another similar project. The TSP funding has provided small start-up grants to young people moving into the Amber House project and funded the support worker services.

The project will be evaluated to inform joint commissioners about the effectiveness of the model to meet the needs of the target group of young people, to assess the effectiveness of multi-agency partnership working and to gather the experiences of the young people involved in the scheme in order to develop best practice.

## **5. Strategic joint partnership working**

### **Multi Agency Transition Steering Group**

The **London Borough of Redbridge** have developed a Transition Steering Group that meets every six weeks and is responsible for overseeing transition work and driving forward developments. There are representatives from Connexions, Learning Disability Partnership, Community care Services and Children with Disability Team. There are also parents representatives in and the person centred planning co-ordinator also attends. The Transition Steering Group is chaired by the Head of SEN and Disability Services.

## **Multi agency transition protocol**

The **London Borough of Redbridge** has employed two consultants to support them in the development of a multi agency transition protocol. On completion the protocol will support the delivery of a streamlined transition process for all young people with a statement of special educational need and will give consideration to young people on school action and school action plus. It is agreed that as part of implementation of the protocol all professionals involved in delivering services under the protocol will receive training in person centred planning, person centred commissioning, disability equality duty and on the protocol itself. The protocol will be agreed by the Community Care Management Team, Children's Trust Management Team and PCT executive board to ensure senior management multi-agency sign up and commitment.

## **Transition Action Plan**

**Birmingham City Council**, with the support of TSP, used the Transition planning and development tool to improve and update their Transition Action Plan for Birmingham. This has resulted in securing strategic multi agency engagement that is informing priority implementation actions in relation to personalisation agenda and transition planning for Disabled Young People.

**national transition support team**

[www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk)

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