

# **national transition support team**

working together to improve transition  
for disabled young people

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## **The Self Assessment Questionnaire – update on returns**

**March 2009**

### **Background**

*'In the last few years there has been increasing recognition of the need to improve transition planning and support for disabled young people<sup>1</sup> moving into adulthood. There is a widespread understanding of the need to co-ordinate this support across a range of agencies, including health and social care, youth services, leisure, Information Advice and Guidance providers, housing, education, benefits and employment services. In some local areas people are working hard within statutory and voluntary sectors to meet this challenge.'*<sup>2</sup>

The Transition Support Programme is a national programme to support disabled children and young people into adulthood. It is part of a wider programme called Aiming High for Disabled Children, which will transform local services in England for all disabled children, young people and their families.

The national transition support team is the Council for Disabled Children and partners working with the National Strategies and the Care Services Improvement Partnership to coordinate the work of the Transition Support Programme.

The national transition support team's first task was to produce a Self Assessment Questionnaire to get a picture of transition support in all local areas<sup>3</sup> across England.

The national transition support team (NTST) has produced this short update to provide an overview on how transition support looks across England and give early information from the Self Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) process.

The SAQ responses were used to identify:

- Local areas which are not reaching minimum standards in transition
- Local areas in England meeting minimum standards in transition
- Local areas which are working well on transition.

We have used this information to develop three offers for local areas to support them in developing further work on transition to improve outcomes for disabled young people.

We will continue to analyse the Self Assessment Questionnaires to inform our work, provide general information and updates and to support the work of partners at National Strategies (NS) and Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP). Every local area has a copy of their SAQ response and will have access to support to develop a planning and development tool based on this.

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<sup>1</sup> For ease of reading, we use the term 'disabled' throughout this document to refer to young people with SEN, disabilities or complex health needs.

<sup>2</sup> Council for Disabled Children (March 2009) TransMap: from theory into practice

<sup>3</sup> We use the term local areas to describe local authorities, Primary Care Trusts and their partner agencies.

## **The Self Assessment Questionnaire**

The Transition guide<sup>4</sup> published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in 2007, and the Department of Health transition guide<sup>5</sup> published in 2008, identify a number of principles that support effective planning and delivery of transition support. These principles were tested in the CDC transition mapping project and report<sup>6</sup> and developed into the "*Transition Planning and Development Tool*" now in use and available to download on the NTST website. The SAQ content was based on this set of information.

## **Methodology**

Self Assessment Questionnaires were sent out to all 150 local areas on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008. Addressed to Directors of Children's Services and copied to:

Director of Adult Social Care  
Primary Care Trust Children's lead/CEO  
Service Manager (strategic)  
Head of SEN  
Lead Member for children and families  
Transition lead

The NTST staff team and three expert consultants made contact with all 150 local areas in December 2008. This was to make sure they had received the SAQ, find out who was leading on its completion and to offer support if needed. All 150 local areas were contacted again at least twice in January 2009 to make sure they were on track to meet the deadline and again offer support.

## **Analysing the SAQs**

We had an unprecedented response to the SAQ with 147 out of 150 local areas returning the completed questionnaire by the deadline which was 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009. Three NTST staff members worked on the initial sorting of data. We set out four core areas which were used to refine the information along with additional evidence. The four areas are:

- Statutory duties – unequivocal
- Guidance – should do
- Good practice – no obligation but good practice to do so
- Innovation – creative work to improve process or options beyond normal work.

### **See table 1 for a breakdown of criteria across these areas.**

To further inform our work we took information from the following pilots, pathfinders and projects:

All AHDC pilot sites, including short breaks and child care  
NI 54 sites  
IB pilot sites  
Taking Control & Dynamite sites  
Children and Young People's Plans  
Adult Services  
Play pathfinders (Yrs 1&2)  
SEN Outcomes project  
Childcare Strategy affordable childcare pilots  
EDCM Charters sign up (LAs and PCTs)  
Lamb Inquiry (parental confidence) innovative project authorities  
JARs and other inspection information

<sup>4</sup> DCSF (2007) A transition guide for all services

<sup>5</sup> DH (2008) Transition: Moving on well

<sup>6</sup> Council for Disabled Children (March 2009) TransMap: from theory into practice

Set out below are some initial findings from the SAQs. Further information will be on the NTST website over the next few months.

### **Comprehensive multi agency engagement**

Local areas were asked a number of questions about developing a multi agency protocol, how they monitor its effectiveness, and about the pathway which supports its implementation.

#### **Protocol**

	% of local areas
Have a protocol	50%
Protocol in development	47%
Protocol not started	3%

#### **Pathway**

	% of local areas
Have a Pathway	44%
Pathway in development	50%
Pathway not started	6%

This shows us that local areas recognise the use of these tools for joint working as effective in bringing together the range of partners who should contribute to strategic transition planning. However, many find it difficult to engage key agencies and to keep momentum going once the document is developed.

Where pathways stand alone (without a protocol) it is often an indication that work on transition is led by one service or that it is practitioners that lead the activity with little support or formal acknowledgement of issues at a strategic level.

### **Clear key-working or lead professional arrangements – AHDC focus point in transition**

Key workers or lead professionals play an important part in coordinating the transition planning for young people, taking the responsibility of following up action plans, and therefore leading to a smoother transition for the young person.

SAQ: Do disabled young people have access to a key worker or lead professional during the transition process?

Young People	% of local areas
All	33%
Some	66%
None	1%

## The full participation of disabled young people and their families

Many local areas want to develop this but are a little daunted by how.

SAQ: Are disabled young people supported to contribute to their transition process?

	% of local areas
Most	80%
Some	20%

## Personalised services

119 local areas stated they provide enhanced day services for young people at transition, with 135 stating they provide individual packages of support that includes a range of options and activities. In addition, the data below indicates a developing awareness of individual support.

SAQ: Are disabled young people able to access individualised budgets at transition?

	No. local areas	%
Yes	36	24%
In Development	97	66%
No	14	10%

## Conclusion

The national transition support team are delighted to be working with National Strategies and the Care Services Improvement Partnership to provide a strong, three part approach to supporting local areas and strengthening regional structures.

Our focus for year two of the Transition Support Programme is meeting minimum standards and working beyond them in these areas:

- Effective engagement with and participation from disabled young people and also their families;
- Effectiveness of personalised approaches including person centred planning, use of individual budgets and direct payments;
- Joint assessment processes within **children's trust services, including schools** and with adult social care;
- Realistic **post 16 opportunities for living life and to** help reduce the numbers of disabled young people who are not in education, employment or training;
- Strategic partnership working **including commissioning, to ensure** that all agencies are fully engaged in providing transition support. In addition ensuring that other AHDC activity and universal offers, like the youth strategy, take into account the needs of disabled young people at transition.

**For more information about the Self Assessment Questionnaire and the Transition Support Programme visit the website.**

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

## NTST Self Assessment Questionnaire analysis: criteria used to work out levels of support

	<b>TSP Offer 1</b>	<b>TSP Offer 2</b>	<b>TSP Offer 3</b>
Statutory requirements	Meeting all statutory requirements	Meeting some statutory requirements and starting to put developments in place to meet others	Not meeting a number of statutory requirements
Guidance	Meeting majority of guidance, work underway to develop those not met	Meeting some guidance, some work started to meet those not met	Meeting a few areas of guidance, starting to put developments in place
Good Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comprehensive multi-agency engagement</li> <li>- The full participation of young people and their families</li> <li>- The provision of high quality information</li> <li>- Effective transition planning</li> <li>Post 16 opportunities for living life</li> </ul>	Demonstrate consistent good practice across these five areas.	Significant work needed to improve two or more of these areas.	No or very little evidence of any good practice.
Innovation & potential for development	Evidence of practice that is above and beyond minimum standards and demonstrable potential for development. For example developing multi agency single assessment process.	Some innovation. Little evidence of potential for development.	No evidence of innovation or potential for development.
Other	Knowledge and evidence from other existing sources show consistent transition practice and area is ready to develop further.	Inconsistent or little evidence of transition practice.	Evidence raises concerns that area is struggling.