

national transition support team

working together to improve transition
for disabled young people

Brighton and Hove Transition Case Study

The transition process

Developing a strategic transition protocol

Brighton and Hove has a transition protocol, however it is now out of date and due to be reviewed in the New Year, when following a pilot project, a new transition team will be established for those young people who are most likely to be eligible for significant support when they become adults. The current protocol is a multi-agency document, however needs updating to reflect changes in practice.

Brighton and Hove has a multi-agency Transition Forum that is responsible for the overall development of transition processes. It is chaired by the Head of Integrated Services (B&H's Children and Young People's Trust). Representatives on the forum include the Head of the Adult Community Learning Disability Service, Connexions, Learning and Skills Council, Community Paediatrician (with responsibility for those with SEN), the Supported Employment Team, Children's Rights Service, special and mainstream schools, and a parent representative.

Developing a local transition pathway

The transition pathway formed a part of the protocol and will be reviewed in the New Year. The protocol clearly showed the path for disabled young people in transition.

Transition reviews and Person-centred approaches

Person-centred review processes have been introduced in 5 special schools in Brighton to varying levels. At Downs Park and Patcham House schools all children and young people have person-centred transition review meetings. The Transition Development Worker at Amaze is a trained trainer for the person-centred review process, and she has adapted her training from Helen Sanderson Associates into a 2-day training course to provide to any professional in Brighton and Hove working in the transition field. The transition coordinator went to each school using person-centred reviews to support them in developing their practice, and in one school provided early morning training for the staff. Teaching assistants have been very involved in the training, as they are seen as key to supporting the young person to prepare for their reviews and to support them at the meeting.

To encourage schools to participate in the pilot of person-centred review processes the head of the transition forum visited each school with the Transition Development worker. They were invited to participate in this piece of good practice work. Amaze received additional funding from the Learning Disability Development Fund to co-ordinate and deliver this piece of work.

Feedback to Amaze suggested that some parents are concerned about their child being present at the review, particularly if parents are not happy with the support their child is getting. Amaze encourages schools and parents to discuss major areas of conflict outside of the review meeting so that the young person is not in the middle of any conflict between the school and their parent/s. Amaze offers training to parents to engage them in the person-centred review process, to help prepare them and their child for thinking and planning for the future. Some of these sessions have been provided at the schools.

Statutory services – an overview

Children's trust models and multi-agency working in the transition process

Brighton and Hove has recently piloted a Transition Team that is now due to be rolled out in the new year, following a review. The team was brought together from a range of professional backgrounds including adult and children's services social workers, Connexions workers, and specialist youth advisers. The decision was taken to pilot a team as many parents were becoming frustrated through having to relate to many professionals. Each professional became a generic Transition Worker, although it was acknowledged that referrals for young people may be passed on to a worker with a specific skill set. Each Transition Worker took the role of lead professional for a specific case load, and acted as a point of advice for other young people and their families. The team has been evaluated and although it was agreed that the lead professional approach for transition is the right approach, there were identified issues, particularly around ensuring that each Transition Worker had access to professional management, and to ensure that being a generic worker does not de-skill a professional. The team was jointly funded by Adult and Children social care services and Connexions. Parental feedback indicated that having a lead professional eased the transition process for them. Another issue that Brighton and Hove face in establishing a transition team is that of data systems. Connexions and Social Care services have separate systems, and this will need addressing in order for the team to work effectively.

The plan is that sometime in the future, this way of supporting young people and their families through the transition to adulthood will be available to all young people with a statement of educational need, providing a lead professional role. At present Brighton and Hove does not have the resources to be able to do this.

The Transition Forum is keen to build on the work they have been doing to fully involve young people in decisions and choices about their future. They are working with a local organisation called Frameworks for Change who have developed an interactive CD rom called My Life Plan which they are hoping to pilot in Downs View Link College in the 2008/09 academic year. This approach will be evaluated after the pilot. Brighton and Hove have also been piloting ways of adapting the Common Assessment Framework for transition.

Education – schools in strategic planning

The transition forum involves representatives from both mainstream and special schools, and this means that they are involved in all transition developments.

Health services

The consultant paediatrician who is also the designated medical officer for children with a statement of educational needs attends the Transition Forum, as the health representative. She is responsible for contributing to statements, annual reviews and transitional planning. Health services are endeavouring to engage with the Common Assessment Framework, however there are some concerns from health professionals that this does not provide the quality of information that the specialist reports do. Currently medical professionals submit their reports as an appendix to the Common Assessment Framework. There are also conflicting issues around consent, with different guidelines from different professional bodies.

Transition between children's and adult's health services vary between departments. Some departments, such as the Endocrine and Diabetes service run transition clinics to ensure that adult services are aware of the needs of young people. The processes for transition within health services is dependent on each department having protocols in place, which means that young people's experience of transition may differ greatly.

Connexions, information, advice and guidance arrangements

The Connexions service was part of the Transition Team pilot and it is envisaged that specialist advisers will form part of the transition team. All workers in the transition team will have a generic job description, however young people may be allocated to a worker based on their specialism.

Participation and further support

Participation of disabled young people in the transition process

Through the person centred transition review project, young people are now more fully involved in their plans for the future. Disabled young people can access advocacy support from B&H's Youth Advocacy and Participation project and Speak Out, an advocacy project for adults. Speak Out recently supported young people to produce a DVD, acting as "roving reporters" interviewing and talking to other young people about their experiences.

Participation of families in the transition process

In Brighton and Hove a large proportion of transition developments are led and supported by the Transition Development Worker at Amaze, the parent partnership service. She has direct contact with parents through the support Amaze provides, and supports parent representatives who feed directly back into the transition forum and B&H's Learning Disability Partnership Board. She keeps up to date with all developments in transition and then presents examples of good practice to the

transition forum, and asks them to consider ways in which Brighton and Hove can develop their practice.

Supporting disabled young people and their families:

- ***key workers and lead professionals***
- ***direct payments and individual budgets***

The key worker system for disabled young people in transition will be established once the transition team is set up. The team will consist of social care professionals, Connexions specialist advisers and specialist youth advisers who will all have a generic job description and take on the role of key worker or lead professional for individual young people. The long term aim is that the team will grow and will work with all young people with a statement of educational need.

Information for disabled young people and their families about the transition process

Amaze produces an information handbook for parents called “Through the Next Maze,” which contains information for parents about transition planning, supporting the young person to be involved in the process, education, youth and leisure services, money, social care, health, employment and travel.

Amaze runs training for the parents of young people with special educational needs. This includes a course called “The Insiders Guide to bringing up Teenagers with special needs.” This course covers areas such as leisure, communication, sex and relationships.

Amaze also runs a parent helpline, where parents of young people with special educational needs can call for advice, including information around transition. Although these calls go through to the main helpline, they will be forwarded to the Transition Development Worker if necessary.

Transport

In Brighton and Hove transport to and from college for disabled young people is funded by the local authority.

The Grace Eyre foundation in Brighton offers a travel buddy scheme to those attending their services.

Some schools are looking at the possibility of travel training for disabled young people in Brighton and Hove.

Other Information

The south-east region has a Strategic Transition to Adulthood Group (STAG) as part of the Getting a Life Programme. This is a forum to ensure that the programme benefits the entire region, and to share the good practice and learning outcomes developed. It is chaired by the Regional Lead for the Learning and Skills Council.

Sara Merriman
Practice Development Coordinator

national transition support team
Information line: 0207 843 6348
Email: tsp@ncb.org.uk
Web: www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk