

national transition support team

working together to improve transition
for disabled young people

Redbridge Transition Case Study

The transition process

Developing a strategic transition protocol

The Transition Steering Group in Redbridge meet bi-monthly and are responsible for overseeing any transition work that is happening in Redbridge. The group has representatives from Connexions, the Learning Disability Partnership, Community Care services and the Children with Disabilities Team. The Person-Centred Planning co-ordinator and parent representatives also attend the meeting, and the group is chaired by the Head of SEN and Disability Services.

The Transition Steering Group have an overview on any work happening in Redbridge around Transition. From this they felt that although there are pockets of good practice happening around the borough, there is a need to co-ordinate these approaches and to ensure that the approaches work together, and that each group of professionals is aware of their roles and responsibilities within the process. It was agreed therefore to develop a new protocol for Transition, involving professionals from across the authority.

The steering group decided that the initial stage for the development of the protocol would be to hold a multi-agency workshop. The invitation list was extensive and included managers from Adult Social care services and various Children's Trust teams, including Children Living Away from Home and Leaving Care; SENCO's from all mainstream schools; education professionals from special schools; youth services; health professionals including psychologists, psychiatrists, SALT, Occupational Therapists, Paediatricians and Community Nurses; housing services; Connexions and advocacy organisations.

The programme for the day was put together by the steering group, and included several key issues. The day began with all services considering the legislation and guidance that provides a framework for their service, particularly in the area of transition. A brief presentation was then given, with an overview of recent legislation and guidance that mentions transition.

At each table the groups were then asked to discuss the current transition process from the perspective of their department or organisation. The seating plans were arranged to ensure that there was a range of professions and experience at each table, enabling people to learn from other professional groups. An overview was then given of the current social care transition process, and two parents spoke from their experiences.

The first aim of the day was to begin to put together a Vision Statement for the transition work in Redbridge. With the "Transition Guide for all Services" as guidelines each table was asked to compile a list of "We want.." and "We will.." statements, that identify what we want for disabled young people, and what "we" as professionals will commit to doing to help in achieving this. Information gathered from this session will be taken to a future steering group meeting to be written into the Vision Statement.

After lunch a presentation was given by the Person-Centred Planning co-ordinator for Redbridge. The presentation was to inform the professionals and parents present about the process of Person-Centred planning, and about work that is currently happening in the borough. Some young people attended and performed a drama about the benefits of person-centred planning.

Redbridge recently commissioned the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities to write an assessment for transition, combining the Common Assessment Framework, with the Section 5&6 assessment and the Community Care Assessment, and also hoping to incorporate other plans such as Connexions S140, and Health Action plans. The aim was to create a more person-centred approach to transition planning, and to ensure that all agencies are working together in the transition process. The draft assessment was introduced at the workshop, and although the idea was liked in principle, lots of concerns were raised about young people who do not receive support from social services, and what support they could expect through transition.

At the end of the day professionals were asked to consider joining the Transition Steering Group, and it is hoped that new members will now include Redbridge College, health services, and voluntary organisations.

Developing a local transition pathway

Redbridge are currently developing their transition pathway as part of developing their protocol.

Post-16 options: education and employment

In Redbridge young people eligible for adult social care services are offered the opportunity to access support in a variety of ways. The local authorities day centres are currently undergoing modernisation, and whilst this has been happening young people in transition have not been able to access these services. Young people can choose to access a private day service, to have support based from home, or to have a combination of the two.

One private provider of day services in Redbridge, have been a popular choice for young people with complex needs and their families. The service is community based, and although the day starts at the centre, this is usually only for a short period of time before young people go out into the community, often accessing public transport. Each young person will have some person-centred planning completed, which supports the staff to identify the activities that the young person

would enjoy, and opportunities are then provided for the young person to engage in these activities. This is constantly reviewed, so that the activities that a young person engages in change according to their preferences at the time. The provider also offers an outreach service where young people can be met at home, and supported to access activities of their choice.

Transition reviews and Person-centred approaches

All young people in Redbridge with a statement of special educational need have a transition review at year 9. Responsibility for arranging these lies with the schools, and schools arrange for invitations to be sent to the appropriate professionals, and for young people to be involved in their review.

The development of a new transition assessment that incorporates person-centred approaches is hoped to combine with the transition review process, to ensure a joined up approach to transition planning.

Statutory services – an overview

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

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Currently young people in Redbridge are likely to undergo several assessments during the transition years. Children with Disabilities team workers carry out the Section 5&6 Transition assessment, often with minimal input from other professionals. The assessment should provide a detailed picture of the young person's needs and abilities, and begin to look at provision for the future. It was apparent that the format of the assessment was not accessible to young people, and the assessments were often completed with parents instead.

There are several other assessment processes that a young person may have to go through. With the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework it is expected that any new referral to the team would have this assessment completed.

A young person may also have an S140 Moving On assessment completed by the Connexions Personal Adviser, although this is usually completed for young people that will be moving on to college.

A proportion of young people will also have to have a Community Care Assessment carried out as for many adults services this is a requirement. This alongside any education and health reviews means that many young people are constantly being assessed, and parents feel that they are constantly attending meetings or appointments.

Redbridge has been involved in the Dynamite project, which looked at the provision of Individual Budgets for young people in the transition stage, and this in turn led to a focus on the current transition processes. Following consultation with, and agreement from the Transition Steering Group, Redbridge and Waltham Forest Learning Disability Partnership then commissioned Christine Burke from the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities to look at combining the assessments, ensuring that all of the statutory duties are met, whilst streamlining the process, and ensuring that the assessment could be carried out in a person-centred way.

Christine Burke from the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities led the work, with support from the Transition Workers from both Redbridge and Waltham Forest. The Transition Workers provided copies of all the assessments that are currently completed including the Common Assessment Framework, Initial Assessment, Child in Need Review, Section 5&6 Assessment, Community Care Assessment and the S140 assessment, along with other ideas about what she be included such as Health Action Plans.

It was felt that the basis for the new transition assessment should be the Common Assessment Framework, as all children known to the team will eventually have one completed. The basic information on this could then form the basis of the transition assessment, and this would hopefully mean that the assessment would be compatible with the computer system.

The first priority was to ensure that a person-centred approach could be easily adopted in the planning process. This was then followed by looking at all of the assessments to see where they overlapped, and ensuring that each question was only asked once.

The creation of a single assessment led in turn to the development of a suggested pathway. It is suggested that the assessment now becomes the basis of a person-centred review, involving all professionals that may be involved in a young person's life, the young person's family and, most importantly, the young person. This will ensure that the assessment presents a holistic picture of the young person. Each year the assessment will be updated following the person-centred review, and the social worker will review the identified plan at six-monthly intervals, as required for 'Children in Need.'

In Redbridge a 'Transition Finance Meeting' is held quarterly. The meeting is held to look at all of the young people known to the Children with Disabilities Team from year 9 onwards, and to discuss what services they may need when they reach 18, and which teams they are likely to receive services from. Representatives from both special schools attend these meetings, to ensure that information that the school have on a young person is encapsulated in the planning of provision. These meetings are also attended by the Connexions specialist adviser, and the Transition Worker, and are used as a forum to ensure that planning for a young person is underway, within an appropriate time frame.

Education – schools in strategic planning

Special schools in Redbridge are represented in the Transition Finance Meeting, which identifies all young people known to the Children with Disabilities Team from year 9 upwards, and looks at their future support needs. The schools attend to give information about individual young people.

Health services

Young people in Redbridge may have access to a Transition Health Clinic. This is a clinic appointment that the Transition Worker attends, and the Learning Disability Team Psychiatrist when required. These appointments are to ensure that all of a young person's needs are addressed in the transition process. Ways of incorporating health planning into the wider planning process are being considered.

Connexions, information, advice and guidance arrangements

Redbridge has a specialist Connexions adviser that works one day a week within the Children with Disabilities Team. Her main role is to advise disabled young people on financial and social issues. Redbridge also has a specialist adviser linked to the special schools, who attends review meetings, carries out S140 assessments, and advises young people on the options available for them. Both Connexions advisers are invited to attend the Transition Steering Group and the Transition Finance Meeting, and at least one of them will regularly attend both meetings.

Participation and further support

Participation of disabled young people in the transition process

Redbridge has a Transition Advocacy Worker who runs workshops for young people and their families around different areas of transition.

Barnardos runs a weekly Moving On Group for disabled young people which acts as both a social opportunity for young people and looks at issues that young people may face as they move into adulthood.

Participation of families in the transition process

There are two parent representatives on the Transition Steering Group, both of whom are the parents of disabled young people.

Supporting disabled young people and their families:

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

Redbridge Children with Disabilities team have a high number of children receiving Direct Payments. All workers within the team discuss Direct Payments with families, when talking about the most appropriate support for a child or young person. Printed information is available for families to read if required. The team has also held several Direct Payment information workshops. The initial workshops were aimed at families from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and translators were available as required. The workshops have recently been repeated, and an increase in the uptake of Direct Payments is always noted afterwards. Redbridge also has a Direct Payment Support Service, which supports both the children's and adults teams, and is therefore able to effectively support young people through transition.

Redbridge has piloted individual budgets for transition through the Dynamite project. A handful of young people now have their plans agreed, and the first budgets have been paid out. All young people participated in person-centred planning approaches to ensure that their support plans reflected their dreams and aspirations. There were difficulties agreeing the Resource Allocation System and this is an area that still needs development.

Redbridge is now part of the Taking Control project looking at extending individual budgets to children, and several families have agreed to take part.

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

A leaflet is available for the families of young people in transition, explaining the current process. The Transition Worker also attends information meetings organised by one of the special schools, to discuss the transition process and the most suitable options available.

Redbridge holds an annual opportunities fair, which is an information event for disabled young people. Service providers, as well as local authority departments attend, and provide information to young people about the support that they can provide.

Youth services and activities

Redbridge Mencap and Redbridge Youth Service jointly fund a club for disabled young people aged 14-25, called 'Our Club.' It meets on Wednesday evening during term-time, at one of the local youth centres. Youth workers funded by the local authority run the club, and Mencap also employ a 22-year-old young lady with learning disabilities to support the other young people.

During a staff meeting for the staff at Our Club, it was suggested that there were a number of young people who would benefit from some more specialist equipment.

A suggestion was made that an application could be made to the Youth Opportunities Fund for the purchase of some specialist sensory equipment, for young people with sensory needs.

The young person employed by Our Club felt that this was a good idea and was immediately able to identify which young people in particular would benefit from this equipment. She decided that she would like to make the application on behalf of the youth club.

J worked with a youth worker from the centre to identify the equipment that would most benefit the young people that access the club. Once this was selected they completed the application form together and submitted it to the panel.

J was then asked to present her request to the Youth Opportunities Fund panel. Independently she prepared a display for the meeting, showing all of the equipment that they hoped to purchase, and who in the club it would be beneficial for. J had done this by cutting out the pictures from the catalogues, and sticking them onto a long strip of wallpaper. J then attended the panel, supported by the youth worker from the club, and presented her display. At the panel she explained why she was requesting the funding, and answered any questions that the panel asked. J and the youth worker were then asked to leave the room, and 10 minutes later were called back in to be told that the panel had agreed their request.

J then received a letter at her home address, confirming that her application had been successful, and that she has been awarded £10,000 for the equipment. J was able to open the equipment when it arrived at the youth centre, and may make another application later this year, for funding to convert one of the rooms at the youth centre into a sensory room. The young people at the centre are already starting to benefit from the equipment, and as some of the equipment is mobile, many other young people around the borough will be able to take advantage of it.

Our Club has also benefited from Positive Activities for Young People funding, as each year they apply for the funding to take a group of young people from the club for a long weekend on a barge.

There are several youth clubs run for disabled young people in Redbridge, however these are often discreet, not integrated provisions. There are different clubs available each night of the week, and many young people have active social lives. Young people with more complex needs may struggle to access these clubs. The children's provision for those with complex needs ends when a child finishes school, and there is little to replace them.

Housing

Housing needs are addressed on an individual basis. Many young people opt to stay with their families during the key transition times. Those that are accessing provision out-of-county are encouraged to move back to the region, however if they choose to stay out-of-county support is given to identify a suitable provision.

The housing department were invited to the Transition Strategy Workshop, to try and engage them in the transition protocol and processes.

Transport

In Redbridge the Post-16 Transport Policy allows for the provision of transport to and from college for young people up to the age of 21 (25 in some circumstances), where this has been identified as a need in either the statement of Special Educational Need, the Transition Plan or the S140 moving on plan. Transport will be provided to and from all local colleges, and for residential colleges young people can be transported at the beginning and end of each half term. The Learning and Skills Council provide funding for post-16 transport. It remains the local authorities responsibility to provide an escort in cases where this is necessary.

Transport for London provides travel training for disabled people across London. One disabled young person in Redbridge was supported by Transport to London to learn to travel to and from college on the bus. Transport for London provided him with 20 sessions, initially fully supervising him, and later on just observing from a distance. The young person learnt which bus to get, where to get on and off, and how to use his freedom pass. Transport for London provides this service for free, following a referral from a professional. This young person is now able to travel to college independently, and his Mum is free to pick up his younger sisters from school.

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