Transition

What is it?

Transition is a term used nationally for the process of change for young disabled people as they progress from childhood to adulthood. This transition is a time of celebration, change and challenges for all young people. It is a time when they are considering and making decisions about their career, their continuing education, their social life and where they will live. This is no different for young disabled people, however, options available to them tend to be more restricted and putting in place plans for the future can be more challenging.

National picture

In Oct 2007, the Department of Health stated that the population of disabled children and young people across the UK stood at over 770,000 and the evidence suggests that this number is rising. This rise is due to a number of factors, including increased survival of pre-term babies and greater numbers of children being identified with autistic spectrum disorders. Furthermore, among this there is a growing proportion of children with complex and significant needs surviving into adult life. All of these groups have a wide range of support needs.

- Challenges for transition

The transition to adulthood is an all encompassing process covering every aspect of a young person’s life. Supporting disabled young people in their transition to adulthood can be a challenge to service providers. This is because the process must be individual to the needs and aspirations of each young person. Often local options for disabled young people are limited. These challenges are compounded by young people’s moves from one service to another at different ages. For example, a disabled young person may move from paediatric to adult health services at 16, then at 18 move from children’s to adult social care. This is alongside the transition stages in their education. Each of these transitions is likely to occur independently of each other, which means that disabled young people and their families may repeatedly have to deal with new agencies and professionals, re-telling their story each time. A further problem leading to a lack of continuity in provision across transition stems from different eligibility and legislation governing both children and adults services. In addition different services are provided and there are different funding streams.

In a Department of Health good practice guide called ‘Transition: moving on well’ published in Feb 2008 it was stated that many young people feel vague about the transition process because they have not been given the opportunity to discuss it, and families report that they are faced with a ‘cliff edge’ where services fall away when the young person reaches the age of 16.
• **Characteristics of good transition services**

- A clear transition care pathway
- A focus on person-centred planning
- Excellent links across adults and children’s services
- A multi-agency model
- A service responsive to the needs of young people and their families.
- Better long-term health and well-being, access to education, employment and improved social inclusion.
- Improved follow-up

Young people value:

- Continuity (so histories do not have to be repeated)
- Changes that are less stressful and don’t occur at the last minute;
- Maintaining previous links and relationships
- Making decisions in the context of friends and peer experiences

Parents value:

- Information on options and processes
- Planning in good time, leading to reliable arrangements
- More transparency around funding
- Good all-round life experiences for the young person (independence, confidence, activities and friendships).

The young person and their carer should be central to the transition planning and should be kept fully informed and involved in the planning process. They should be given information about legislation and eligibility criteria governing adults services and have realistic expectations of available adult service to meet need.
The Haringey story

In Haringey we have historically attempted to assist with the transition of young disabled people from childhood to adulthood by having a dedicated transition team to work alongside partner agencies, such as Connexions and F.E colleges in order to ensure that the health, education and social care needs of disabled young people are met into adulthood.

A review of transition services to young people with disabilities and their families was conducted in 2005. As a result of this, in January 2008, the transition team in Haringey relocated from the Disabled Children’s Team to the Learning Disability Partnership. The reasoning behind this was that adult services are the receiving service of young disabled people, therefore knowledge about available adult resources are located within this service.

The team is currently staffed by a part-time manager, Gillian Rodway and 2 full-time transition social workers. These workers are currently agency staff, however, recruitment to permanent workers is currently underway.

As of January 2008, 200 cases of young people aged 16 and up transferred to the transition team from the disabled children’s team. Some of these cases will not meet adults eligibility criteria and some will move into adults physical disability team at aged 18.

The transition team will work with young disabled people from the age of 16 until a viable transition plan is in place, this would usually be at the ages of 18/19.

Protocol between the Disabled Children’s Team and Learning Disabilities Partnership (transition)

Case responsibility transfers from the DCT to LDP when a young person reaches 16. The exceptions to this are:

- Young people who are looked after on a permanent basis -- remain with the DCT until they reach 18. LDP will be invited to first LAC review following 16th birthday so that they can start to plan for post 18 provision. A SW will be allocated after the young person 17th birthday and will jointly work with the SW from the DCT to plan the provision post 18.
- Young people on the child protection register will remain with DCT until their name is removed from the register. The Learning Disabilities Partnership will be given information about any young person on the CP register who reaches 16 so that plans can be made for the young post 18 provision. If the young person remains on the CP register until after their 17th birthday a SW will be allocated from the Leaning Disabilities partnership and will work jointly with the SW from the Disabled Children’s team to plan their post 18 provision.
• If there are CP concerns once case responsibility has transferred to the Learning Disabilities Partnership these concerns will be investigated jointly with the Social Workers from the Disabled Children’s Team and the Learning Disabilities partnership. Case responsibility for planning services will remain with the Learning Disabilities Partnership.

• All new referrals for young people who are 16+ at the time of the referral will go straight to the Learning Disabilities Partnership unless there are Child Protection concerns.

Responsibilities of the Social worker from the Disabled Children’s team

• The SW in the Disabled Children’s team will be required to have completed:
  a person centred plan
  a health action plan
  an up to date Care plan
  The transition plan and statement (available from the SEN team)

The person centred plan and the health action plan will be completed alongside colleagues in the Special schools.

• The SW will also ensure that there is a copy of a recent review on file. The review should have taken place within the 3 months prior to the young person’s 16th birthday as it will inform the care plan.

• The file will then be audited by the Senior Team Manager and a transfer meeting will take place between the Social worker from the Disabled Children’s team and the Learning Disabilities Partnership and their Team Managers. This meeting will be the point of transfer and the work will then be tasked to the Learning Disabilities partnership on Framework – i by the Senior Team Manager in the Disabled Children’s team.

Responsibilities of the Social worker from the Learning Disabilities Partnership

• The SW in the Learning Disabilities Partnership will be required to work with the SW from the Disabled Children’s team in those cases where a young person remains Looked After or is on the Child Protection register. They will retain the responsibility for care planning and completing the Comprehensive assessment.

• The SW will be responsible for preparing the Looked After Children’s review paper work for those young people receiving short term breaks and completing the necessary alterations to the Children and Young person’s Care plan. They will be required to update the work flow on Framework – i.

• The SW will be required to complete the necessary paperwork and attend the Family Support Panel if the young person’s needs change before their 18th birthday and their respite care package needs to be altered.
**Financial accountability**

The financial responsibility for respite care packages will remain with the Disabled Children’s team until the young person reaches their 18th birthday. The Social workers in the Learning Disabilities Partnership will be required to apply to the Family Support Panel if there is a change in the young person’s care plan. Reviews will also need to be seen by the Panel if a change in provision is requested.

**What’s happening now………**

We have, of necessity, had to prioritise planning work for young people who have already left school or are leaving in July 2008, however, we anticipate that in future years we will be able to undertake transition planning at an earlier stage, thus making it a much more integral experience for disabled young people.

We have already begun forming better links with schools, colleges, Connexions and other external agencies and are looking forward to working in partnership with young disabled children and their parents/carers.
Transition

- What is it?

- Nationally –

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Young Person

- Housing
- Connexions
- Day Opportunities
- Health Needs
- Children’s Services
- Benefits
- Adult Social Care Services
- Work
- Education