

Transition update

Welcome to a special newsletter from the Valuing People Support Team about some of the things happening to support young people as they become adults.

Young Disabled People often leave school without a clear route towards a fulfilling and productive life. The government wants disabled young people to have equal opportunities. This means to be in education and training, to get jobs and to be equal citizens.



Valuing People says that transition planning must get better. Young people with disabilities should be able to do the things that other young people do.



When the Government wrote **Valuing People**, they talked to young people and families. Who told them that transition planning was not working and there were too few opportunities after school. There has been lots of research that says the same things.

Young people said that they want to be treated like other young people. They want to do the things other young people do, to be independent, to get a job and have a home.

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***Valuing People* says the following things should be happening:**

- Every Learning Disability Partnership Board should have a person with lead responsibility for this area of work. This person is the “transition champion”.
- Health, education and social services for children should work together. They should make sure that young people and their families get good support that helps them to plan their future.
- Children’s services should be working with adult services to make sure that young people and their families understand how and when the support system changes.
- Young people should be able to get person-centred planning.
- Transition planning should make sure that we support young people to take part in all the things that other young people do, both now and in the future.



This newsletter tells you about some of the things that are happening to make transition work more for young people.

Linda Jordan
VPST lead for Transition

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Transition Champions and Learning Disability Partnership Boards

In 2003, the Valuing People Support Team produced an information pack for transition champions on Partnership Boards. Although the pack needs to be up dated, it says what should be happening in every local area.

The pack is available at: www.valuingpeople.gov.uk

Since the pack was written, Children's Services have changed. ***Every Child Matters*** was brought out by the Government. In each local authority area, the new Director of Children's Services is now responsible for bringing health, education and social services together. There are five outcomes that have to be achieved for all young people:

The five outcomes are:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-Being.

The Connexions Service, which was given big responsibilities for transition planning, will also be part of local authority children's services.

Adult services have now changed. In most local authorities, adult social services have are working with other services such as housing, leisure and cultural services.



The Adult Social Care White Paper, ***Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*** has new ideas which work with the ones in Valuing People. The new White Paper says that “self-directed services” and individual budgets should be for everybody who needs support.

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The Directors of Children's and Adult Services are both responsible for making sure that transition planning is good.

It is important that Learning Disability Partnership Boards continue to make sure that transition planning happens. The boards should have a local action plan, which the transition champion can check on.

In most local authorities there is a transition group who work out how to make better transition planning and opportunities for young people. It is a good idea for this group to be a sub-group both of the Learning Disability Partnership Board and of the children and young people's board.

Hertfordshire — Learning Disability Partnership Board Transition Sub-Group

In Hertfordshire, a group of students with learning disabilities, who attend Oaklands college in St. Albans, lead the transition sub-group.

The students decide what to discuss at each meeting. Representatives from children's services, adult services, connexions and health go to the meetings to make sure things get done and report back on any issues raised by the students.

The minutes are written in easy read format. They are posted on web pages specially designed by the students with an e-learning developer at the college. The pages are interactive and feature sound and videos made by the students. They can be looked at by all students and school leavers. You can view the students' web pages at www.oaklands.ac.uk/transition

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Working Together Better



Transition champions and other people who are working to improve the experience of young people and their families must be supported in their work.

In each region, there is a **Transition Network** which brings together people from each local area. In this way people can share what they are doing and learn from each other, as well as working out what they need to tell other people in the region.

To find out about the transition network in your region you can contact the Valuing People Support Team Regional Advisors. They are:

North East	Paul Davies	paultdavies@mac.com
Yorkshire and the Humber	Jenny Anderton	jenny.anderton@dh.gsi.gov.uk
North West	Dave Spencer	dave.spencer@northwest.csip.org.uk
West Midlands	Rachel Heywood	rachel.heywood@csip.org.uk
East Midlands	Helen Mycock	helen.mycock@eastmidlands.csip.nhs.uk
Eastern	Simon Whitehead	simon@sjw2.demon.co.uk
South East	Jean Collins and Jo Poynter	jean.collins@dh.gsi.gov.uk jo.poynter@medway.gov.uk
South West	Carol Robinson and Sue Turner	carol.x.robinson@dh.gsi.gov.uk sue.turner@dh.gsi.gov.uk
London	Nicola Gitsham and Linda Jordan	nicola.gitsham@dh.gsi.gov.uk linda.jordan@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Person-Centred Transition Planning

Valuing People says that young people are an important group for person centred planning.



Every Partnership Board has written a report about how person centred planning will happen locally. The report should say how young people are being helped to work on their plans.

All services should be using person centred approaches with the plans.

In 2003, we worked with transition champions and person centred planning co-ordinators across the country. They knew that many young people and their families did not like the way that transition reviews were being done they wanted to see this change.

They said that using a person-centred approach could improve them. People also said it would be a good idea to start thinking about person-centred planning and approaches in school year 9, when young people reach age 14, especially as that is when school transition planning starts.

The Valuing People Support Team set up a programme to find out whether using a person-centred approach to transition planning would be a better way of doing things. The national programme of person-centred transition planning started in 2004. It aims to develop new and better ways of doing transition planning with young people with learning disabilities and their families.

So What Have We Done?

We started in April 2004 with four London local authorities (Lambeth, Bexley, Newham, Barking and Dagenham). Young people and their families, and lots of different professionals, took part.

Two people in each area were trained as facilitators and they then helped ten young people to have person-centred year 9 reviews. In March 2005

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everybody met to talk about what they had done. We have a DVD of this day, which shows how young people, families and professionals liked the reviews.

In April 2005, using what had been learned from the first four local authorities, we started introducing person-centred reviews in 65 more local authorities across the country. 140 young people from 70 different schools had a Year 9 review using the person-centred approach.

In April 2006, we opened up the programme to the rest of the country and now year 9 person-centred reviews should be happening in every local authority.

Why Person-Centred Transition Planning?

- It places the young person at the centre: “he was smiling, relaxed and interested in what people were saying about him”; “getting to know the real person, not just information in a report”.
- It concentrates on the positive: “Dad liked hearing all the positive things”; “Jason’s brother and sister – saying what they liked and admired about him”
- It is energising: “the meeting itself created momentum and energy”.
- It is empowering: “equal roles – everyone had a chance to speak”; “there wasn’t a professional hierarchy”.
- It is different: “people took a while to get used to walking around ... but they were soon moving enthusiastically from poster to poster, taking the chance to talk to one another”.
- It is holistic: a far more comprehensive plan than is usual; “we gained a holistic picture of Sarah – great process, relaxed and comfortable”
- It is about partnership: “strength and effectiveness through networking”;
- It is about action for change: “useful to target specific actions”; “I like the way the action plan gets generated; very specific”.



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What Happens at a Year 9 Review?



Before the meeting, the young person is asked to say who they want to invite to their review (in addition to the people who have to be invited) and what kind of background music, drinks and snacks they would like. Spending time with the facilitator to make these plans helps the young person to get to know their facilitator and feel comfortable at the meeting.

At the meeting, the facilitator's job is to welcome everybody and explain how the meeting will happen. The meeting starts with people introducing themselves. Each person says how they can help the young person make their plan and what they like and admire about them.



The rest of the meeting is spent answering these questions:

- What is working?
- What is not working?
- What is important to the young person for now and in the future? What questions do we need answered?
- What needs to happen for the young person to be healthy and safe?

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Then comes the action plan.



The information is collected by everyone writing or drawing on big pieces of paper (“flip charts”) on the walls. People help each other with things like writing what they want to say. The result is that a lot of really useful information is recorded and each person’s contribution can be seen by everyone else.

Young people have many different ways of communicating and getting their messages across. The meetings encourage them to work in their own way. Lots of photos and pictures are used. Writing the action plan is a very important part of the meeting. This makes it clear:

- What will happen
- Who will do it
- How we will know that it has happened
- Who will check it is happening.

People s Experiences of the National Programme

Throughout the programme, we have asked everyone to tell us what they thought. We asked them three questions:

- What do you like about this way of doing transition planning?
- What worked well?
- What did not work so well?



We heard from many people, including the young people, their families, and professionals. Most of them really enjoyed this new way of doing transition reviews. When people said some things hadn’t worked well, we used this to make changes and do things better in future.

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What did people enjoy, and what worked well for them?

Young people

Doing transition planning in this way was a very different experience. Young People liked it because:



- They had a say in planning their review meeting.
- They decided who would be invited, and they chose the music and refreshments
- They were at the centre of the meeting. It was their meeting
- They were able to speak like everyone else and talk about their lives
- Having support helped them to play a full part in their review.

Jenny was clearly listening very carefully as sometimes she got up and indicated very clearly that her mum or teacher should write something on the large sheets around the room. She also added some things of her own.

Sumesh contributed throughout the meeting and was able, with support from people in the group, to represent his views on all the posters. His humour and skills really came across; he liked having music on and talking about concerts and singing with the group.

Throughout the meeting he was smiling and appeared relaxed and interested in what people were saying about him and his achievements; at times he was encouraging others to write more about him by giving them pens!

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The Families

Families really liked this person-centred way of doing transition reviews because:

- they were now more involved in the review meeting than at meetings in the past
- the meetings were relaxed and friendly
- they felt able to ask questions
- they felt more equal with professionals
- they liked it when everyone said what they liked and admired about their son or daughter
- they found out more about their son or daughter from hearing what the young person and other people said
- they felt more able to contribute to the review.

It was relaxed and much more open; you could see what was happening and the interest that people have in my son.

It was much more relaxed; I did not have to go to the head teacher's office and think 'what have I done? In the past it has been too officious!

Being able to write on the flip chart enabled me to say something I wouldn't have been confident to raise verbally

It was lovely to have the time to hear what she wanted to say about the things we had not thought about. It was good to be able to talk about her loneliness; it's things like this that really help my daughter with her self-esteem.

Lots of different family members came to the reviews, including brothers, sisters and grandparents. This helps to build a fuller picture of the young person. If relatives could not be at the meeting, they were able to help with some preparing for the day.

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Jason's younger brother and sister were involved in the meeting, and they contributed fully throughout, saying what they liked and admired about Jason, and writing and drawing on the posters in the 'mingling' session. Their contribution was really important because they spoke about Jason as a brother and a person.

Ashleigh (who had been given time off school specially) read a poem she had written about Joe - there couldn't have been a nicer tribute.

Joe's family made me very welcome and told me lots of things that would make the meeting special for Joe. They gave careful thought to all the people who could tell us about Joe the person, his likes and dislikes. And about the things he needs to keep him safe and healthy.

Friends

Some young people asked their friends to their review. This gave some different new ideas to the meeting. The friends liked:

- ✓ being able to contribute to each other's reviews
- ✓ reminding everyone that the young person was a friend
- ✓ and they enjoyed the experience.



It was cool because it was all about my best friend.

I really love coming to these annual reviews to support my mates.

Helping at Hamish's review was my proudest moment of the last year.

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Professionals

Many people from different groups took part in the reviews. They liked this way of doing transition planning because:

- ✓ the young people were much more involved
- ✓ they could get all the information they needed for their paperwork on transition in one place
- ✓ plans covered all aspects of the young person's life – not just their educational needs
- ✓ they found it a good way to get to know the young person
- ✓ they found that the meetings were relaxed, friendly and fun



It's the first time in my teaching career that I have seen a young person one hundred percent engaged in their review – I haven't seen this before!

Very different feel to this review – very relaxed – felt I'd gained much more information.

Nice not to go through paperwork in the usual way.

It was the first time in many years of attending reviews that I have remembered the young person hours later. It helped to identify accurate information, good needs profile and was client-centred and at all times enlightening.

The Next Steps Programme

In April 2006, we developed the programme based on what we had learned during the two previous years. We started some new work with the local authorities who had already tried the year 9 reviews. The new programme included the following:



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- Making sure that young people who had a person-centred year 9 review in 2004-2005 had a year 10 review which was also person-centred
- Recruiting and training more local facilitators and training some people to be trainers
- Working out how the council's transition paperwork can fit in with person-centred transition planning
- Using person-centred reviews for young people with a range of support needs (e.g. young people looked after by the Council and young people in residential care)
- Exploring how the school curriculum can support person-centred approaches to planning

The Year 10 Review

We wanted to make sure that the year 10 review really helps young people and their families to think about the future. There should be lots of information and ideas about what is possible. We wanted to make a strong link with what is happening in adult services, so that transition planning makes more sense across the age divide.



The year 10 review is linked to the 6 “Keys to Citizenship” which have been very important in the development of individual budgets and self-directed services as part of the work on ***In Control***. Over 90 local authorities around the country are now using this way of working to change the way things happen for adults who are entitled to support.

We have made a DVD which explains the Keys to Citizenship – Self-Determination, Direction, Money, Home, Support and Community Involvement. It shows twenty young people doing things under each of the headings to show others what is possible. We will give each young person and their family a copy of the DVD before their review so that they can watch if they want to. The photos' here are from the DVD.

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The Year 10 Review Meeting

The meeting begins with introductions and a review of the action plan from last year. The facilitator then explains how the meeting will run and talks about the Keys to Citizenship:

The Keys to Citizenship

Self-Determination

This means having a voice and looks at advocacy and communication.



Direction

This is about planning and talks about having a PATH, an Essential Lifestyle Plan, using ***Listen to Me***, “Families Leading Planning and Support Plans



Money

Different ways of having a job – supported employment, micro-enterprise and open employment, Direct Payments, Individual Budgets, Going to college.

Home

Having your own place - being a tenant and having a mortgage.



Support

This is about how to get the support you need. It includes having your own staff



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Community Involvement



The young person and other people at the meeting then say what they think needs to be talked about at the meeting today. They usually choose two of the Keys.

They will then watch those parts of the DVD. People at the meeting who know what is available locally and give the young person the information. So, for example, if the young person says that they would like to know more about advocacy, the local people will be able to tell them about the local advocacy.

These reviews have been tried in the 4 pilot authorities and are now happening in the other 65 local authorities. From April 2007, they will be started everywhere else. This way of doing the annual reviews can continue into year 11 and beyond.

Where Do We Go From Here?

By the end of March 2007:

- At least 300 young people will have had a person-centred year 9 transition review, resulting in a person-centred transition plan
- At least 100 young people will have had a person-centred year 10 review
- At least 300 people will have been trained to facilitate person-centred reviews; they include families and professionals
- At least 100 people will have been trained to facilitate year 10 reviews; they will also be able to link these to In Control and Keys to Citizenship
- In at least two local authorities (either In Control sites or pilots for Individual Budgets), the person-centred year 10 reviews will be linked to the development of individual budgets.



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People who have worked on the programme have found it a good and helpful start for transition planning. They want it to continue. We are currently planning what will happen next year (from April 2007). We hope that the following will be in place:

- In each region, there will be a year 9 and a year 10 course so that more people can be trained to facilitate reviews
- In each region we will keep bringing together the leadership teams (including young people) from each authority. This is to make sure that they are supported and that they carry on learning from each other
- Links between transition planning and Individual Budgets will continue to be made. Some local authorities will give individual budgets to young people in transition
- A group of schools and local authorities will produce an information pack which will show how to use person-centred approaches to planning with children of all ages and their families. The pack will also have ideas about how the curriculum can support person-centred approaches and how statutory paperwork used by social services, health and education can be changed
- The year 9 and year 10 reviews will be tried with children who are looked after, are in the criminal justice system, in residential care and who have mental health needs

We also need to do something about things that are seen as unhelpful or getting in the way. All the National Frameworks, new ideas and policies say that Transition planning should be person-centred. This programme has shown how it can be. We now need to look at top level work to see what can happen nationally and regionally to move some of the blocks that still stop things.



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The main things that people have said need to be tackled are:

- Leadership for Change
- Quality planning
- Strong partnerships with young people and families, across agencies and with schools
- Person-centred transition planning supported by school organisation and curriculum

Leadership for Change

People who do this work have often found that transition is not always a local priority. Different agencies are not always working together to make transition work well. It is important that local areas have a clear idea about how to support young people as they reach adulthood. Everybody needs to understand this. There also needs to be an agreement by senior people in each agency that they will do the work and will have a plan for it.

Quality Planning



We discovered that in many places transition reviews were planned to last for less than an hour. Often people did not turn up young people would not always attend. Meetings were sometimes held at times that were not suitable for the family, and sometimes meetings were held in unsuitable rooms. Transition review meetings need to be seen as important enough to dedicate time to helping a young person to plan for their future. Although a really good person-centred review may take an hour and a half, the outcomes are much more meaningful to the young person.

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They also have a far better chance of leading to good actions for the young person. Trained facilitators have been important to how well the programme can work. They help everyone at the meeting and have often helped the young person and family get ready for the meeting. A good facilitator makes sure everything goes as well as possible. (This is not the same job as chairing a meeting.) The facilitator asks questions, helps people work out what they want to say, and makes sure everyone takes part in the meeting. People liked the fact that many of the facilitators were independent. This means that they were not part of the school or working with the young person. We need to think hard about how to learn from this.

Strong partnerships with young people and families, across agencies and with schools

Most people liked the fact that the new way of doing reviews brought people together helping the young person to plan. Many family members said that it was so much easier to say the things that were important to them. For most young people it was the first time they had attended a review at school. One mother said she felt that “she owned the paperwork.” Rather than lots of people writing and keeping notes, everybody could see what everybody else had written. This links to Leadership, and we need to do more to help people to work in partnership.

Building strong partnerships with the young people and their families can make a huge difference. Families’ experiences of partnership with professionals have not always been very good. We know that they have found person-centred approaches to be empowering and enjoyable.



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Person-centred transition planning supported by school organisation and curriculum

The review meetings worked well. For some young people and families they worked better when there was time before the meeting to get things ready. The facilitators usually did this. Using the ***Listen to Me*** workbook really helped families to prepare for their reviews.

Schools who worked with the programme early on realised that they could help young people to plan for transition by doing work during lessons. Some classes talked about review meetings and what they wanted to get out of them. They talked about how they could support each other by attending reviews of friends. They said what they all liked and admired about each other. Other schools thought harder about how they could make sure that young people were thinking about the future. The schools wanted to make sure that they had good information about what people could do.

We need to find more ways of getting person-centred approaches in to schools, and sharing this work. Schools would get better at how they prepare young people for moving into adulthood.



If you have been involved in the person-centred transition planning programme and would like to let me know what you think we should do next year, please let me know by emailing me on linda.jordan@dh.gsi.gov.uk or phoning me on 0207 972 1242.

Better opportunities for the future

Once we get better at supporting young people to make their plans, there will need to change to make it easier for them to get out and about in their communities. They should be able to get jobs, have good housing options and do the things that all young people do. There is a lot happening that we hope will help things to change. Some of these are:

Education

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for all education after the age of 16, apart from universities. Last year the LSC looked at what it offers to people with learning difficulties and disabilities. A report was written and there is now a big plan called ***Learning for Living and Work***. The plan says that education and training will get better for people with learning difficulties and disabilities. An extra £35 million will be available by 2008 to develop new and improved courses. The LSC wants to work with people with disabilities in its planning for the future and it is going to set up a group to help it to work on the changes that it should make.

Also, the LSC will work with all of the other groups like health and local authorities to make sure that there is better joint planning and working. The Chief Executive of the LSC, Mark Haysom, says that people with learning difficulties and disabilities should have a sense of achievement and independence from learning as well as being able to go on to new opportunities. He wants the English post-16 education system to be an inspiration for the rest of the world by 2015.

The Learning and Skills Council has set up groups in each region to make sure that what has been said in Learning for Living and Work happens. There will be Valuing People representation on each of these regional groups.



Jobs

Partnership Boards, employers and others will work to make it better for people who want to get work by supporting them to get jobs. To find out what is happening in your region contact your regional advisor.

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Dynamite

As we said in the section on person-centred transition planning, it is important that we make the links with the work going on to introduce “self-directed support” and individual budgets.

Dynamite is a programme, run by **Paradigm**, which is working in twelve local authorities to support a number of young people to have control over their lives, to get individual budgets and to set off into adulthood with self-directed support. This programme is linked to the **In Control** programme. It is looking at how to help to develop better transition planning locally and it supports a strategic approach to transition planning across children and adult services. To find out more about the programme contact:

nicrc@paradigm-uk.org

Finally – if you are doing interesting work that is making a difference to young people and their families please let me or your regional Valuing People advisor know.

You can email me: linda.jordan@dh.gov.uk or phone **0207 972 1242**.

Young people having a voice

The Valuing People Support Team wants to make sure that young people with learning disabilities get the support they need to speak up.

- The BILD English advocacy grants programme has money to support advocacy for people with learning disabilities. Young people are one of the groups that can get money.



For more information, telephone BILD on **01562 723021** or email us at h.boon@bild.org.uk.

There will be a new leadership course for young people with learning disabilities. There will be more information about this on the Valuing People Support Team in the New Year.

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The Transition Pathway is a pack of accessible guidance and tools which can be used by anyone with an interest in supporting young people (age 13 – 25) in the transition to adult life. It provides a firm foundation to person-centered transition planning.

It consists of four key tools which all link together:

- The Transition Pathway - Guidance and tools
- The Big Picture - Guide for young people
- “My Life, My Future” -Template for individual transition planning workbooks
- CD - containing all tools and templates

It is written in an easy to read and visual format, following a 5 stage transition process:

- Getting ready
- Making the transition plan
- Planning ahead
- Leaving school
- Moving on

The Transition Pathway pack was runner-up in the 2006 Books for Teaching and Learning Award, and is being widely used to support person-centred transition planning.

For more information, take a look at the website:

www.transitionpathway.co.uk

or email Chris Sholl and Fran Dancyger at:

transitionpathwaypartnership@yahoo.co.uk

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Disability Equality Duty — training and information

From December 2006 there is a new law called the Disability Equality Duty. It says that public authorities like local councils, colleges and NHS Trusts must make sure that their services are suitable and accessible to disabled people.



Most public authorities will have to write a Disability Equality Scheme and an Action Plan. This must say how they will make their services better for disabled people. They have to do this in partnership with disabled people.

The Valuing People Support Team and the Disability Rights Commission have produced a training and information pack about the Disability Equality Duty. It was written by Speaking Up, and is designed to be used by people with learning disabilities and their organisations.

To get a free copy of the training and information pack, ring the Disability Rights Commission: **08457 622 633**.

Update from Sue Carmichael and Debra Moore

We hope that you found this update on Transition useful. We will soon be back with our usual newsletter. In the meantime if you would like any further information about Valuing People and whats happening in your region, please use the Valuing People Website or contact your Regional Advisor. www.valuingpeople.gov.uk.

Sue and Debra

