

Lost in transition?

How to find your way through.

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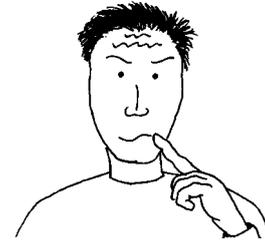


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Summary

If I told you that there was an easy way through transition would you believe me?



When I started reading about transition I didn't understand what it meant. But soon I learnt that transition can be a very difficult process.



I admire all young people with a disability and their families who have to go through transition.



Transition is the time when young people with a disability stop using children's services and they start using adult services. It is sometimes also called **transition to adulthood**.



Summary

Successful transition takes a lot of **planning** and preparation.



I learnt that transition could be made easier if only professionals worked **together** with the young people and their families.



These professional include people from the:

- Local Education Authority (LEA)
- Schools
- Children and Adult Health Services
- Children and Adult Social Services
- Careers Services
- Connexions Services
- Housing
- Leisure
- Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
- Youth Services.

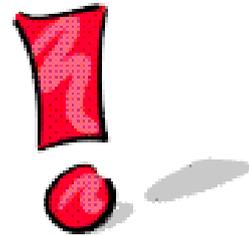


Summary

Unfortunately these professionals are not very good at working together yet. This causes a lot of problems for young people and their families.



This is why it is very important that councils across the country work together and bring together all these different professionals.



There are documents that can be produced to tell the role of each individual professional in the transition process what they have to do. These documents are called **Protocols and Agreements.**



Professionals talk a lot about finding out what young people want. We call this **person centred planning** but unfortunately it is not very common yet.



At transition, Person Centred Planning should lead to **Transition Plans**.



We have found that young people with a disability want the **same things** as any other young person growing up.



Summary

They want:

- money
- friends
- they want to know about sex
- they want their own home, and
- they want freedom to do the things they enjoy doing.



They especially enjoy **friendships** and **leisure** but these are hardly ever mentioned in their Transition Plans.



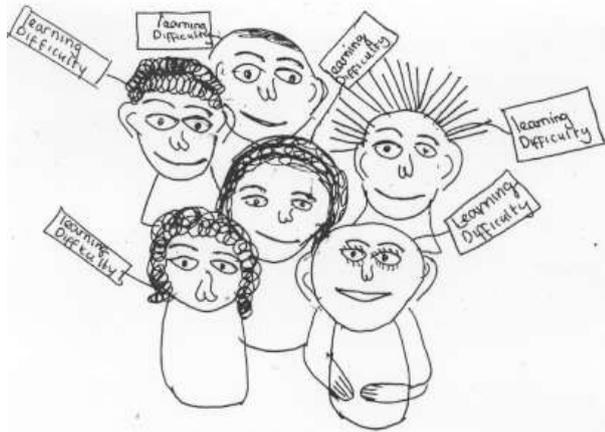
We have found that transition to adulthood need not be so difficult. The secret is to **listen** to what young people have to say and get professionals to work together to achieve young people's dreams.



In this paper we will also talk about our organisation's experience of transition. We are called Dimensions.



We at Dimensions believe that **all** young people, even those with more complex needs, are capable of achieving their dreams.



We at Dimensions believe that transition should provide young people with **life** rather than services.

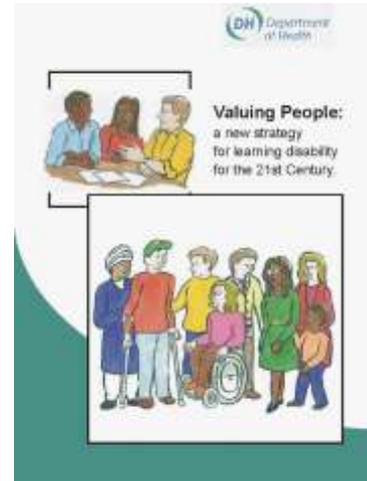


Transition Plans should become **life plans** which give young people and their families security and hope for the future.



1. Introduction

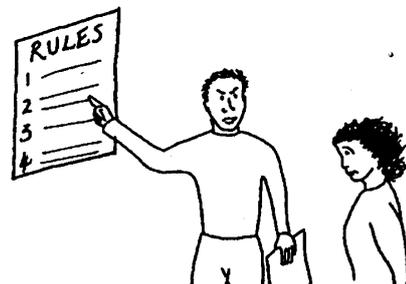
In 2001 the Valuing People White Paper said that there were 210,000 people with severe learning disabilities. 65,000 of them were young people with a learning disability. This number is on the rise.



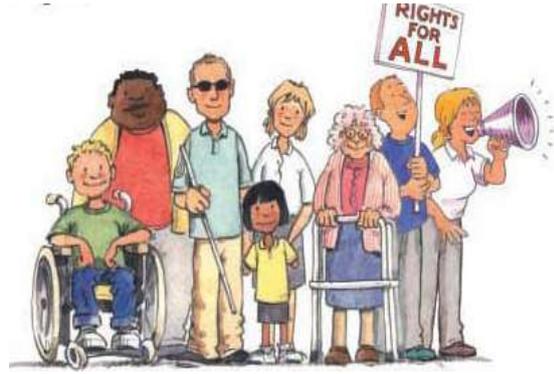
There are a lot of challenges facing young people with a disability.



One of the main problems is that they have **no control** over their life.



The most important thing to recognise is that people with a disability have the **same rights** as any other person.



We must make sure that people with a disability get a lot of help to have more choice, independence and inclusion in their life.



The government promises that by 2025 people with a disability in Britain will have all of this.

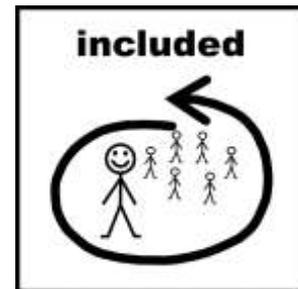


Introduction

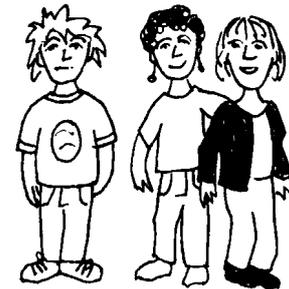
They will have full **opportunities** and more choices to improve their quality of life.



They will also be **included** and respected as equal members of society.



For young people with a disability the government promises that by 2015, the transfer from children's to adult services will be **smooth**.



The government also promises that by 2015 **parents** with disabled children will get all the support they need to cope with being a parent, and hold down a job if they choose so.



One of the best ways to achieve all these goals is with the use of **individualised budgets**.



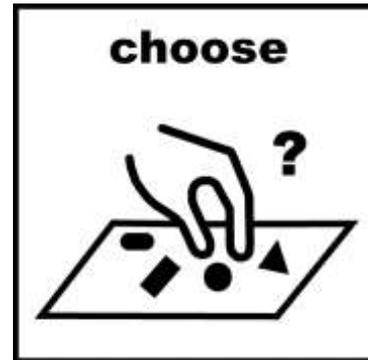
Individualised budgets are lump sums of money given to every person with a learning disability depending on what their needs are.



In this paper we are focusing on young people with a disability aged **14-25** who are entering and passing through transition.



It is true that young people with a disability have more rights and **choices** today than ever before, but there is still a long way to go.



The Road Ahead research says that very few young people understand what transition means.



Similarly many parents are unsure what should happen to their children during transition.



Our aim with this paper is to answer these questions and give an overview of what is happening in transition across the UK.



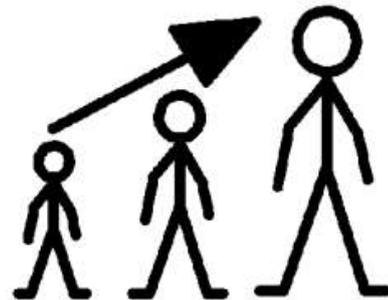
2. Background

Teenage years are often very difficult.

Young people's lives change rapidly between the ages of 14-25.



Teenage years are about development and preparation for adulthood. This period is called transition to adulthood.



Transition to adulthood for young people with a disability is more difficult. This is because they need **extra support** to achieve the same things as other young people their age.

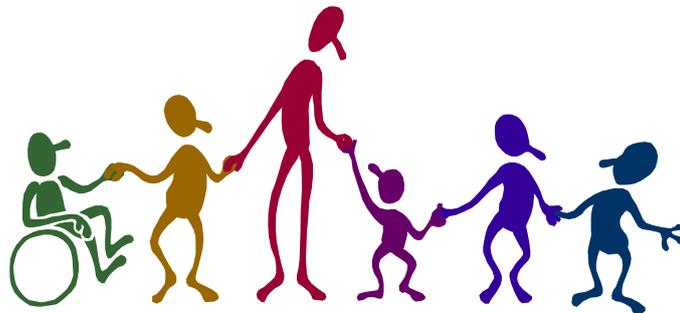


Background

Teenage years are a time of experimenting and searching for **identity** and independence.



Professionals say that the most important message to teach children and teenagers is that **everybody is different.**



There are different shapes and sizes, different colours and cultures and different abilities.

All these are considered to be normal but sadly people with a disability are still treated differently.



Transition for young people with a disability is very difficult.



Good examples of transition practice already exist in the country but there are still **no rules** on how exactly it should happen.



Generally it is down to the hard work of parents that results for their children are achieved.

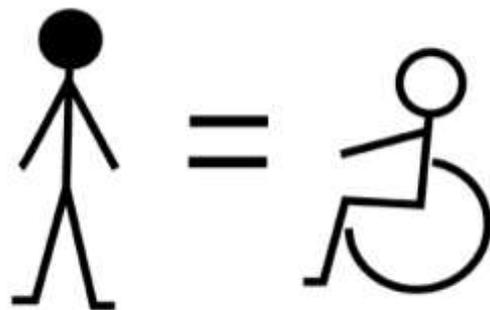


3. Context

Children and young people with a disability today face many barriers. This makes it very difficult for them to achieve their goals and dreams.



The fact is that these young people want the same things as any other young person their age.



They want to do **normal** things:

- they want to be listened to
- they want to go shopping
- they want to go to the cinema
- they want to go clubbing
- they want to do sports
- they want to be safe from bullying
- they want to have control of their money, and
- they want to have enough money to enjoy life.



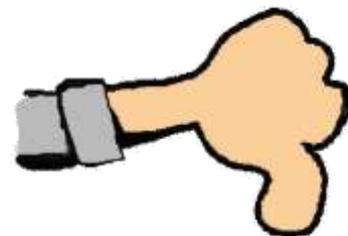
Standard 8 of the National Service Framework says that children and young people with a disability live **happy lives** and all their needs are satisfied.



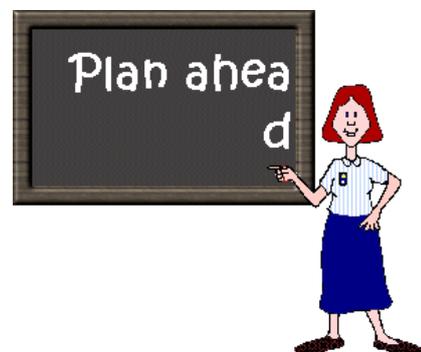
The truth is far from this. Many young people with a disability and their families face **poverty** and hardship.



Today transition provision for young people with a disability is poor.



The main reason for this is that professionals don't plan ahead in time and they don't work together.



This causes a rushed transfer from children's to adult services. But worst still, sometimes this transfer doesn't even happen.



Some parents describe transition as standing on an **edge of a cliff**, about to fall into the black hole.



One parent said that when a disabled person reaches 18 it seems that no one is interested in them any longer.



Another parent said that it is important to understand that disabled children **do not** grow into non-disabled adults.



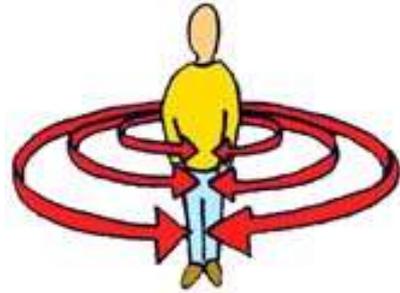
It is very difficult for young people with a disability to become independent adults. Often they are not provided with the right support, and their parents have to fight for their rights.



A lot of planning is needed for young people with a disability to have a successful transition.



Planning should be focussed on the individual needs of every young person.



Planning should make sure that there is the right support and services for young people during transition.

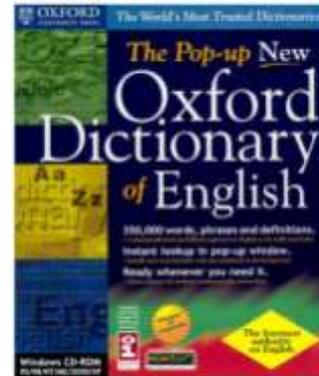


Planning should lead to opportunities and choices for young people in adulthood.



3.1 Definition of disability

Many different terms can be used to describe disability, and this can be very confusing.



Some people talk about **disability**, others talk about **learning disability** or **learning difficulty**.



The Disability Discrimination Act describes a person with a **disability** if they have a long term physical or mental impairment which stops them carrying out normal day to day activities.



Definition of disability

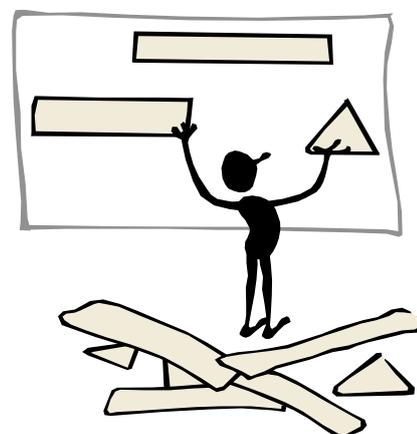
The Learning and Skills Act 2000 says that a person has a **learning disability** or **learning difficulty** if they find it a lot harder to learn things than the majority of people their own age.



A nationwide self-advocacy group called People First is run fully by people with learning difficulties. They explain why they choose to call themselves people with **learning difficulties**.



The reason People First call themselves people with learning difficulties rather than people with learning disabilities is because they want to express that their support needs change overtime.



Definition of disability

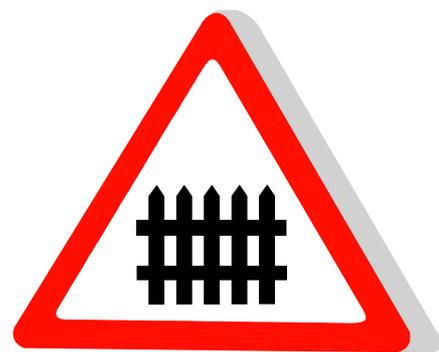
They say that with good support they can become more independent and do more for themselves.



The **social model of disability** explains disability in a very refreshing way.



The social model of disability says that disability is not caused by an impairment. But it is caused by the barriers society puts on individuals who have a disability. These barriers can happen in education, transport, housing, leisure, health and other public services.



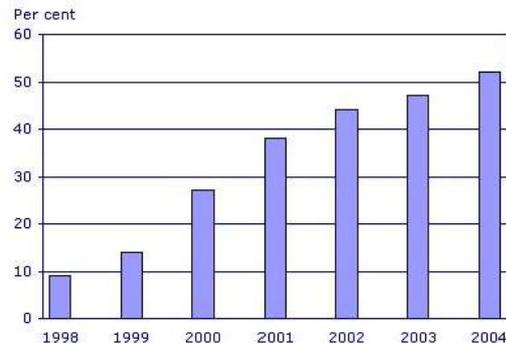
Definition of disability

You will notice that in this paper I talk about **young people with a disability**. This is because I want to include young people with all kinds of disability. In this paper I don't want to make the distinction between disabled, learning disability or learning difficulty.



4. Facts and figures

The number of disabled children in the UK increased by 62% in the past 30 years.



55% of disabled children in the UK grow up in poverty.



Only 1 in 13 families with disabled children get support from social services.



98% of disabled children in the UK live at home with their families.



Facts and figures

8 out of 10 families with disabled children in the UK say that they are at breaking point.



Disabled children are 13 times more likely to be excluded from school. And their educational achievement is a lot lower than that of non-disabled children.



It costs 3 times more money to raise a disabled child than it does to raise a child without disabilities.

3 x

In the UK only 16% of mothers with disabled children are in work, compared to 61% of mothers with non-disabled children.



Facts and figures

Because of these difficulties 31% of families with disabled children have relationship problems, and 9% of them separate.



75% of local councils failed to talk to disabled children and their families when making their plans.



People from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups face even more barriers. A study shows that 70% of BME carers of children with a learning disability are very distressed compared with 47% of carers overall.



Facts and figures

Compared to other young people, at the age of 25 young people with a disability are less likely to have qualifications, skills or a job.



Young people with a disability aged 16-25 are less happy with their lives than other young people. Very often they don't get the support they need at the right time as they move from children's to adult services.

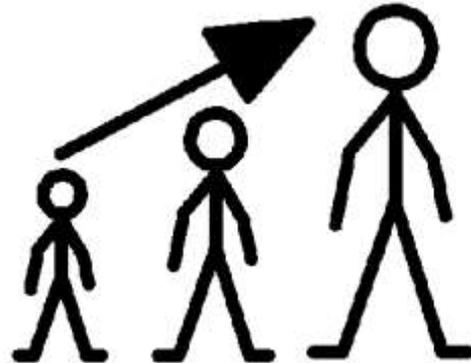


Compared to other EU countries, families with young people with a disability in the UK are least satisfied with the practical and financial help they receive.



5. What is transition?

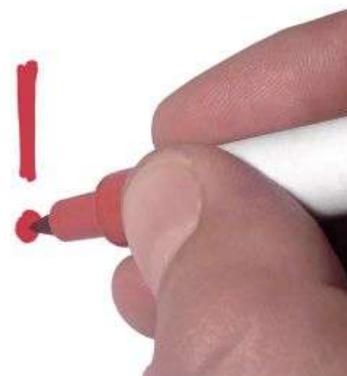
Transition is the process of becoming an adult.



For young people with a disability this means what happens to them when they leave school and start the transfer from children's to adult services. This process involves health, education and social services.



During transition young people make very important decision about their future. They make decisions about their education, housing, employment, finances and relationships. For this reason it is very important to get young people's transition right.



What is transition?

Unfortunately transition is very often a distressing time for young people and their families.



Many young people don't start their transition on time. And many find it difficult to coordinate between the different services.



Also many young people get confused when their entitlements change when they move from children to adult services. As a result they often end up receiving services based on their age rather than their needs.



What is transition?

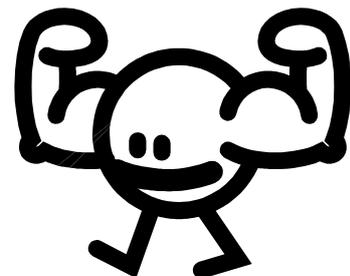
Professionals must remember that transition is supposed to be an **exciting time** for young people. And a time when they make decisions that will affect the rest of their lives.



Every child with special educational needs (SEN) should get a **Transition Plan** after their 14th birthday (Year 9). In order to start planning for the young person's transition from school to adult life, Transition Plans should use information from lots of people.



Transition Plans should focus on the **strengths** and needs of young people, and cover all aspects of their development.



What is transition?

Transition Plans should include the **young person's views** about:

- their future education
- their training
- their leisure and recreational activities, and
- their independence.



Transition Plans should include the **family's hopes** for their child. They should also include their views about the amount of support their child needs, and how the family should be involved.



Transition Plans should also include the **school's views** about how they can help, including non-educational goals such as training, independence and leisure.

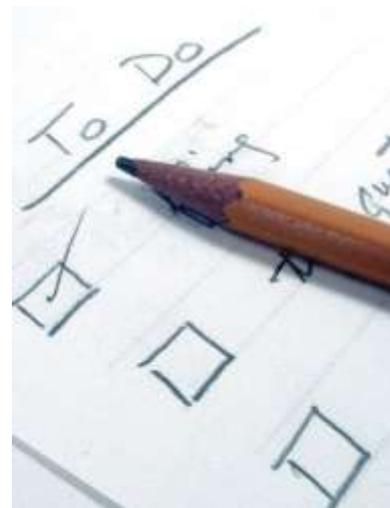


What is transition?

Transition Plans should include details of which agencies need to be involved in future planning. These agencies include Social services, health professionals, education services, benefits agency and the Connexions Services.



Finally Transition Plans should include a clear **action plan** for the future, stating who will do what and when.



What is transition?

It is very important to understand that Transition Plans **don't stop** at the age of 25.



Transition Plans should become **life plans** which constantly change as the needs of the young person changes.



These plans should take account of every aspect of the young person's life, such as getting a job, a place to live, relationships and leisure.



5.1 What do young people want?

All young people with a disability who go through transition need practical information about the transition process, and specific issues which will affect them during transition.



The Road Ahead research report interviewed young people with a disability and found out that they want information on the following issues:



All young people who were interviewed said that **getting a job** is very important.



What do young people want?

Young people want more information on **colleges** so they can decide on options for their future.



All young people want a place to call their **home**. Whether it is a house, flat with support, living at college, or living at home.



Young people want information on how to handle **money**, learn how to pay bills, and learn how to balance their benefits with getting a job.



What do young people want?

Young people with a disability say that making new **friends** and keeping old friends are the most important aspects of their lives. Friends provide them with emotional support. Sadly, Transition Plans hardly ever take notice of this.



Young people need advice on **sex** and **relationships**. They need advice on emotional changes, advice on how to get a boyfriend or a girlfriend. And they also need advice on contraception and starting a family.



Young people want to know about how to **stay safe**. They want to know about road safety, safety at home, safety on the streets, fire alarms, and drugs and alcohol.

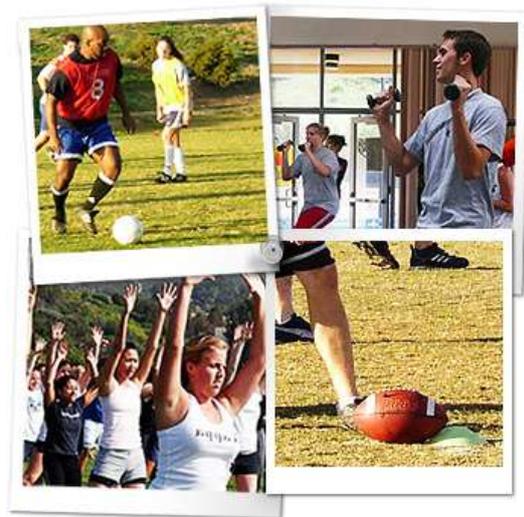


What do young people want?

Young people want advice on how to **stay healthy**. They want to know about healthy eating and exercising. They want to know about allergies. And they also want to know about the affects of smoking, alcohol and drugs on their health.



Young people want to know about **recreation**. They want advice on sports, joining clubs, music, partying, hobbies and other ways of relaxing.



Young people want to know the practical aspects of **living independently**. They want to know about cooking, having a car, shopping, cleaning, and paying bills.



What do young people want?

Some young people with a disability would like to **help others** such as ill people or those who use a wheelchair. Some are also interested in looking after the homeless or sick animals.



Research shows that many parents don't know what should be done during transition.



They don't realise that it is their children's right to have a Transition Plan which makes arrangements for their future.

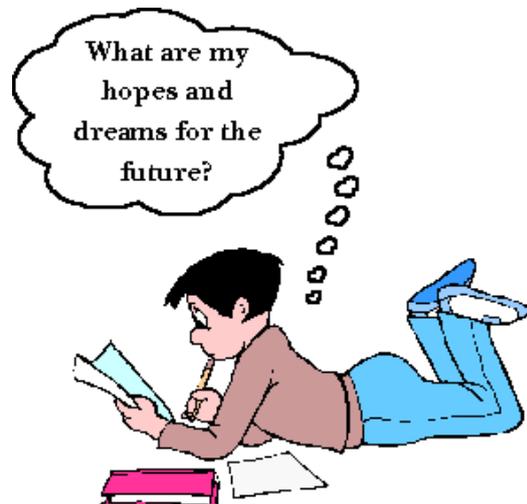


5.2 What is good transition planning?

It is important that young people are **involved** in their transition planning because Transition Plans are about them.



Transition planning has to be **holistic**. This means that the young person's whole life needs to be thought about including getting a job, a place to live, their finances, their relationships and leisure.



Young people and their families need lots of **support** from professionals when they make decisions about the next stages of the young person's life.



What is good transition planning?

Transition Plans are **developing** plans. Leaving school is only the first step of transition to adulthood. Transition is a long journey and the different stages slowly develop with time.



Transition Planning has to be **inclusive**. It is important that young people with a disability get the chance to do the same things as other young people their own age.



The Connexions Service is responsible for making sure that things in the Transition Plan happen.

connexions

What is good transition planning?

The Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) is responsible for this.



Personal Advisers work closely with young people to make their plans a reality. They work with young people up to the age of 25.



5.3 When is transition successful?

The Norah Fry research centre asked parents what they thought successful transition was. Parents said the following things:



Successful transition means that the young person is **happy** and **content**.



Successful transition means that the young person is able to have a **social life**.



When is transition successful?

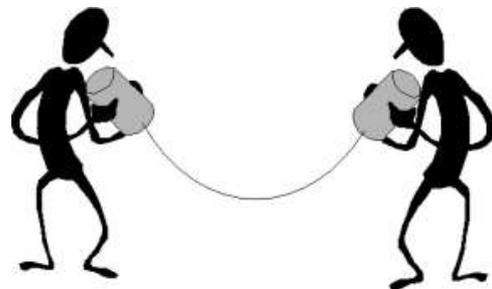
Successful transition means that the young person is **confident** and has **self-esteem**.



Successful transition means that the young person has opportunities for **progression**.



Successful transition means that the young person is able to **communicate** their wishes freely.



Successful transition means that the young person has the opportunity to take part in different activities, and continue with their **interests**.

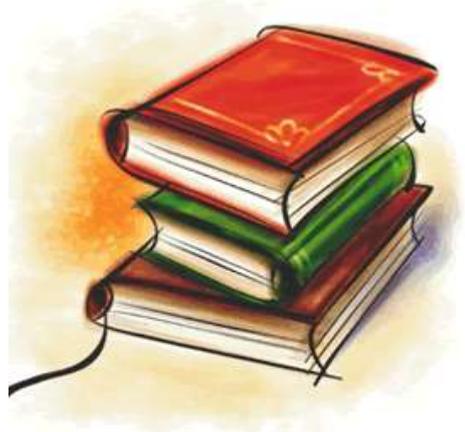


6. What happens when?

The different stages of transition are recorded in the Transition Plan.



The Council for Disabled Children say that there are 3 documents that every local authority must have to help young people with a disability through transition. These are the following:



1. Before the transition process can start it is very important that a **Protocol** or **Agreement** is written by all the different people who are part of the process. This is to make sure that everyone is clear about who does what.



What happens when?

The different agencies include:

- Local Education Authorities (LEA)
- Schools
- Children and adult Social Services
- Children and adult Health Services
- Careers Services
- Connexions Service
- Housing
- Leisure
- the Learning and Skill Council (LSC)
- Youth Services.

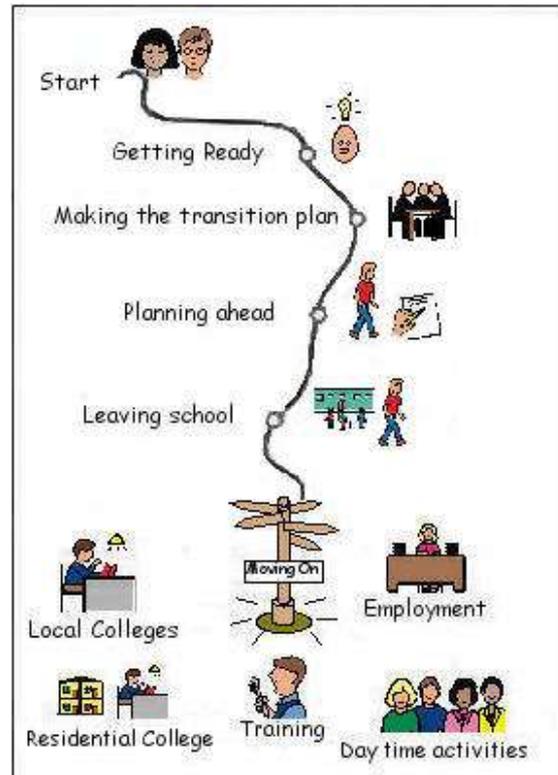


2. The **Guides for young people and parents** document explains what and who is involved in the transition process. It also gives advice about where young people and parents can go for further information about transition.



What happens when?

3. **Pathways** are very useful documents because they make a complicated process look very clear.

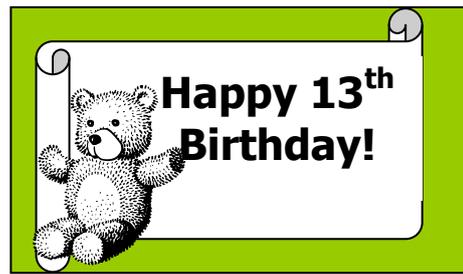


Pathways lay out the transition process **step by step**. They explain who should be involved at each stage, and what the options are at each stage.



What happens when?

At age of 13 (Year 8)
Connexions gets in touch with schools to find out about the number of young people with a disability.



Connexions works closely with the school's Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to make sure they are ready for the start of young people's transition.



Age 14 (Year 9) is when planning for transition to adulthood **begins**. At this stage all the different agencies are told what each young person needs.



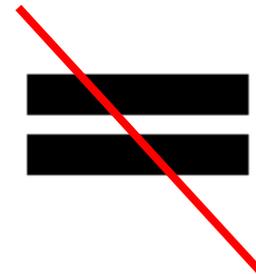
What happens when?

The Local Education Authority (LEA) writes to the young people to invite them to a meeting called a 14+ Transition review or **Year 9 review**.



The LEA notifies social services, and the **Transition Plan** is drawn up.

The Transition Plan is different from the **Action Plan**. Both of them happen around the Year 9 review but the Action Plan is drawn up by Connexions, and it becomes part of the Transition Plan.



At age 15 (Year 10) parents are told about the **15+review**. They are asked if they want to make any changes to the Transition Plan.



What happens when?

At this stage young people start to make visits to local colleges or other post-16 services.



At age 16 (Year 11) the Transition Plan has to be checked to see if it is still relevant.



The **Moving On Plan** is drawn up for those young people who are in ordinary mainstream education.



What happens when?

At age 16, the social services children's team needs to contact the adult's care team manager to talk about any planning meetings that might be needed.

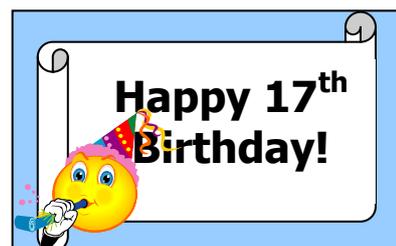


At age 16 young people with a disability can apply for **benefits**. These include Disability Allowance, Direct Payments and the Independent Living Fund.



The Local Education Authority (LEA) can also apply for funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

At age 17 (Year 12) the **17+ annual review** takes place. This review checks if the Transition Plan is in place, and if it needs changing.



What happens when?

At age 18 the young person's support is **transferred** to the adult care team. Sometimes this process can take place earlier at the age of 16, or later at the age of 19.



Some young people leave full time education at age 18, and some stay at school until they are 19.



When a young person leaves full time education (school or college), they are covered by the **Disabled Persons Act**.



What happens when?

The Disabled Persons Act requires social services to carry out a **multi-agency assessment** of the young person. The results of this assessment should then be used to make relevant plans for the young person's future after leaving full time education.



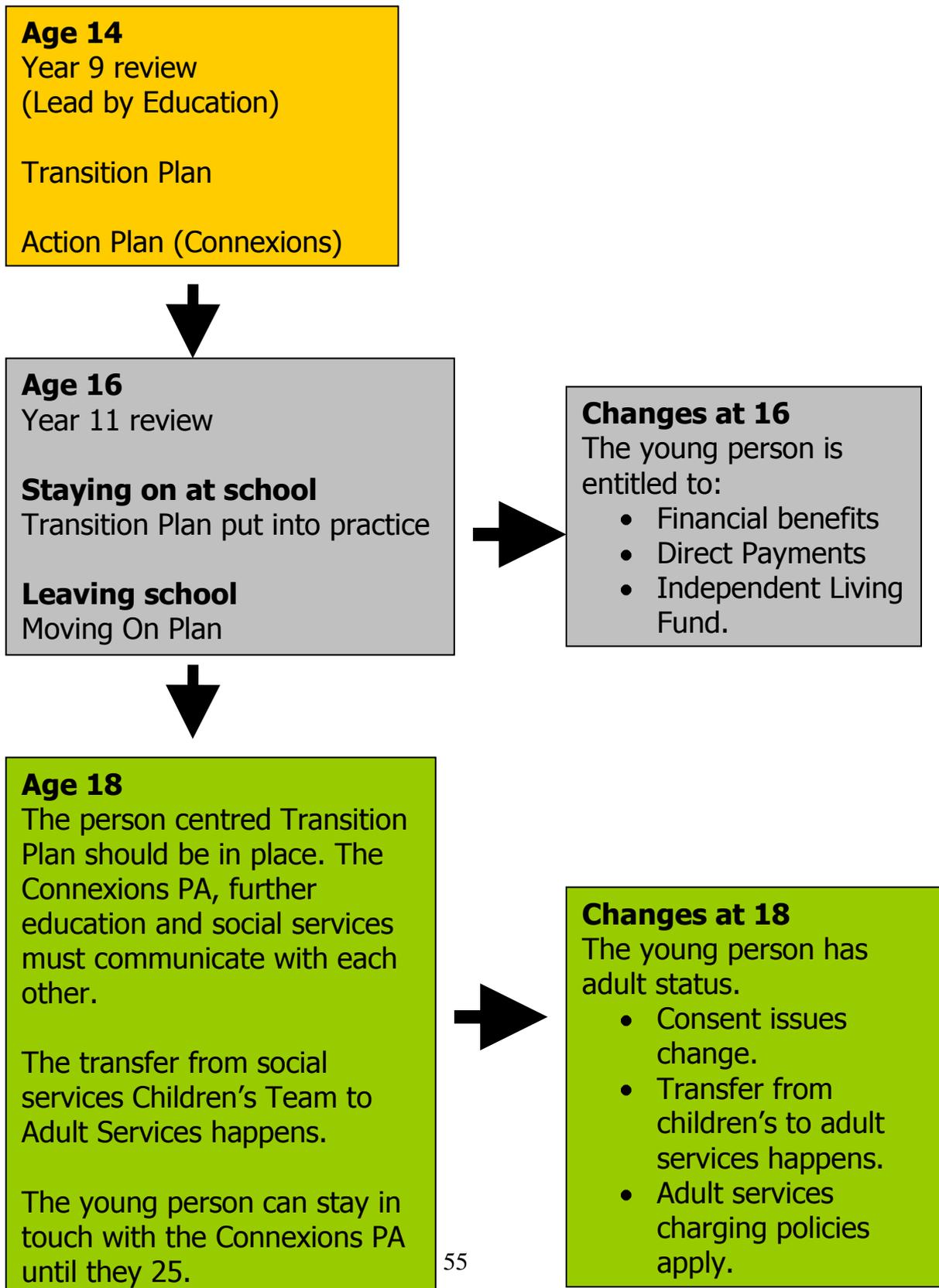
It is important to remember that all the assessments and plans must be done in a **person centred** way.



Sadly, many policies think that youth **ends** at age of 18 or 19. The truth is that this is the time when some young people with a disability need the most support.



6.1 Summary of transition planning

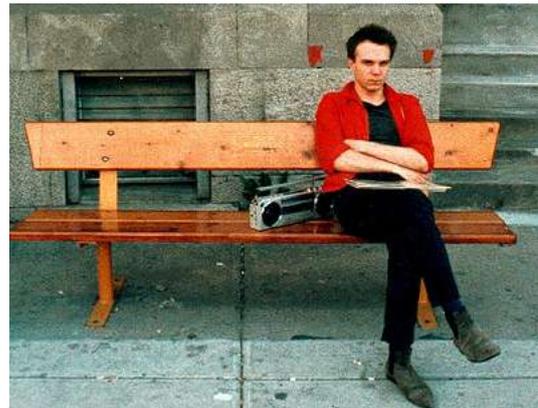


6.2 Why isn't transition always successful?

The biggest problem young people experience in their transition is the **lack of continuity** in the services they receive.



This happens for a number of reasons but the main cause of it is the **transfer** from children's to adult services. Very often this transfer is delayed, or at worst it doesn't happen.



This issue can be best seen in health and social services.



Why isn't transition always successful?

When young people transfer from child healthcare to adult healthcare, very often their health gets worse.



This is because the support they get as children **stops** when they become adults.

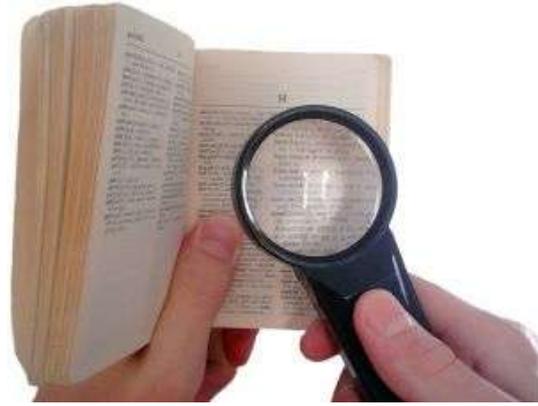


The same is true for social services. Very often young people are placed in services which are designed for much older people.



Why isn't transition always successful?

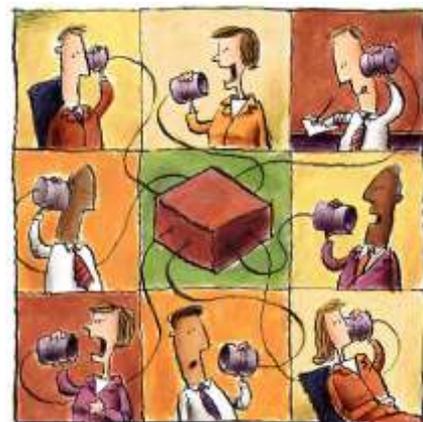
Sometimes there is confusion over the definition between children and adult services.



The types of benefit that young people can get changes when they transfer into adult services. If the process isn't explained properly this can be very confusing.



There is often **poor communication** between agencies. They don't share information about young people which slows down the transition process.

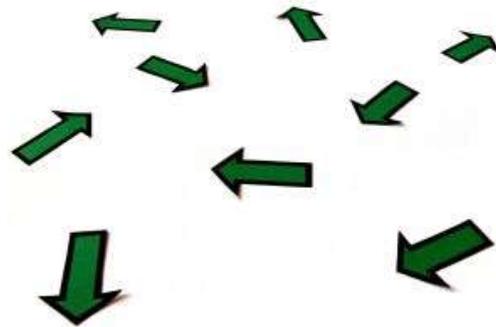


Why isn't transition always successful?

Agencies often don't have enough **information** about the young people. They also lack local and regional information to help them in the planning process.



When young people transfer from children to adult services they start getting their money from **more than one place**. This can be very confusing.



Agencies **sometimes don't agree** on things. They also know very little about each others' jobs which can cause problems.



Why isn't transition always successful?

It would save a lot of time and energy if agencies shared **good ways of working** with each other.



It is important to provide **local** services for young people rather than sending them away out of the county they live in.

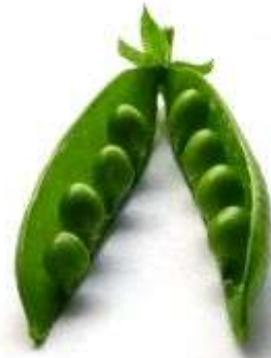


Sadly, very often there are not enough services locally. This means that young people have to go away from their home area.



Why isn't transition always successful?

It is important to remember that transition is not the same for every young person. There isn't a **one size fits all** policy, and every Transition Plan is different. For example:



Martin is 21. He had been away at boarding school but now he is back home with his parents. He started college and he says he is very happy.



Ellie is 23. She wants to be a classroom assistant and her dream is to live independently.



Why isn't transition always successful?

Carmel is 21. She is an athlete and travels the world. Her dream is to do sports on an international level.



Jack is 21. He is at college studying design. He wants to get a job locally.



7. Types of support available

When transition works well, it enables young people to **achieve their dreams**.



This can only happen through good **person centred planning**, where the young person's need and dreams are put at the centre of the plan.



Professionals must have excellent **knowledge** about what services and resources are available locally for young people in transition.



Children's and adult services must **work together well** for transition to be a success.



Types of support available

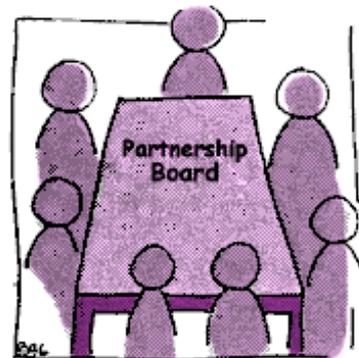
There are many different types of **support packages** to choose from to support young people in transition.



These support packages are outlined in the Valuing People white paper, and developed by the Department of Health. Every local authority should use them.



To find out what happens **locally**, it is best to contact the local Disability **Partnership Board** in that area.



Types of support available

Sadly, a lot of these support packages are not used properly, which means that young people don't always get the help they need.



The following are the most common worries for parents:



Parents are worried how the transfer from children's to adult services will affect their child.



Types of support available

Parents worry about making the wrong decision for their child.



Parents are often not sure what they are allowed to ask for.



Parents worry that they won't be able to cope with caring for their children alone.



Parents worry that there are not enough services to choose from.



Types of support available

Many parents complain that there is not enough information provided for them.



There are also good examples of transition across the country.

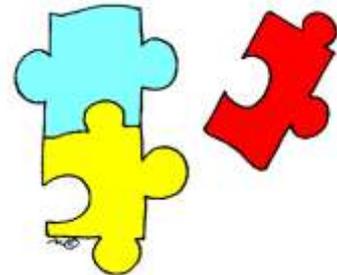


And many young people and their families are **happy** about the support they receive.



7.1 Person centred planning

Person centred planning is a type of support available for young people in transition.



It is a planning method which focuses on the young person's **dreams** and **aspirations**.



Person centred planning talks about the young person's **life history**. It also talks about their culture and their beliefs.



Person centred planning

Person centred planning talks about the young person's **goals**. These plans also describe how the goals will be achieved.



Person centred planning talks about how **friendships** will be developed. The plans also talk about how **community** facilities can be used by young people with a disability.



It is important that the young person builds their own **circle of support**. These are the young person's family and friends, all those who will help the young person achieve their goals.



Person centred planning

It is important that person centred planning starts **early** in year 9 when the Transition Plan is made.



7.2 Direct payments

Direct payments are another type of support available for young people in transition.



Direct payments were **invented** by a group of disabled people who were living in a residential home.



One day this group of people decided that they didn't want to stay in the residential home forever. Instead, they decided that they wanted to live **independently** in the community.



Direct payments

Direct payments are payments from the **local council**.



Direct payments can only be given to people who have been **assessed** as needing help from social services.



Direct payments mean that people can arrange and pay for their own care and support services instead of receiving these things directly from the local council.



Direct payments

The money can **only** be used to pay for services to meet the assessed needs.



The amount of money given to people depends on their individual circumstances.

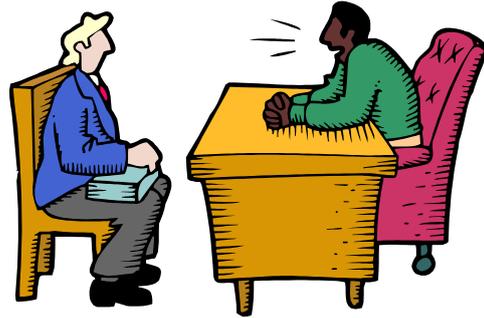


People can use this money to pay a **service provider** who will then take responsibility for employing a support worker and arrange any other costs.



Direct payments

Young people can take matters in their own hands and employ their own support worker and make their own arrangements.



Direct payments are one of the most successful government policies which have helped people with a disability to live normal lives.



7.3 In Control

In Control is another type of support available for young people during transition. In Control is about people **getting control** over their support and their lives.



In Control is a process where a person is assessed by the local authority. If they are found to have specific support needs, they will be given a **pot of money** every year to use as best they can to help their needs.



First of all, the young person and their family have to write a **plan** to show how they are planning to use this money. Social services have to approve this plan.



The main focus of In Control is to help young people make lasting and meaningful **links** with their local community.



Young people are encouraged to find more **non-paid sources of support** from within their community, and their circle of family and friends.



In Control

In Control allows young people to use their money in a way that **suits them best**.



Young people want to be given enough help but not too much. They believe that they too have things to give.



In Control is about **self-directed support**. It means that the young person stays in charge even if they need help.



7.4 Housing

Housing is another type of support available for young people during transition.



There are housing departments in each local authority who are responsible for housing needs in their area.



Young people should be able to get **supported** housing, **mainstream** housing, or **move away** from home if they wish to.



Supported housing is special housing designed around a young person to accommodate their needs. Mainstream housing means ordinary housing which the majority of people live in.



If a young person wishes to live away from home after they have left school, this should be included in their Transition Plan.

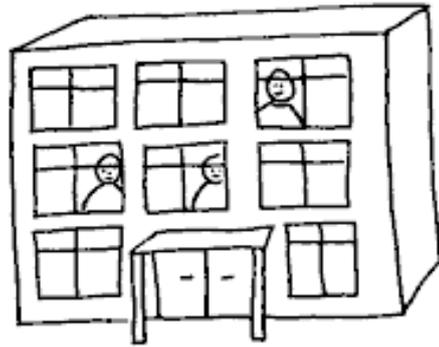


There are many different types of housing available for young people with a disability. They can have **supported living**, they can **rent** privately, they can **buy** a house, or they can have **shared ownership** of a house.



Registered residential care

homes are very often the first choice for people with more complex needs where a lot of people live together. These might not be the best option for all young people with a disability.



Supported living offers young people more possibilities.

Supported living allows young people to choose where they want to live, who they want to live with, who they allow in their home, and have tenancy rights to their home.



In supported living, the level and type of support varies depending on the young person's needs. It can be anything from a few hours a week to 24 hour support.



Floating or community support is similar to supported living. It provides hourly support to people in their own home or living with relatives, parents or in a residential service.



The purpose of the support may be to develop a particular skill like independent travel, access to college or employment.



7.5 Short breaks

Short breaks are another type of support available for young people in transition. Short breaks provide young people with an enjoyable break away from where they currently live.



Short breaks enable young people to have a break that is safe, stimulating in a relaxed and friendly environment away from home.



At these places young people have the chance to get involved in activities that they enjoy, and to socialise with their peers.



Short breaks

Short breaks are also very important for parents. Many parents find time to relax and unwind while their child is at a safe place.

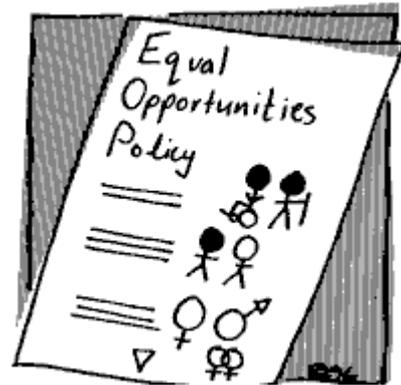


Parents find short breaks one of the most important issues at transition.



7.6 Education, training and work

It is important that young people with a disability have the same rights to access education, training and jobs as other young people their age.



Sadly, very often this is not the case.



Research has found that 20% of young people with a disability are discouraged to take their GCSEs because of their disability.



Education, training and work

60% of young people with a disability who didn't choose further education said that it was because they wouldn't have got the support they needed.



86% of young people with a disability feel that it is harder for them to get a job compared with other young people their age.



There is a lack of opportunities after the age of 16 for young people with a disability. When they leave school at 19, very often they have no further education or work opportunities.



Education, training and work

Sometimes young people with a disability decide not to get a job because they are afraid that they will **lose their benefits**.



Many young people are forced to move away from home because there is no suitable local education and support services.



The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) must ensure that there is greater focus on work in the Year 9 review at the age of 14.



Education, training and work

It is important that all young people with a disability leave school with a Transition Plan. This plan must include options for further education and work.



Education must provide young people with basic daily living skills as well as some practical skills for working.



Getting a job must be a realistic option for young people with a disability.

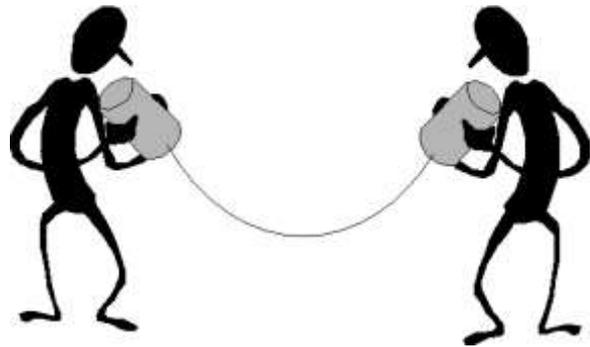


7.7 Working together

The different agencies involved in transition must work together well.



It is important that these agencies talk to each other about what the young person wants.



Sadly, a lot of the time they don't talk to each other, and young people have to repeat the same story over and over again.



Working together

Key workers are very important for young people and families in transition. Their role is to make sure that the agencies do talk to each other. They also make appointments for young people and make life as easy as possible for the families.



Their role is to make the transition process as easy as possible so that young people won't have to repeat themselves time and time again.



7.8 Advocacy

Advocacy is another type of support available for young people during transition. The role of advocacy is to help someone **speak up** for themselves and help them express their views.



Advocacy is very important at the time when the Transition Plan is drawn up and young people move from children's to adult services. Advocacy helps young people to express their wishes for the future.



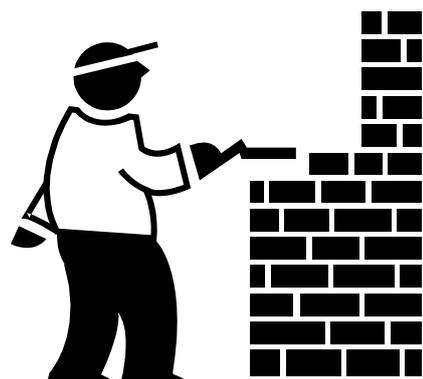
All young people with a disability can have an advocate but it is especially important for young people who have no parents.



Professionals often don't realise that close friends, brothers and sisters can act as very effective advocates for young people with a disability.



The secret of good advocacy is to build up a trusting and friendly relationship with the young person.



7.9 Transport

Lots of young people with a disability find using transport very difficult.



Many young people have to buy their own transport equipment privately which can be very expensive.



Many young people miss out on things because of the lack of transport and equipment they need to get about.



8. What can be done to improve transition?

It is very important that planning for transition begins **early**. The next placement should be agreed at least 3 months before the young person is due to leave their school/college.



Housing is one of the major worries for parents, and it is not always included in the young person's Transition Plan. It is important that housing plans are made as early as possible so that young people know where they are going to live after leaving school/college.



What can be done to improve transition?

Young people identify leisure and social activities as the most important aspects of transition but these are rarely included in their Transition Plans.



It is important that parents stay well **connected** with other parents who are dealing with the same things. This gives parents practical and emotional support.



Parents should make sure that they chase up professionals, and become advocates for their children.



What can be done to improve transition?

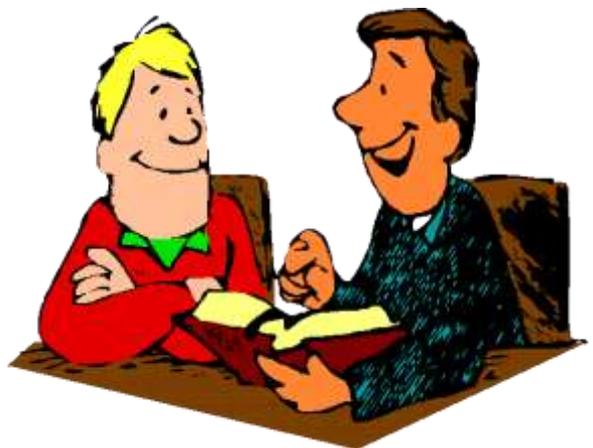
The role of a keyworker or **Transition Worker** is very important. They take responsibility of the transition process and work closely with the young people and their families.



It is important that parents and young people are given sufficient information during transition so they can make decisions.

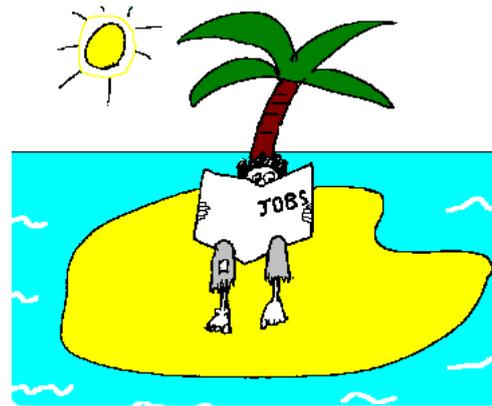


It is important that local authorities, the different agencies and parents share information with each other.



What can be done to improve transition?

This way transition becomes everybody's responsibility, and young people and their families will not feel isolated.



It is important that protocols and agreements are in place so that the different agencies know what is expected of them and each other.



Monitoring is very important. Each Transition Plan should be followed up regularly because this makes sure the plan is still relevant, and the young person's dreams are still the same.

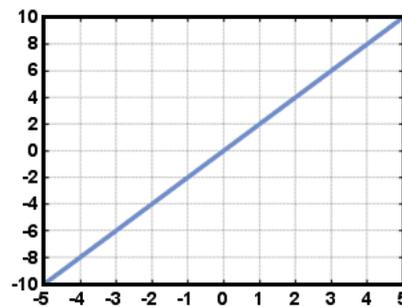


What can be done to improve transition?

It is important that there is open and honest communication between the different agencies, the young people and their families.



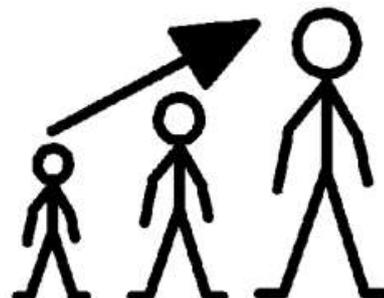
It is important that there is **continuity** in transition.



This means that the young person has the same keyworker for as long as possible.



It also means that the transition between children's and adult services is as **smooth** as possible.



What can be done to improve transition?

It is important to understand that transition is about **life** and not services. This means that young people are given opportunities to enjoy their lives.



It is important that education prepares young people for getting a job and independent living.



When young people move into adult services, it is important that the health and social teams are different from those providing services for older people.



8.1 Young people's suggestions

Young people find it very important to have someone independent who they can talk to and who they can trust.



Very often the best people to help young people with a disability understand what it means to be an adult is their brothers and sisters, close friends or their peers.



Young people want to work with experienced professionals who know the difficulties they are facing.



Young people say that it is very important that they are treated **based on their needs** and not based on their age. At the age of 18, young people often lose a lot of support that they receive while they are in children's services.



Young people say that they would like to be encouraged to have higher expectations of themselves.



Young people would like if they had more information about benefits. They would like someone to explain the whole process to them.



Young people's suggestions

Young people would like information to be provided in an accessible way so they can clearly understand everything.

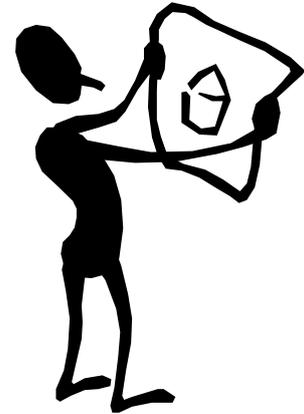


Young people would like to have more privacy and given more responsibility.



8.2 Parents' suggestions

Parents must chase up professionals to get on with transition planning, and with reviewing the plans.



Parents need guidance and advice on preparing for the meetings.



Parents find it very important that all key professionals attend all of the meetings at transition.



Parents' suggestions

Parents would like if the transition process was made as easy and clear as possible.



Parents suggest that each family should have a keyworker, or Transition Worker who looks after the whole transition process.

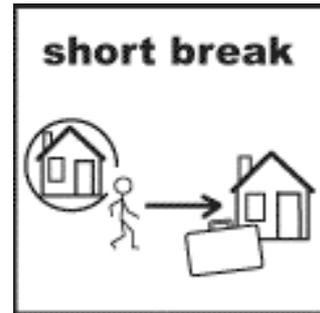


Parents often find talking to other parents in similar situations very comforting.



Parents' suggestions

Parents want to have access to reliable short breaks for their children.

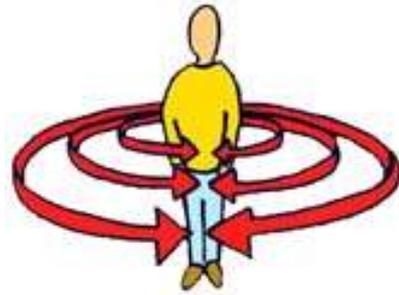


Parents want their children to have full access to education and job opportunities.



8.3 Service providers' suggestions

The most important thing to remember is that young people are the centre of transition. Transition should be both challenging and exciting for them.



It is very important that young people are provided with long term plans and continuous support. Short term plans very often don't suit young people with more complex needs.



Service providers' suggestions

It is very important that local authorities invest into **local services**. This way young people with a disability needn't move away from their home county in search of suitable services.



It is very important that service providers, who are organisations that provide support for people with disabilities, establish good relationships with young people and their families.



Service providers' suggestions

Service providers want all the agencies who work on transition to work together. This way transition can be planned in advance and young people can reach their potential.



8.4 What should the government do?

It is important that the government puts funding into sharing information about how transition can be done well.



The government should make sure that children and adult services work together in transition.



The government should make sure that every child with a disability has access to education and employment.



What should the government do?

It is important that the government encourages local authorities to write protocols and agreements so that every agency knows what they have to do at transition.



It is important that families are provided with enough information at the start of transition so they know who to turn to at each stage.



Transition should be kept local as much as possible. The government should make sure that young people have services provided where they live.

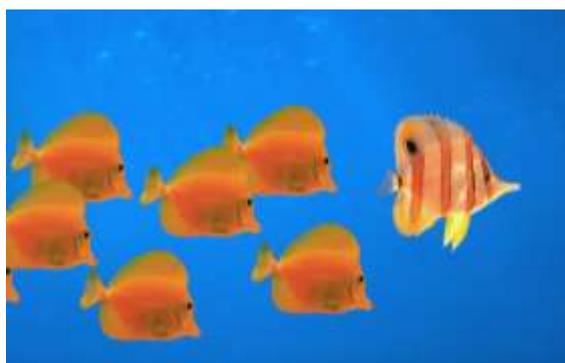


What should the government do?

Transition planning must start at the age of 14. This makes sure that local services are identified in time especially for young people with more complex needs.



If young people are placed out of their home county, the government must ensure that their transition is properly tracked.



The government must make sure that there are sufficient short breaks available for young people.



What should the government do?

The government must make sure that there is enough money for direct payments in each local authority, so that all those young people who are eligible can receive them.



It is important that transition happens according to the young person's needs not their age.



The government must review the link between benefits and employment. Benefits **should not stop** as soon as a young person gets a job, but the government should wait until they become financially stable.



What should the government do?

It is very important that housing options are included in the transition planning. Families need information and support to make this big change for their children.



It is very important that the government makes transition as smooth as possible. Children and adult services should **overlap** so transition doesn't become a traumatic experience for young people.



It is important that the role of families in transition is acknowledged and celebrated.



What should the government do?

It is important that all young people, even those with more severe disabilities, are encouraged to live independent lives. With the right support **all young people** can achieve this.



It is important that young people access mainstream provision as much as possible instead of specialised services. This helps them become part of society and prevents them from being socially **excluded**.



It is very important that each local authority establishes a **register** of children with disabilities. This way all children can be tracked, and it makes sure that they don't 'fall through the net' at transition.



What should the government do?

This information should be shared between all agencies involved at transition.



Contact with a young person must be kept up until the age of 25, or over if it is needed.

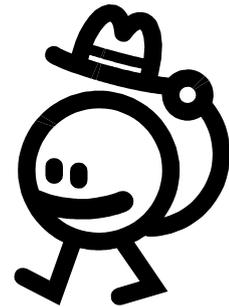


9. Transition at Dimensions

Dimensions supports people with learning difficulties.



We respect every person, and want every person to live the life they want.



Our values are at the heart of everything we do.



Transition at Dimensions

We see people with learning difficulties as people first.



We respect the culture and beliefs of every person we support.



We listen carefully.

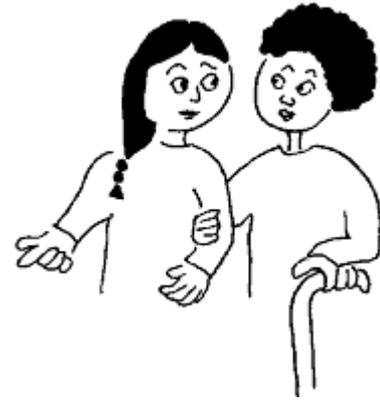


We value everyone's contribution.



Transition at Dimensions

We work closely with every person to make a difference in their lives.



We learn and we improve.



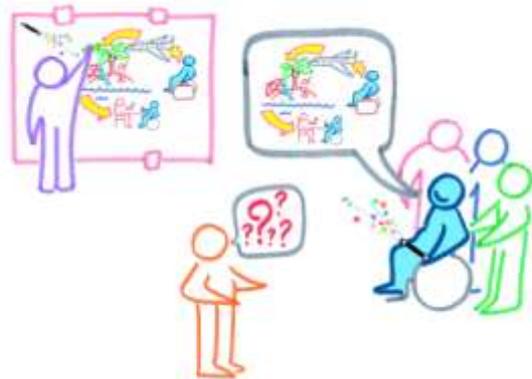
We provide support over 1,200 adults and young people with a learning difficulty.



We have found that many organisations talk about transition but not all of them do it. We at Dimensions have decided **to make a difference.**



Our aim is to deliver more and more support packages that are person centred and focus on each individual young person.



We believe that early planning is central to successful transition.



We work closely with local authorities to find out how many young people will need help during transition.



We help young people to access education and employment. We also help young people with their housing options, which not many other providers do.



We provide all the different support types which we mentioned in chapter 7.

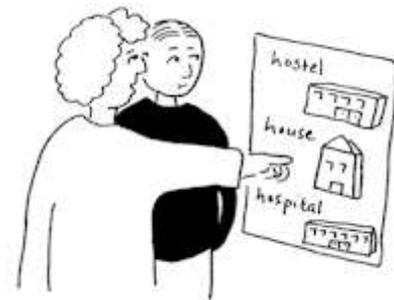


Transition at Dimensions

At Dimensions the young person and their circle of support chooses the level of support and number of hours they need.



This support can be provided in the family home or in an independent living environment.



Dimensions also support young people at college, work and leisure.



Dimensions also provide support for young people with a disability aged 14-16 after school or during school holidays.



This way we can start the planning process for the young people early.



At Dimensions we work very hard to design our services. We work hard to gain the trust of all the agencies who participate in transition.



Transition at Dimensions

At Dimensions we build close relationships with families who often tell other families about our services.



Supporting children and supporting adults are two very different things. Because of this, it is very important that we have specialised skills to work with children at transition.



We have found that it is vital that we employ a specific worker who only focuses on transition, the young people and their families.



We at Dimensions understand transition as providing young people with **life** rather than services.



Transition is often used as a word to describe the movement between services.



But it is important to understand that transition is about precious human lives, about young people growing up and enjoying life to the full.



10. Conclusion

There are a lot of good examples of transition across the country but many young people and parents find transition stressful.



Many young people and parents don't understand what transition is, and what they should do.



Everybody who works with young people with a disability should use person centred planning. Sadly, this is not always the case.



Conclusion

Young people with a disability find it difficult to get a job.



They also find it difficult to find a place to live.



Friendships and leisure are very important for young people with a disability. Sadly, these are not always in their Transition Plans.



Conclusion

It is important to understand that life for young people with a disability doesn't stop when they turn 18, and they move from children's to adult services.



Transition Plans should become life plans which think about the young person's whole life.



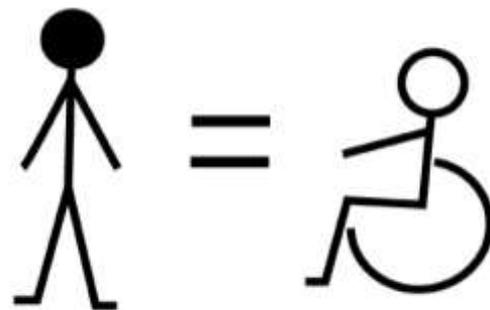
Transition should be simple.



It should bring together professionals who listen to what young people want.



Young people with a disability want the same things as any other young person their age.



They want to do normal things. They want to be listened to, go shopping, go to the cinema, do sports, have money and have their own home.



Conclusion

Keyworkers or Transition Workers are very important for young people and their families. Their job is to bring together all the different agencies, and to make life as easy as possible for young people and their families.



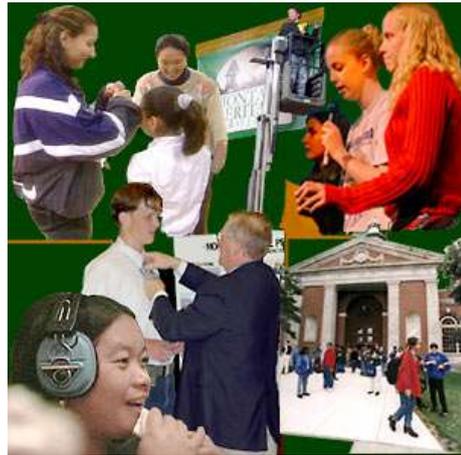
Direct payments have completely changed the way young people receive help.



Young people look at their families, friends and neighbours for help.



Young people want to become part of the community, and because of this they want to work with community organisations.



It is important to understand that with the right help, **all young people**, even those with more complex needs are able to live independently and reach their dreams.

