

# Education Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee

## ELLS(2)-15-06 (p3-Annex A)

### Special Educational Needs Policy Review Part 3: Transition

#### Consultation Questionnaire

##### ‘Transitions in Action’ group response

‘Transitions in Action’ is made up of organisations who work with or for young disabled people in Wales. Our members include Children in Wales, the National Autistic Society Cymru, Skill Wales: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, SNAP Cymru, Caerphilly Children's Centre, Barnardos, Disability Wales, Disability Rights Commission, CLIMB, Promoting Independence Project (Caerphilly), CCNUK, Contact a Family Wales, NCH Pembrokeshire Children’s Centre, RNIB Cymru.

The group is looking at transition practice from 14 to 25 years of age.

The aims of the group are:-

- To identify areas of good practice across social services, health, education and the voluntary sector
- To identify why the transitions process is not working for some disabled young people
- To highlight what minimum standards should be in place to aid transition
- To bring about positive outcomes in terms of awareness and focus on good practice at a local level

#### Question 5 – Transition

What do you consider the main concerns are with regard to this transition?

A lack of co-ordination between agencies is causing failure to implement transition plans effectively. Transition plans often get made and then go nowhere. There needs to be a specific transitions key-worker for each young person in order to act as a connection between agencies in order to facilitate information-sharing and to ensure that what is laid out in the transition plan is actually implemented. The NSF for Children, Young People and Maternity Services states that ‘all young people should have a transitions key-worker appointed at the age of 14, who co-ordinate the planning and delivery of services before, during and after the process of transition and will continue to monitor and have

contact with the young person until the age of 25 years' (NSF 2005: Action 5.33). The group feels that this action is extremely important and work should be done as a priority to ensure this action becomes reality for young disabled people in Wales. – The group also feels that the key worker should be a professional with knowledge of their child's disability (and preferably not the parent of the young person, which isn't always the ideal situation as the views of young people and their parents can be different. In addition, parents often want someone to help support in a facilitative role, as they don't have the time or skills to do this).

A lack of person-centred planning – The process is often based on what funding is known to be available rather than the wishes of the individual young person. Person centred planning has been recognised by the Cabinet Office document, 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' (see point 6.4 2005:41) as a key element of support for disabled people. The group believes that the Welsh Assembly Government needs to formally adopt the notion of person centred planning and initiate work to promote the implementation of person centred planning at transition

A lack of knowledge – Often the professionals involved in the transitions process don't have sufficient knowledge and training to advise the young people fully on their options and to guide them through the process successfully.

Low expectations – Professionals involved in the transitions process often have low expectations for the young people. Young people need access to role models who have been through the transitions process in order to know what options are available to them. The group feel that if young people don't know what is possible and how they don't know what can aim for. There needs to be a 'Reaching Higher'-type of strategy for young disabled people to enable them to meet their individual potential.

A lack of support for the parents. Parents are often not given enough information on the transitions process – information is often not filtered down, even when requested by the parents. Parents are often affected financially by the transitions process, due to changes in the benefits received by the family, and due to the fact that they may have been out of the workplace for some time to care for their child. Support needs to be available at this time.

A lack of inclusion of the young person in the transition process – Often the young person needs support in order to participate fully in the process. Sometimes the young person will not be able to use verbal communication in order to express their wishes, so professionals need to be creative in order to discover what they want, rather than decide for them. The young person needs to understand the process and why it is so important, this takes time and needs to be fully participative

## **Question 6 – Employment Opportunities**

What do you consider the main barriers or problems are concerning employment opportunities?

### **For employees/students:**

It is difficult for young disabled people to gain access to appropriate, high quality work tasters and

work placements. There are not enough supported employment opportunities for young people with complex needs.

Whilst in theory the group supports the key principles of Learning Pathways, in reality it seems that this is not doing enough for young disabled people. In particular, job coaches can be very difficult for young people to access (and when they do they need to have sufficient understanding of the young person's needs to support them). The group have examples of when supported employment agencies have raised expectations and then as there is no job coach this as resulted in the expectations not being able to be met.

Transport can often be an issue as work placements can often be a distance from the young person's home, causing long transport times which often lead to placements breaking down. This is especially a problem in rural areas.

Financial concerns – young people can often be discouraged from entering employment by the threat that their benefits may be taken away from them.

Current processes and forms e.g. those provided by Jobcentre plus, can be unnecessarily complicated and not appropriately accessible for the young person.

Insufficient awareness of disability issues amongst Disability Employment Advisors

There are also issues with young people not being made aware of schemes such as access to work. Clarification around time scales for application is also important. This lack of awareness can restrict young people's options and opportunities.

### **For employers:**

Employers need a key contact with which they can share information about how they can best support the young person in order to prevent the placement breaking down (e.g. supported employment advisors who understand the person's needs and who can provide ad hoc occasional support when the young person is in employment).

Employers need support in order to overcome problems with access to the workplace – physical and otherwise (this should also include awareness raising about hidden disabilities such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder).

Access to financial support for employers could perhaps help them to make necessary adjustments to improve their ability to employ young disabled people.

Employers need better awareness of the DDA, Access to Work etc.

## **Q.7 Languages of Wales**

What do you think are the main issues about the provision of services in languages other than English, concerning the transition from secondary education?

Young people and their families/carers need access to information and support in their preferred languages. There is a lack of information and support through in minority languages.

The method of communication needs to be what's most suitable for the young person whether this be British Sign Language, Makaton, PECS, TEAACH, communication board etc.

## **Q.8 Transition Plan**

What do you think are the three main issues or concerns?

Transition planning isn't as multi-disciplinary as it should be. See key action 5.32 in the NSF for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (2005) and the recommendations in 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' (2005)

There is a lack of understanding as to what the transition plan actually means. Information needs to be filtered down. The process needs to be explained to the young people involved.

Agencies such as colleges, day services etc need to become involved in the transition process before the young person leaves school.

**For further information about our comments or the work of the transitions in action group, please contact the Chair, Liz Withers at the National Autistic Society Cymru:**

**e-mail: [liz.withers@nas.org.uk](mailto:liz.withers@nas.org.uk)**

**telephone: 02920 629316**