

# Information and learning from the Aiming High for Disabled Children Transition Support Programme

National Transition Support Team

Council for Disabled Children

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## A note on language

For ease of reading, we use the term 'SEND' throughout this report to refer to children and young people who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and/or complex health needs.

We use the term 'local areas' to mean education, local authority and health agencies with a statutory responsibility for supporting disabled young people in transition.

# Contents

Executive summary .....	3
Introduction .....	7
Section 1: Multi-agency engagement: strategic joint planning and operational systems .....	10
Section 2: Participation by young people and their families .....	20
Section 3: Personalised approaches.....	24
Section 4 Assessments .....	29
Section 5: Opportunity and choice for living life post 16.....	34
Section 6: Learning from TSP .....	42
Section 7: Conclusion .....	44
Resources .....	48

# Executive summary

This summary draws together the key points made in the *Information and learning from the Aiming High for Disabled Children Transition Support Programme* report. The report was written by the Council for Disabled Children in order to summarise and reflect on the experience from the Transition Support Programme (TSP). The report focuses on learning from success and identifying key principles and actions supporting positive change for children, young people and families.

The TSP identified five focus areas as a basis for local activity in addressing the challenges of providing transition support. The five focus areas were:

1. Strategic joint partnership working
2. Participation of disabled young people and their families
3. Effectiveness of personalised approaches
4. Joint assessment processes within children's trusts and with adult services
5. Realistic post-16 opportunities for living life

In this summary we draw together the key points from each focus area. For links to a range of resources that were developed throughout the programme please visit the Council for Disabled Children's website here: [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk).

## 1. Strategic joint partnership working

Strategic-level agreement and planning is essential to success. It gives individuals working at operational level the authority they need to make changes and secures the attention of managers who make decisions affecting a number of different agencies and operational teams and brings a different range of skills and experience to the table.

Agreements about how agencies will work together to support disabled young people and their families are set out in multi-agency transition protocols.

An effective multi-agency steering group or board developing and implementing protocols and pathways keeps momentum going and supports operational staff.

### *Key learning points*

- Multi-agency change at operational level is more likely to occur with strategic-level commitment and engagement.
- Designated leadership, time and capacity to maintain a focus on transition and workforce development are essential elements in service improvement.
- Multi-agency protocols and pathways are critical stepping stones to progress, but not ends in themselves.
- The development of better experiences of transition for young people and their families is a multi-agency enterprise and must involve services that are provided for adults.

- The role of key worker for some young people moving through transition should be better understood and promoted.

## 2. Participation of disabled young people and their families

Disabled young people should be supported to participate in the transition process in whichever way they feel comfortable.

The information returned by local areas presented a positive but varied picture of increasing participation. Increased participation by families in shaping transition services is linked to the development of parent and carer forums supported by the AHDC programme.

### *Key learning points*

- Participation by young people and families in shaping transition services results in the provision of more appropriate services.
- Increased participation by families in shaping transition services is most successful when it is part of a wider participation strategy.
- The TSP successfully highlighted the importance of participation by young people and their families in Year 9 reviews, particularly in mainstream schools.

## 3. Effectiveness of personalised approaches

Person-centred approaches put young people at the centre of planning and review processes and encourage them to retain control over the transition process and feel ownership of their transition plan. Young people are asked to say what's important to them and explore the support they'll need to achieve their objectives.

Advocacy can support participation by young people in decision-making about their future and ensures young people's views are heard, while maintaining family involvement. Advocates help young people to get their views across to other people, enabling them to have more choice and control.

Individual Budgets can provide more joined-up support for young people in transition and their families, as well as more choice and control over support received.

### *Key learning points*

- Person-centred planning brings a shift in culture and significant changes to working practices.
- A local workforce development strategy is required to support the systematic introduction and use of person-centred approaches across schools, children's services and adult services.
- The introduction of person-centred approaches in mainstream secondary schools should be monitored and linked to broader consideration of Team

Around the Child and Family approaches and 'structured conversations' with families.

- Quality assurance measures should concentrate on how person-centred approaches improve the lives of young people and their families.
- Working together to improve the quality of information available to young people and their families is a powerful expression of participation in action.
- Feedback from people who are going to use information improves the quality and appropriateness of any material being developed.
- Young people with the most complex learning difficulties or support needs require specialist information, advice and guidance that is beyond the scope of universal services.

## 4. Joint assessment processes within children's trusts and with adult services

As young people reach adulthood, they are assessed at different times for different purposes. There may be assessments for support from adult social care or adult health services and to ascertain support needed to access further or higher education. Local areas are working to create joint assessment processes to reduce the number of assessments young people and families experience.

Some local areas used the opportunity of the TSP to focus on the development of an integrated assessment framework.

Nearly all local areas reported that information, advice and guidance (IAG) advisers or Connexions personal advisers (PAs) attend Year 9 reviews; 80% indicated that these professionals take on the role of lead professional, fulfilling the requirement in the SEN Code of Practice for Connexions PAs to co-ordinate planning.

### *Key learning points*

- Better data shared by children's and adult services is essential to forward planning, quality assurance and efficient commissioning.
- The particular issue for transition is how practice with younger children and families in schools and use of the SEN Code of Practice relate to person-centred approaches.
- The broader challenge is to develop the use of health action plans as an integral part of a single, multi-agency transition planning process.

## 5. Realistic post-16 opportunities for living life

The transition of young people into adult life is not only about leaving school – it involves supporting young people aged 16-25 in many different aspects of life. In addition to continuing education and moving into employment, young people may need support around housing, transport, and developing a social life.

Disabled young people may need specialist information, advice and guidance in thinking about options after school.

There is a lack of local post 16 education and training provision available to disabled young people. This particularly impacts on young people with more complex needs for whom the only suitable provision is often far from their home and so means they lose contact with friends and their local communities.

Many local areas focused on developing employment opportunities for disabled young people and found that one of the first steps is to challenge expectations.

### *Key learning points*

- A coherent workforce development strategy for IAG professionals is required ensuring a consistently high standard of practice across IAG provider services.
- Group or peer support arrangements enable the sharing of specialist knowledge and expertise across groups of IAG professionals.
- Quality assurance systems for Connexions and other IAG services are most effective when they focus on the experience of young people and families.
- Effective transition relies on tracking young people after they leave school, particularly as they move on from their first college placement or training.
- Transport and housing are often essential elements in achieving a successful transition into adult life.
- Opportunities for employment and work experience sometimes improve when expectations are challenged.
- Where employment, education or training are not appropriate, aspirations for young people, and the link between transition planning and Short Break services is critical to making leisure services more accessible.
- Appropriate and timely support cannot be provided for young people if data systems cannot identify young people who are not on the social care register but are in need of help.

Further information about the programme, and a wide range of resources, case studies and how to guides can be viewed on the Transition Information Network's website: [www.transitioninforonetwork.org.uk](http://www.transitioninforonetwork.org.uk).

# Introduction

*'All disabled young people need access to sufficient information and support to ensure they reach their goals when transferring from child to adult services, enabling them to remain safe, grow up, live the lives they want to live, and play a full and active role in society.'*

**Aiming High for Disabled Children: better support for families, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007**

The Transition Support Programme (TSP) was a three-year national programme initiated to support service improvement at strategic and operational levels across England. The programme involved work with specialist and universal services across health, education and social care and with voluntary sector agencies to raise awareness of and embed minimum standards of service provision and encourage good practice, thereby improving the experience of transition into adult life for young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

The programme built on existing good practice and the previous activity of the Transition Information Network and many other individuals and agencies. The TSP was part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) programme, which in 2007-11 expanded Short Break and Childcare provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, focused on palliative care and encouraged the development of parent and carer forums.

The TSP provided ring-fenced funding and support from TSP Named Advisers, working for National Strategies, the Child Health and Maternity Partnership and the National Transition Support Team (NTST). Every local area was to formulate a development plan for transition and identify a TSP Local Area Lead, who would exchange experience with other Leads via regional support networks.

The TSP was co-ordinated by the NTST, based at the Council for Disabled Children, for the Department for Education and the Department of Health as part of the AHDC programme.

This report summarises and reflects on experience from the TSP. It focuses on learning from success and identifying key principles and actions supporting positive change for children, young people and families.

## Why TSP was needed

*'... the support that young disabled people receive is variable. Services struggle to provide information at the right time, co-ordinate their responses ... and provide appropriate support to young people and their families'*

**Aiming High for Disabled Children**



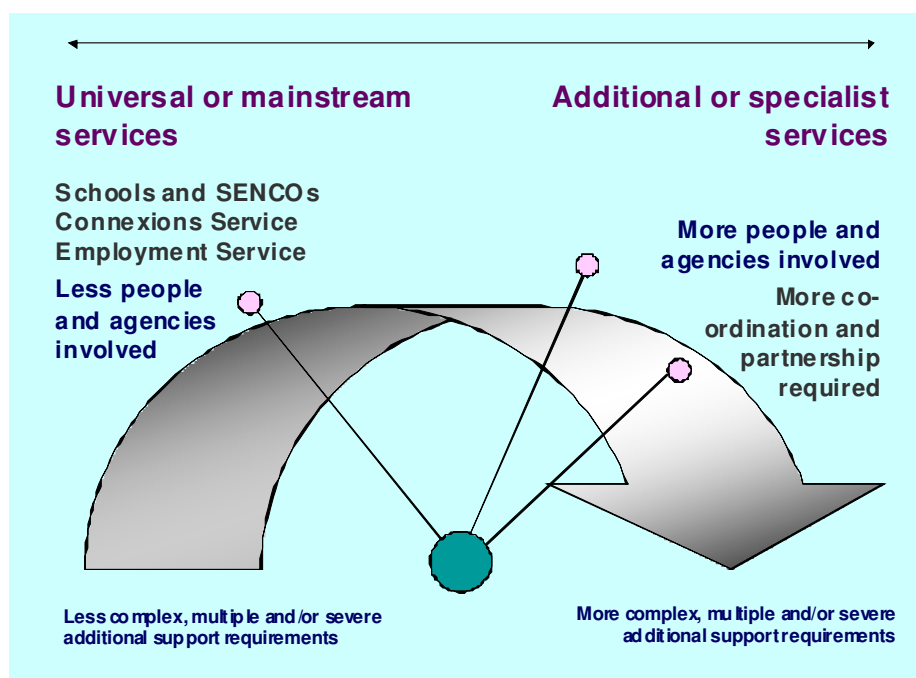
In this context, 'transition' means the transition to adult life that disabled young people make from the time they leave school or college – a process that characteristically extends over a number of years and involves consolidating identity, achieving independence, establishing adult relationships and finding meaningful occupation. For many families with disabled young people, transition can be a time of particular anxiety and concern. *Aiming High for Disabled Children*, published in 2007, described transition as a time when disabled young people may have few options and become more isolated, and families may experience a drop in levels of support.

Discussion and service development in this area often focuses on young people with the most severe learning difficulties and most complex support needs. But other disabled young people also need co-ordinated support through Transition – a point highlighted by one of the people interviewed for this report:

*'We're moving away from the idea that a transition Service is about getting young people with intensive packages of care into Adult Social Care Services. We're trying to increase the capacity of universal and targeted services to support young people, rather than assuming that children with complex needs will pass directly into specialist services used by adults.'*

**Local Area Assistant Director**

All young people need help and advice when they leave school and move on to further or higher education, training or employment. The more support a young person needs, the greater the number of agencies and people likely to be involved and the more assessments likely to be required. The provision of lead professional or key worker support to help co-ordinate planning and activity becomes more important in proportion to the number of people and processes involved. This reality can be represented as a continuum, with the lines cutting across the curve from left to right representing assessment processes and eligibility criteria that are gateways to particular additional support services.



The transition of young people into adult life is not only about leaving school – it involves supporting young people aged 16-25 in many different aspects of life. Some young people need help with housing, transport, welfare benefits or developing a social life in addition to education and training. The more complex a young person's support needs, the more important it is that support agencies focus on the bigger picture and think about a young person's likely support needs several years down the line.

*'Transition isn't just about what goes on in schools or in children's services or in adult services. Managers need to ... see the whole picture from a young person's perspective. They don't just fit into a social care box or a health box or a leisure centre box. They have a life that needs lots of different components to make it work.'*

### **TSP Named Adviser**

The TSP identified five focus areas as a basis for local activity in addressing some of the challenges of providing transition support:

- Strategic **joint partnership** working
- **Participation** of disabled young people and their families
- Effectiveness of **personalised approaches**
- **Joint assessment** processes within children's trusts and with adult services
- Realistic **post-16 opportunities** for living life.

The focus areas built on the aims of AHDC and reflected recurring challenges to service improvement.

When the TSP commenced in November 2008, local areas were asked to review their transition service for young people with special educational needs and disabilities, using a detailed self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) in 2008, 2009 and 2010 (TSP SAQ 1, 2 and 3)<sup>1</sup>. In Year 2 of TSP, 151 out of a possible 152 local areas completed and returned SAQs. In Year 3, completed the SAQ,

This report draws heavily on TSP SAQ material, which provides a detailed picture of activity in local areas over the last three years.

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<sup>1</sup> TSP Self Assessments [http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/resources/self\\_assessment.aspx](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/resources/self_assessment.aspx)

# Section 1: Multi-agency engagement: strategic joint planning and operational systems

*'There has to be a multi-agency strategy, supported by lead members, the Children's Trust Board and senior managers. In my experience, local areas that can't unblock the system are often also those that don't understand the power of a good strategic approach.'*

**TSP Named Adviser**

Strategic-level agreement and planning is essential to success. It lends issues importance and gives individuals working at operational level the authority they need to make changes. It also secures the attention of managers who make decisions affecting a number of different agencies and operational teams and brings a different range of skills and experience to the table.

*Multi-agency working at strategic level to support the development of better services was a central theme of the TSP. Local areas responded by investing heavily in this aspect of work. One positive result of this focus was raised awareness of statutory duties and good practice guidance on service standards. In Year 3 of the TSP, 97% of local areas said they had a strategic planning group for transition and 96% reported meeting all statutory requirements associated with transition, compared with only 54% in Year 1. The nature and scale of the work involved is indicated by case studies on the TSP website<sup>2</sup> ([www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk)), for example:*

*'Nottingham City Council set up a multi-agency transition team ... to bring together current resources to support transition ... to reduce duplication and effect better outcomes for young people by achieving better case co-ordination. The experience of ... the multi-agency team has been that:*

- *a multi-agency steering group works at strategic and operational level and is needed to co-ordinate resources and services and drive change*
- *a transition co-ordinator/manager post helps the smooth running of services*
- *a co-located service creates opportunities for joint working and improves communication – for example, it makes it easier to establish person-centred approaches across agencies*
- *there are advantages to bringing information about young people together in one place – services now have a much better picture of the young*

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<sup>2</sup> [www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk)

*people coming through and better quality of information informs more timely and cost effective commissioning.'*

**Extract from the Nottingham City Council multi-agency working case study on the TSP website<sup>3</sup>.**

## Multi-agency transition protocols

*'A multi-agency transition protocol is a strategic document to which senior managers and council officials have signed up and which details the roles and responsibilities of all agencies in the transition process. It is developed with a range of professionals so that each agency feels an ownership for the part they play. The full involvement of young people and their families is key to ensuring that the protocol is effective.'*

**TSP Named Adviser**

The TSP was successful in encouraging local areas to develop the multi-agency protocols, as shown in the following table.

<b>Is there a multi-agency transition protocol in place that covers the roles and responsibilities of all agencies involved?</b>	<b>SAQ 1 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	73	49.7 %	108	71.5 %	117	81.3 %
In development	69	46.9 %	42	27.8 %	27	18.8 %
Not started	5	3.4%	1	0.7%	0	0.0%

The complexity of achieving progress at strategic level and the importance of involving service users alongside professional agencies is indicated by the following table. There was an increase in representation from all agencies from SAQ 2 to SAQ 3.

<b>The following senior managers and lead members have signed up to the protocol and have a responsibility to deliver</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Children's Social Care	142	94.0%	144	100.0 %
Adult Social Care	142	94.0%	144	100.0 %
Inclusion/school improvement	107	70.9%	118	81.9%
Connexions/IAG services	135	89.4%	143	99.3%
PCT Commissioning / NHS Providers*	125	82.8%	99	68.8%

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CSNottinghamCity.pdf>

Learning and Skills Council / YPLA*	71	47.0%	51	35.4%
SEN Department	136	90.1%	144	100.0%
Lead member for Adult Social Care	82	54.3%	99	68.8%
Youth services	96	63.6%	115	79.9%
Housing	81	53.6%	99	68.8%
Supported Employment	70	46.4%	95	66.0%
Local Colleges	81	53.6%	96	66.7%
Training providers	36	23.8%	48	33.3%
Lead member for children's services	93	61.6%	109	75.7%

\*Government policy change meant that the terms used in the SAQs changed, which led to variance across SAQs.

The importance and positive impact of involving young people and parents/carers in strategic level planning and in the development of transition protocols was consistently highlighted in interviews:

*'The high level of parent involvement has been an important factor driving things forward ... Three years ago we didn't have parents or young people sitting on anything. We now have parent reps on the Transition Group and on our Strategic SEN and Disability Group. Having them there has developed transparency around the things we're doing on many levels, because you're held to account.'*

**Local area TSP Lead**

Professionals have learned how to develop multi-agency transition protocols and reach agreement at strategic level, for example:

*'One area developed a brilliant protocol, but they couldn't get anyone to sign up to it. In the end, we took out the few really contentious elements and put them in an appendix ... with a note saying, "We would also like to work towards the following things." Everybody was then able to sign up to the essential things and since that time they've knocked off seven of the ten contentious items ... It's not realistic to ask people to sign up to something they know they can't deliver.'*

**TSP Named Adviser**

*'Sometimes it helps to think about a strategy rather than a protocol. You start by agreeing a joint vision and then ask all the people involved, including housing and transport, to go away and write down how they can contribute to achieving that vision. This ... may take a long time because it requires people to think about how they might contribute to this joint piece of work, rather than the way they currently deliver services. But it will eventually deliver a strategy on which a more formal protocol can then be built.'*

### **Local area TSP and AHDC Lead**

A case study from East Sussex<sup>4</sup> addresses a number of issues in relation to the transition process that were impacting on their ability to ensure positive outcomes for young people, and sets out the pathway that was followed to establish a 16 to 25 Transition Service.

Many areas formally launched their protocol and pathway documents as a celebration of the work involved and as a commitment to using them as working documents in future. Most set a review date for checking outcomes and to give a focus for further joint working for agencies offering specialist or universal support to families and young people.

The exercise of bringing together a group, setting out what could realistically be delivered by each agency, all agencies hearing from and working with young people and families about their priorities made an impact on future working relationships, communication and transparency in service planning and provision. An effective multi-agency steering group or board developing and implementing protocols and pathways is critical to success – it can keep momentum going and support operational staff:

*'It's important that ... senior managers... form some sort of multi-agency board or steering group. It's about taking transition seriously and driving a development plan that identifies exactly what's going to be developed. Boards or steering groups feature in all the places I can think of that are doing really well and if I think about ... areas that ... could have done better I think not having such a group has been ... holding them back.'*

### **TSP Named Adviser**

The development of multi-agency strategic planning groups across the life of the TSP is shown in the following table.

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<sup>4</sup> Case Study: East Sussex

[http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CEastSussex\\_Transitionservice.pdf](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CEastSussex_Transitionservice.pdf)

<b>Is there a strategic transition planning group that links to the Children and Young People's Strategic Planning Board and the Children's Trust?</b>	<b>SAQ 1 Local Areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local Areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local Areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	94	63.9%	137	90.7%	139	97%
In development	45	30.6%	14	9.3%	5	3%
No	8	5.5%	0	0%	0	0%

The TSP highlighted the importance of local leadership in achieving multi-agency service change through the work of the TSP named advisers.

*'Many people working at operational level don't have the ... power to bring about change and that saps momentum. Leadership is key. Transition leads must have the power and authority to work across services and agencies and the vision and energy to take other people with them.'*

**Group discussion, TSP Named Advisers**

Ring-fenced funding gave local TSP leads more time and capacity to focus on planning and leadership. Even where funding was modest, it nevertheless underlined the importance of giving named individuals a remit to improve services.

## Transition teams

A key area of learning and development was the development of transition teams, as shown in the following table.

<b>Are there formal management arrangements in place that support these professionals to work as a transition team?</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	71	47.3%	85	59.0%
In development	55	36.7%	42	29.2%
No	24	16.0%	17	11.8%

Figures in the tables above mask very different stages of service development and a wide range of thinking about how best to structure joint working arrangements. Some areas developed a discrete, co-located team, others operate on a 'virtual team' basis, and others are in the early stages of bringing about change. TSP evidence shows that change can be achieved in many different ways and using more than one model of service provision, as the following comments:

*'The Transitions Team sits within Adult Social Care. The Children, Families and Learning budget funded the staff... there is a multi-agency Transition Steering Group chaired by the Head of Service for Adult Social Care Services and attended by an Assistant Director and Service Manager from the Children's service. This meets monthly to ensure the Transition Service is delivered according to required standards ... Key partners in health link in via the integrated Health and Social Care team.'*

### **SAQ 2 Local Area**

*'Each professional continues to work in their own organisation/service but their responsibilities as part of the virtual transition team are laid out in the transition planning model. Professionals meet three times a year ... and senior managers meet three times a year for a planning meeting where lead professionals and ... Team Around the Child arrangements for individual young people are agreed.'*

### **SAQ 2 Local Area**

Identifying a number of people working in different places who are involved with different aspects of transition does not, of itself, make a team. Work from across the TSP shows that transition teams operate successfully on a 'virtual' basis if they:

- agree and use common practices and language
- meet face to face periodically
- train together
- exchange information regularly
- ensure that everyone understands and 'owns' shared service delivery targets and policies.

Further information on joint working across children and adult social care and partner agencies can be found on the Transition Support Programme website<sup>5</sup> and the Commissioning Support Programme website<sup>6</sup>.

## Key working or lead professional arrangements

*'Co-ordination of transition care is critical and ... a transition/support worker should be identified for each young person to oversee their transition, ensuring links with a counterpart within the receiving adult service.'*

**Better care, better lives: improving outcomes and experiences for children, young people and their families living with life-limited and life-threatening conditions. DH guidance<sup>7</sup>**

The TSP set out to promote improved access to advisers or key workers, and advocacy for disabled young people. Key working was part of the TSP

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/resources/toolkits.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.commissioningsupport.org.uk/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://palliativecarefunding.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Better-Care-Better-Lives.pdf>



participation focus area because the engagement of individual young people in planning for their own lives was poor. TSP self-assessment questionnaire returns indicate positive development in this area.

<b>Do disabled young people have access to a key worker or lead professional during the transition process?</b>	<b>SAQ 1 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
All	49	33%	85	56.3%	84	58.3%
Some	97	66%	65	43.0%	60	41.7%
None	1	1%	1	0.7%	0	0%

The SAQs reveal considerable variation in understanding of the importance and nature of lead professional and key worker activity. Some responses highlight the difficulties in developing this work:

*'This is a role which professionals can be reluctant to take on because of the additional work it brings with it. In the revision of our Transition Protocol, we need to make a realistic appraisal of the capacity to offer key working so that what is offered is actual rather than aspirational.'*

**SAQ 2 Local area**

*'Most families with young people going through transition would like a key worker. That was a message coming through loud and clear at a recent consultation meeting. Quite how we set that up, building on what we already have in place, has yet to be debated.'*

**Local area TSP and AHDC Lead**

In contrast, some areas already have this kind of support in place:

*'...key worker arrangements apply to all children and young people, including those making the transition to adult life. A lead professional is identified where there are two or more practitioners involved in supporting a young person ... The aim is that the majority of practitioners working with young people will ... act as a lead professional for a young person ... the coordinator of services and the single point of contact. We are considering the need to prepare a particular specification of the expectations of a key worker ... to ensure ... issues related to transition are clear.'*

**SAQ 2 Local area**

Some SAQ responses indicate positive action by a single service or agency:

*'... a number of physiotherapists and occupational therapists from adults and children's services act as lead professionals. They provide direct support to families and signpost them to other services.'*

### **SAQ 2 Local area**

TSP experience suggests the interface between information, advice and guidance and key working needs careful consideration. Information, advice and guidance (IAG) personal advisers (PAs) or Connexions PAs often operate as lead professionals, particularly for children and young people who do not receive support from social care services. The provision of IAG is an essential part of key working, but other functions (such as co-ordinating assessments and planning meetings that involve a multi-agency groups of professionals) are equally important. In some local areas, provision reflecting this is already in place:

*'Usually a Connexions PA is the person who supports a young person ...If problems arise or a person has very complex needs, the young person may be offered more intensive support by someone employed by a voluntary organisation commissioned by Connexions and the Children's Service to provide a key worker service.'*

### **SAQ 2 Local Area**

Better use of key working is a powerful way to get everyone to consider how they might contribute effectively to co-ordinated service provision:

*'A key part of the operation of a 'virtual' team is a shared understanding of lead professional or key worker functions. Local areas that have a virtual team and regular joint information sharing and training sessions are the ones ... most likely to sustain good work on transition. They understand that the role of lead professional is to co-ordinate activity and be the first point of contact, and they understand that it's these functions that will make a difference, whether they're Connexions personal advisers, social care workers, teachers or therapists.'*

### **TSP Named Adviser**

## **Training**

There are particular training imperatives associated with service improvement in the area of transition. These include:

- increasing the capacity of personnel working in a range of universal services to meet the needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities
- supporting some Connexions PAs or IAG advisers to develop specialist knowledge so they can support young people with disabilities and their families
- extending the use of person-centred approaches in the development of strategic management, transition plans and support plans
- ensuring everyone understands and implements the transition protocol and pathways in their area.

In 78% of SAQ returns for Year 2, local areas reported that they provided shared training for everyone involved in their transition team: 142 out of a possible 151 areas reported training professionals on disability equality, 139 on communication skills and 121 on person-centred planning.

Some local areas provided training for IAG advisers specialising in providing a service for young people with special educational needs and disabilities:

*'Our specialist personal advisers have attended a three-day accredited course in working with disabled young people... On successful completion of this course ... advisers should be able to: recognise barriers and solutions in professional practice; appreciate the impact of ... legislation on professional practice; recognise the ... importance of ... a social model of disability; analyse any services provided to disabled young people by a specific organisation ...recognise the benefits of accessibility and support.'*

#### **SAQ 2 Local Area**

Where IAG advisers act as lead professional, interviewees emphasised that they must receive training about the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), and lead professional or key worker functions and practice.

Joint training sessions are seen as a way to embed understanding of multi-agency protocols, establish new working practices and understand how to work together more effectively, resonating with the Kennedy Review:

*'Training together breaks down ... professional isolationism. It ... fosters an understanding of one another's roles and responsibilities. And it sets the basis for a more holistic approach to the care of children and young people.'*

#### **Getting it right for children and young people: overcoming cultural barriers in the NHS, Department of Health, 2010**

The other major focus for workforce development through the TSP has been person-centred approaches (see Section 3).

*'We run development days and networking events on ... person-centred transition planning and support discussion about associated resource and capacity issues. Introduction days give professionals and families a taster for person-centred processes and tools. We have used some of our TSP funding to provide support for ... schools developing their review and planning process... and provide some coaching and supervision. In-house trainers ... can offer whole school or 1:1 training.'*

#### **SAQ 2 Local Area**

## Summary

- Multi-agency change at operational level is more likely to occur with strategic-level commitment and engagement.
- Designated leadership, time and capacity to maintain a focus on transition and workforce development are essential elements in service improvement.
- Multi-agency protocols and pathways are critical stepping stones to progress, but not ends in themselves.
- The development of better experiences of transition for young people and their families is a multi-agency enterprise and must involve services that are provided for adults.
- The role of key worker for some young people moving through transition should be better understood and promoted.

# Section 2: Participation by young people and their families

*'The young person is the most important person in the transition planning process and therefore should be encouraged to participate in whichever way they feel comfortable. For the transition process to be truly person centred, young people must have access to information that helps them understand what happens at transition, how to participate in the planning process and how to make informed decisions about their future.'*

## **TSP Transition Planning and Development Tool**

The TSP has actively encouraged increased participation by young people and their families in the shaping of services.

## **Consultation with young people and their families, and participation by service users in the shaping of services**

*'Areas that have done really well have kept a focus on young people and their families and they're working in partnership with them. For example, one area has two young people working with them on transition as paid consultants. They're both severely disabled ... very articulate and able to bridge the gap ... into strategic work. The same area has done loads of work with parents' groups and employ parents and carers in various roles. The key thing is that they haven't only done this at operational level. They've run it right through their structure ... development work is grounded in what life's really like for children, young people and families.'*

## **TSP Named Adviser**

TSP self-assessment questionnaires (SAQs) asked whether young people and their families were involved in the ongoing development and review of multi-agency transition protocols, and for examples of how they are involved. The information returned by local areas presents a positive but varied picture of increasing participation: in year two 90 out of a possible 151 areas reported that young people and families were involved in the development and review of their transition protocol. Every other area described work as being 'in development'.

Predictably, local areas are developing participation at different rates and from different starting points. However, they are all developing practice in tandem with an expansion of Short Break provision, as part of the AHDC programme.

*'A group of disabled young people aged 16-25 who meet together at a community centre are involved in the development of the protocol and also act as advocates for other disabled young people ... going through transition. ..The group has now been commissioned to look at supported housing options for young people passing through transition.'*

**Local Area SAQ 2**

Increased participation by families in shaping transition services is linked to the development of parent and carer forums supported by the AHDC programme. However, while some areas are struggling to increase participation, others are building on established practice. For example:

*'The Transitions Strategy Group, which has responsibility for writing and reviewing the Transitions Protocol, has family members represented on the group and has done since its formation in 2001. Parents are active partners and participants ... and therefore have been involved in the development and review of the Transitions Protocol and other supporting documents such as the Transitions Booklet for parents and the Easy Read Transitions Booklet ... for young people.'*

**Local Area 2 SAQ 2**

Two TSP leads from different areas reflected on increased participation:

*'Part of it's about getting the identification of need right. Part ... about accountability and transparency and part ... about working together. It's important ... to commission work from the parent's consortium as well as consult with them. It really brings a helpful change in perspective and a change in working practices. We have parent trainers participating in ... training to providers of childcare and we're planning to have young people contributing ... to training for professionals about transition.'*

**Local area TSP and AHDC Lead**

*'It's about where power lies. When young people are asked what they think, they don't forget about it. They ask ... what happened as a result ... managers have to go back to the group to explain what's happening. Then young people feel they have a part to play ... It's the same with parents. Our Parent and Carer Forum is a very powerful group. We couldn't have got as far as we have without them ... We have four parents on the Transition Steering Group, who ... bring different perspectives...'*

**Local area TSP and AHDC Lead**

## Involving young people and their families in Year 9 reviews

*'It's not about services and placements ... It's about what this young person wants to do. What are their aspirations? It's easy for professionals to think, "We'll get all these processes sorted and then it'll be fine." I think it shocked some senior managers, hearing directly from families that services were not in place on the ground. Some parents have no choice but to give up work, because services ... are not available on a regular basis.'*

### **TSP Named Adviser**

Year 9 reviews mark the starting point for the formal process of transition for young people with a statement of Special Educational Needs. The SEN Code of Practice states that Year 9 reviews, and reviews in subsequent years, should consider the young person's statement, then draw up and subsequently review a transition plan.

The TSP successfully highlighted the importance of participation by young people and their families in Year 9 reviews, particularly in mainstream schools. It brought together information about rates of attendance and participation.

<b>Percentage of young people attending their Year 9 transition review</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
100%	4	2.8%
Over 90%	47	32.6%
80-90%	33	22.9%
50-80%	55	38.2%
Between 20 and 50%	5	3.5%

The need to return statistics triggered activity in some areas. For example, one reported in Year 1 that they had no reliable data on attendance at Year 9 transition reviews. However, in Year 2 they recorded attendance and could report that 61% of young people attended. More importantly, collecting the data had prompted them to investigate why some young people were not attending or whether there was a recording issue. Some young people who do not attend review meetings are nevertheless involved in planning or submitting a DVD or other material setting out their views, as the following quote illustrates:

*'[We recorded] 106 Year 9 Transition Reviews; 59 pupils attended or submitted their views (55.5%). Connexions report pupils contribute in some form to their review, but may not attend, with involvement being supported by the key worker system and/or pupil advocacy. A Person-Centred Review Champion has been employed to roll out ... good practice across mainstream schools. ... we aim to improve this current participation figure to 85%.'*

### **Local Area SAQ 2**

These comments suggest that although much work remains to be done, the TSP has been successful in focusing attention on the interface between the formal requirements of the SEN Code of Practice and the ethos of person-centred approaches in schools. A direct link can be made between this area of interest and current initiatives to develop 'structured conversations' with families in response to the findings of the Lamb Inquiry.<sup>8</sup> The current development of work to test proposals in *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability – A consultation*<sup>9</sup> will hopefully build on this.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/sen/types/a0063735/lamb-inquiry-special-educational-needs-and-parental-confidence>

<sup>9</sup>

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208027>



# Section 3: Personalised approaches

## Individual Budgets

Individual Budgets might provide more joined-up support for young people in transition and their families, as well as more choice and control over support received. The practice focus of TSP was on developing the use of person-centred planning and on planning and testing individual budgets.

The use of Individual Budgets is relatively new and associated working practices are still developing. This is reflected in TSP self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) returns.

<b>Are disabled young people able to access Individual Budgets in children's services?</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	26	17.2%	41	28.5%
In development	73	48.3%	72	50.0%
No	52	34.4%	31	21.5%

The few reported examples of Individual Budgets being used are promising and indicate significant potential to make packages of care for young people with complex support requirements more personal and flexible. For example:

*'In spring 2009, with the support of a grant from the TSP, six disabled young friends aged 18 and 19 made plans to form a friendship group supported by workers from Richmond Users Independent Living Scheme (RUILS) who helped them find ways to pool their individual Direct Payments in whichever ways they wanted. The group called themselves the Out and About Consortium. ... Three members of the group decided to employ their own personal assistants, but use their hours flexibly so that shared activities could be undertaken with just two of them. With the help of RUILS, the group wrote job descriptions explaining the sort of job they wanted their personal assistants to do ...The young men enjoy going to football matches, the gym and taking part in martial arts together. The scheme helps them make better use of resources. Instead of each person being accompanied to a football match separately by their personal assistant, two personal assistants can accompany four or five young people at a time.'*<sup>10</sup>  
**TSP Case Study Richmond**<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Pooling Direct Payments: your ideas, your way, Richmond Users Independent Living Scheme, 2010

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CSRichmond\\_Personalisation.pdf](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CSRichmond_Personalisation.pdf)

## Advocacy

*'It is important for disabled young people to have a voice that is separate from that of their family. Advocacy support can often provide them with the help they need to independently communicate their thoughts and aspirations ... and make the transition process less daunting.'*

### **A Transition Guide for All Services: Key information for professionals about the transition process for disabled young people, DCSF/DH, 2007**

Advocates help young people to get their views across to other people, enabling them to have more choice and control. Advocacy may be needed to:

- promote better participation by young people in decision-making about their future
- ensure young people's views are heard, while maintaining family involvement
- support young disabled people who are looked after
- promote emotional well-being.<sup>12</sup>

The TSP produced information<sup>13</sup> to support the development and use of advocacy in local areas. Some areas reported commissioning advocacy services or local voluntary organisations to support individual young people in planning meetings and assessments, to enable those with more complex or severe needs to participate in discussions and the shaping of services, and to enable young people with the greatest communication difficulties to take part in stakeholder and consultation events.

*'The county council funds an advocacy service to ask young people to help us to shape strategy and work with young people in schools to develop their ability and confidence to speak up about social care, policy and processes. The young people who attend these groups are encouraged to present their findings to a number of forums and training arenas. Every year the advocacy service organises and facilitates a forum where all the young people in the groups come together and challenge senior managers. They present their questions using a DVD.'*

### **Local Area SAQ 2**

Interviewees emphasised that commissioned advocacy services must work to the *National Standards for the Provision of Children's Advocacy Services* (Department of Health 2002)<sup>14</sup> and in line with the principles set out in *Care Matters: time for change* (Department for Education and Skills 2007)<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Access to independent advocacy: an evidence review, ODI

<sup>13</sup> What is Advocacy? NTST (Based on the work of the Children's Society and Advocacy Partners Speaking Up) January 2010

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4003112](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4003112)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/Page1/Cm%207137#downloadablepar ts>

## Person-centred approaches in transition planning

*'... a transition plan that clearly sets out the wishes and aspirations of individual young people as well as the support they need is a highly effective tool. The plan sets out the commitment each agency had made, and how and when support will be delivered. It also enables young people, their families and professionals to keep track of a complex process, review the support and plan what support will be needed in future.'*

**A Transition Guide for All Services: Key information for professionals about the transition process for disabled young people, DCSF/DH, 2007**

Person-centred approaches put young people at the centre of planning and review processes and encourage them to retain control over the transition process and feel ownership of their transition plan. Young people are asked to say what's important to them and explore the support they'll need to achieve their objectives. Person-centred planning:

*'...has the potential to provide a more holistic approach, to facilitate young people's involvement in planning and produce packages of care that are more responsive to young people's needs and aspirations.'*<sup>16</sup>

The development of person-centred planning in schools and services has been a major focus of activity in many local areas associated with the TSP. SAQ returns indicate steady progress with introducing person-centred approaches, particularly in special schools. SAQ responses in Year 2 indicated that person-centred planning was part of developing transition plans in 88% of local areas; this rose to 95% in Year 3. In Year 2, more than 80% of local areas indicated that professionals working with young people were trained in person-centred approaches to planning and review; other areas reported that training was planned.

The characteristic pattern of activity supported by the TSP was to invest in workforce development, which first influences the practice of the transition team and special schools, then cascades to mainstream schools:

*'Through the person-centred planning project a single person-centred plan format has been developed and is being used consistently within the special school. This assessment process involves all relevant agencies and the transition action plan coming out of reviews are disseminated to all professionals involved in a young person's transition. Through the Action Learning Sets we are exploring how this may be extended to mainstream schools.'*

**Local Area SAQ 2**

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<sup>16</sup> Models of Multi-agency Services for Transition to Adult services for Disabled Young people and Those with Complex Health Needs: Impact and Costs 2011 SPRU, University of York  
<http://php.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/summs/transitions.php>

## Action planning

The culture shift triggered by person-centred planning is significant, but is not an end in itself. It must deliver workable plans that reflect young people's interests, aspirations and support needs, and that lead to action:

*'Person-centred reviews must translate into something tangible like an action plan, with clearly defined things to be done and a date and a person's name against each action point. The role of the key worker is to keep an eye on whether things have been done ...'*

### **TSP Named Adviser**

Quality assurance measures for transition services should focus less on the number of children and young people experiencing person-centred planning and review, and more on evidence that person-centred approaches trigger action, that action points are checked and that the planning process delivers better outcomes for young people and families. The following table shows relevant SAQ responses in Years 2 and 3 of the TSP.

<b>Is there a monitoring process in place that tracks outcomes relating to person-centred planning?</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	50	33.1%	59	41.0%
In development	78	51.7%	81	56.3%
No	23	15.2%	4	2.8%

## High-quality information

This section considers local activity to improve the information available to families and young people triggered by the TSP. A distinction is made between:

- the information families need to make informed decisions, which includes information about the transition process and the options available
- support to understand and use relevant information (information, advice and guidance).

Families and young people passing through transition consistently emphasise the importance of having information that is timely, accessible, relevant and accurate. Information is needed when choices and decisions have to be made.

*'Providing high-quality, accessible information to a young person and their family about the transition process enables them to participate more effectively in the process. It also gives the young person and their family realistic expectations of what they can expect throughout the process. Many local authorities have produced 'transition packs' for families, which gives information on the local transition protocol, potential specialist support services and wider general support services. Many areas hold annual*

*transition events, where young people and families can meet a whole range of people from local support and provision such as colleges, advocacy services, adults team and so on. Some areas have developed websites with information about the transition process and all the local services available.'*

### **TSP Transition Planning and Development Tool**

The TSP identified the development of bespoke information packs for young people, including information on further education, training opportunities and work options as a priority. Improving the information available to young people and their families from Year 9 onwards has been an important focus for activity in many local areas and the national picture is one of steady improvement.

In Year two of the programme, 130 local areas (86.1%) reported that young people received information about the transition process, with a further 21 areas (13.9%) describing work in this area as 'in development'. In Year three, this total had risen to 95.8%. In addition to providing written information, in Year two, 110 local areas reported having information available in different, accessible formats, 122 were holding information events and 109 were making information available on websites. For examples, see the following case studies: [West Sussex case study – Transition Information](#)<sup>17</sup> and [Havering case study – accessible websites](#)<sup>18</sup>.

For general information on personalisation and, personalisation and transition please visit the 'Personalisation' section on the Council for Disabled Children's website<sup>19</sup>.

## Summary

- Person-centred planning brings a shift in culture and significant changes to working practices.
- A local workforce development strategy is required to support the systematic introduction and use of person-centred approaches across schools, children's services and adult services.
- The introduction of person-centred approaches in mainstream secondary schools should be monitored and linked to broader consideration of Team Around the Child and Family approaches and 'structured conversations' with families.
- Quality assurance measures should concentrate on how person-centred approaches improve the lives of young people and their families.
- Working together to improve the quality of information available to young people and their families is a powerful expression of participation in action.
- Feedback from people who are going to use information improves the quality and appropriateness of any material being developed.
- Young people with the most complex learning difficulties or support needs require specialist information, advice and guidance that is beyond the scope of universal services.

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<sup>17</sup>[http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CSWestSussex\\_Transitioninformation.pdf](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CSWestSussex_Transitioninformation.pdf)

<sup>18</sup>[http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CSHavering\\_Clickstart2.pdf](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CSHavering_Clickstart2.pdf)

<sup>19</sup>[http://www.ncb.org.uk/cdc/wider\\_projects/personalisation.aspx](http://www.ncb.org.uk/cdc/wider_projects/personalisation.aspx)

# Section 4 Assessments

*'Children and young people with disabilities are the most over-assessed group in the universe. If you're part of a real multi-agency team, however that's set up, you should be able to use what other people have already done to make assessment easier.'*

**TSP Named Adviser**

## Joint assessment and planning by services for children and for adults

As young people reach adulthood, they are assessed at different times for different purposes. There may be assessments for support from adult social care or adult health services, assessments to ascertain support needed to access further or higher education, and, from 2014, assessments to access activity as the 'participation age' rises to 18. The Green Paper *Support and Aspiration* proposes a streamlining of these assessment and planning processes with a single outcomes-focused plan.

Some local areas have used the opportunity of the TSP to focus on the development of an integrated assessment framework. Questionnaire returns in Year 2 provided information about progress on single assessment frameworks, as shown in the following table.

<b>Is there a multi-agency assessment in place across all services to support disabled young people in transition?</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	60	40%
In development	62	41%
No	29	19%

Better data shared by children's and adult services is essential to forward planning, quality assurance and efficient commissioning, as indicated below:

*'A detailed transition database was set up of children going through transition, from Year 8 upwards. It includes the type of SEN or disability the child has, the school attended, educational attainments, agencies involved, health needs, cost of current provision, whether a transition plan has been completed and updated, services which may need to support and the final actual destination. All agencies involved with the young person contribute data so that there is an overview of the young person's needs and progress through the transition process can be tracked. The (Virtual) Transition Team meets twice per term to undertake a detailed review of the database, checking that cases are*

*progressing appropriately, making sure that agencies which might need to offer support are alerted, and dealing with any problematic issues. The database therefore assists planning for individual young people, facilitates joint working and also assists with strategic and financial planning.'*

### **TSP Case Study W Berkshire**

A case study from West Berkshire<sup>20</sup> highlights the complexity of developing joint assessment processes.

## The transition review process

The efficient sharing of information across agencies and teams is critical to sustaining the principle of single transition plan, into which different assessment processes feed. The national picture reported in SAQ returns indicates purposeful activity and some progress in relation to this particular aspect of service provision.

<b>Is there a process in place for sharing and merging assessment information across agencies supporting disabled young people in transition?</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	91	60.3%	99	68.8%
In development	47	31.1%	43	29.9%
No	13	8.6%	2	1.4%

	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Transition Reviews</b>				
Do schools arrange and lead on all transition reviews when they are due?	144	95.4%	140	97.2%
Do schools send out invitations in good time (at least six weeks prior to meeting) to families and professionals?	135	89.4%	132	91.7%
Are review meetings organised with the young person and their family?	134	88.7%	136	94.4%
Is a named person allocated to follow up actions and implement the plan with young people?	145	96.0%	139	96.5%

Nearly all local areas (99%) reported that information, advice and guidance (IAG) advisers or Connexions personal advisers (PAs) attend Year 9 reviews; 80% indicated that these professionals take on the role of lead professional,

<sup>20</sup>[http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CSWestBerkshire\\_Jointassessment2.pdf](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/pdf/CSWestBerkshire_Jointassessment2.pdf)

fulfilling the requirement in the SEN Code of Practice for Connexions PAs to co-ordinate planning.

However, these items on the SAQ only track compliance with minimum standards for service delivery. In the case of young people with a range of additional support needs, it would be helpful to know more about how schools are using the opportunity for multi-agency review in Year 9 and planning in partnership with families. In particular, it would be useful to know more about practice in mainstream secondary schools, given the current development of 'structured conversations' and the conclusion of the Lamb Inquiry that:

*'In many of the discussions between schools and parents and between local authorities and parents, there was little focus on outcomes for children. Rather the focus was on the type and amount of provision and often on agreeing a number of hours of support from a learning support assistant. What was apparent was that few of the parents the Inquiry met seemed to have been encouraged to have a discussion about the outcomes they expected, or aspired to, for their child or how best these outcomes might be achieved.'*<sup>21</sup>

The particular issue for transition is how practice with younger children and families in schools and use of the SEN Code of Practice relate to person-centred approaches.

*'Culturally, person-centred planning fits nicely into special school environments. They're used to working in an interdisciplinary way and the whole approach of the school is likely to be more holistic. When you walk into a big mainstream secondary school, I'm not sure that you feel the same vibes about 'person centred-ness'. It's become a very ... different learning environment than that provided by special schools. This impacts directly on how far it is possible to extend the reach of person-centred approaches in mainstream schools, which is where most young people are.'*

**TSP Named Adviser**

## Co-ordination of Health Action Plans with other aspects of transition

A Health Action Plan (HAP) comprises a self-assessment by a young person that identifies their day-to-day health support needs and an action plan, developed in discussion with health professionals, to meet those needs in preparation for moving into adult healthcare provision. It is a personal plan that describes what a young person can do to reduce the impact of their health needs on future choices and maximise their opportunity for independence. *Moving on well*, the relevant good practice guidance from the Department of Health, suggests that the process of initiating a HAP should begin around the same time planning for transition starts in schools with the Year 9 review and that while HAPs should be offered to all young people, not all will wish to have one. The integration of

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<sup>21</sup> Special Educational Needs and Parental Confidence, DCSF, 2009.



these different strands of activity is critical, particularly for children and young people with the most complex needs:

*'They understand what medical terms and medical conditions mean and they have a key role to play in helping colleagues from other agencies understand the implications for day-to-day living associated with particular conditions and what that might mean in terms of support. This has to feed into broader planning.'*

**TSP Named Adviser**

In Year 2 SAQ returns, 80% of local areas reported that HAPs were being developed with young people. In Year 3, this had risen to 89%. But this statistic masks a wide range of practice. A significant number of areas could not provide information on the use of HAPs, while others reported that routine use of HAPs was not yet established. The range in SAQ Year 3 responses was from very small numbers of HAPs being used ('only a pilot in one special school at present') to:

*'...100% of young people with severe and complex needs attending special schools have a health action plan ...This roughly translates to 20% of young people who have been issued with a statement of special educational need.'*

**Local Area SAQ 3**

Where the use of HAPs is established, a number of different practitioners support young people to complete them, as shown in the following table.

<b>Who is completing health action plans with young people?</b>	<b>Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
School nurse	85	56.7%
Community nurse	90	60.0%
GP	31	20.7%
Transition nurse	33	22.0%
Community paediatrician	46	30.7%
IAG	10	6.7%
Other	63	42.0%

The broader challenge is to develop the use of HAPs as an integral part of a single, multi-agency transition planning process. Difficulty providing information about the use of HAPs for the SAQ returns probably indicates some difficulties with establishing joint working arrangements between local authority teams and health professionals and agencies. However, the experience of this aspect of joint working is varied, with some areas returning more positive messages than others. For example:

*'Information not collected at present for HAP – 100% of young people with complex medical needs would have a healthcare plan, which is fed into the transition plan through the transition review process. Likewise therapy plans are fed through in this way.'*

### **Local Area SAQ 3**

## *Summary*

- Developing a multi agency joint assessment process is complicated and requires cultural and attitudinal shifts across agencies
- Efficient sharing of information across agencies and teams is critical to sustaining the principle of single transition plan
- A particular issue for transition is how practice with younger children and families in schools and use of the SEN Code of Practice relate to person-centred approaches
- the process of initiating a HAP should begin around the same time planning for transition starts in schools with the Year 9 review and that while HAPs should be offered to all young people, not all will wish to have one.

# Section 5: Opportunity and choice for living life post 16

“I want to leave school and go to college and then work”  
**Young person interviewed as part of TSP**

This section summarises information and learning from the Transition Support Programme about transition into further education, employment or training, preparation for employment, and support for independent living. It is written at a time of significant change for the further and higher education sector, when it is difficult to predict the impact of the closure of the Learning and Skills Council and creation of the Young People’s Learning Agency and Skills Funding Agency on the lives of young people with disabilities – and when use of the Learning for Living and Work Framework<sup>22</sup> was still developing.

## Information, advice and guidance

*‘It is vital that services have sufficient resources to enable staff to become familiar with a young person’s communication style and to implement strategies that maximise the amount of information they can comprehend.’*

**All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism, Transition to adulthood**

Careers and guidance professionals, sometimes known as Connexions personal advisers (PAs)<sup>23</sup> provide a free and confidential service for all 13-19 year-olds and for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities up to 25. They can provide invaluable information on options for education, training and employment. Almost all local areas reported in Years 2 and 3 of the TSP that young people with special educational needs and disabilities have access to an information, advice and guidance (IAG) PA or Connexions PA.

Do young people have access to IAG advisers?	SAQ 2		SAQ 3	
	Local areas	%	Local areas	%
All	145	96.0%	139	96.5%
Some	5	3.3%	5	3.3%
None	1	0.7%	0	0%

<sup>22</sup> Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/learning\\_for\\_living\\_and\\_work\\_complete\\_2.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/learning_for_living_and_work_complete_2.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> This was correct at the time of write. Connexions PAs are now called Careers Advisors.

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/DG\\_10011904](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/DG_10011904)

Young people rely on these services for information about their future choices and so it is important that personnel are knowledgeable and up to date with what is available locally and able to communicate effectively with the young people they work with. Local areas have invested in these roles and provided additional training for IAG professionals to equip them to work with a range of disabled young people. **This has been challenged by budget cuts and in many areas IAG provision has been significantly reduced.**

Many local areas have, or are developing, a specialist service for young people with more complex learning difficulties or disabilities. For example:

*'The Connexions Service employ ... dedicated special needs personal advisers who focus solely on disabled children in and out of the county ... They work across our special schools and are line managed by two team leaders who both have expertise in this area. A larger number of PAs based in Connexions teams work across mainstream schools with young people with SEN.'*

#### **Local Area SAQ 2**

In places where a dedicated specialist service is not available, local areas report the development of more informal initiatives to increase the capacity and expertise of universal services:

*'All Connexions PAs, and all clerical and reception staff have received an introductory level of disability awareness training within the past two years. We also have a Connexions learning difficulties and disabilities Peer Support Group, made up of practitioners who have a particular interest in work with young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The group is made up of a team manager, personal advisers and Connexions assistants. They meet on a monthly basis to share information, discuss specific cases and to agree future training.'*

#### **Local Area SAQ 2**

Connexions PAs and other IAG professionals are normally expected to do more than provide advice and support. Connexions-direct describes the PA role as:

- meeting with young people to assess their needs and the support required
- helping individuals to identify their targets and writing a plan of action with them
- providing information and advice on a range of issues, including lifestyle, money, housing and health
- working with schools, colleges and other organisations, as well as with parents/carers, to co-ordinate support for young people
- keeping in regular touch with young people to review their progress.

As the TSP promotes the development of key worker services, it is timely to reflect on how the co-ordination of support specified above relates to understanding of lead professional or key worker functions, how IAG relates to other aspects of service provision and who needs what.

*'We are developing a keyworker scheme... to assist with transition. Feedback from carers and young people is that they do not always know who to ask about transition issues (often complex) irrespective of whether they have attended an information session or have been provided with written information. The key issue about information is the right information at the right time. We hope by always having a named person, who knows how to access the correct information, that the process will be made easier for carers and young people.'*

## **Local Area SAQ 2**

## Learning points

- A coherent workforce development strategy for IAG professionals is required ensuring a consistently high standard of practice across IAG provider services.
- Group or peer support arrangements enable the sharing of specialist knowledge and expertise across groups of IAG professionals.
- Quality assurance systems for Connexions and other IAG services are most effective when they focus on the experience of young people and families.

## Transition into further education or training

Leaving school and starting college is a core part of transition for young people with special educational needs and disabilities and the role of Connexions PAs is fundamental to this process. The Education and Skills Act (2008)<sup>24</sup> places a duty on all young people in England to participate in education or training until the age of 18 and a duty on local authorities to arrange a learning difficulty assessment for all young people for whom they maintain a statement of special educational needs and expect to leave school to move into post-16 education, training or higher education. This applies whether the young person is in Y11, 12 or 13 and is called a Section 139A/140 assessment.<sup>25</sup> Key issues for improving the experiences of young people and families are that:

- Section 139A/140 assessments are coordinated effectively with other processes and contribute to a single transition plan
- person-centred approaches are used when Section 139A/140 assessments are carried out, to ensure that the aspirations and preferences of young people are heard
- when support requirements for further learning or training and placements have been agreed, practical arrangements are made in good time
- the progress, experience and difficulties of young people are tracked after they leave school.

In Year 3 of the TSP, 91% of local areas indicated that person-centred planning was part of Section 139A assessments (a rise from 72% in Year 2). Areas were

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<sup>24</sup> See also The Education Bill 2011

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/departmentalinformation/educationbill/a0073748/education-bill>

<sup>25</sup> Education and Skills Act 2008: What does it mean for Transition?

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/departmentalinformation/educationbill/a0073748/education-bill>

also asked about joint working arrangements between schools and further education providers:

<b>Do schools and FE providers work together to provide clear progression routes into college as part of transition planning?</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	112	74.2%	115	79.9%
In development	39	25.8%	29	20.1%
No	0	0%	0	0%

The TSP has highlighted the importance of tracking young people for longer and continuing to support them to achieve their goals and aspirations as they finish at college or university. In Year 3, 52% of local areas reported that transition planning was in place for all young people when they left college and 46% reported it was in place for some. This focus on longer-term progression for young people works with other national initiatives like *Aim Higher*<sup>26</sup>, which encouraged access to higher education, and *Getting a Life*<sup>27</sup>, which encourages young people into employment. The following examples from SAQ returns are representative:

*'... our local Connexions service collates destination information for all young people aged 13-19 and up to 25 if they have a learning disability or difficulty. Colleges provide link courses for local schools, which enable students to access a vocational element as part of their school curriculum. Connexions PAs work with FE providers to organise taster sessions ... Transition planning takes place to enable students placed out of the local area to make a transition from college back to their own community or to live independently in the area where they have studied. Transition planning for students who remain in their home area and access local provision tends to be more informal, with tutors involving the PA and social worker as appropriate to help the young person plan their next steps.'*

**Local Area SAQ 3**

*'Transitions co-ordinators work closely with colleagues in Connexions, Adult Social Care and use the Adults with Learning Disabilities database to track outcomes. We have ... established a small group with representatives from the 14-19 Team, transition co-ordinators, FE colleges, the SEN Department and Connexions to monitor school leavers during their first year at local college in order to make sure placements are working and offer timely interventions if they are not.'*

**Local Area SAQ 3**

<sup>26</sup> Aimhigher: helping you into higher education (The Aimhigher programme closed on 31 July 2011). [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/DG\\_073697](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/DG_073697)

<sup>27</sup> The Getting a Life programme ran from April 2008 to the end of March 2011, as part of the Valuing People Now employment work. <http://www.gettingalife.org.uk/>

## Employment

The importance of raising aspirations and maintaining paid employment as a goal for some young people with disabilities has been an important focus for the TSP. The table below shows that providing work experience presents challenges and the comments that follow indicate a wide range of practice.

Do disabled young people receive support to access work experience and employment at Year 10?	SAQ 2 Local areas	%	SAQ 3 Local areas	%
Yes	87	57.6%	83	57.6%
Some	64	42.4%	61	42.4%
No	0	0%	0	0%

*'The quality of Year 10 work experience placements for disabled young people continues to be inconsistent in availability and quality. Further work is needed to ensure disabled young people have access to work experience of their choosing rather than choice being driven by the availability of opportunities.'*

### Local Area SAQ3

*'Connexions PAs play a crucial role in discussing work experience with young people and relating this to their ... aspirations and goals. Schools ... look at the support requirements of individuals. Work experience is a key discussion point for the preceding Annual or Transition Plan Review. Preparation and making good use of information before and after work experience helps to make the experience meaningful and useful. Sourcing placements for those with the most complex needs can be difficult but with appropriate support can be achieved. Employers are key partners ....'*

### Local Area SAQ3

Tracking employment for young people, alongside other aspects of transition into adult life, has been another important focus of interest for the national programme.

Do you collate information on how many young people move into employment?	SAQ 2 Local areas	%	SAQ 3 Local areas	%
Yes	116	76.8%	114	79.2%
No	35	23.2%	30	20.8%

For some young people, volunteering, rather than paid employment, is important:

*'A local project has been working with 16-25-year-olds, including those with autism and profound disabilities, to increase volunteering, work experience and training for work experience. Each young person is supported by a volunteer in placements chosen on the basis of what they enjoy or want to do. Some examples of placements are: working with horses; helping out in a bike shop; administrative work; and assisting in a primary school. One young man has now moved into paid employment. The project has worked with 37 young people; 90% are still active as volunteers. Fourteen have registered to work towards an award, which means you get a certificate and a folder or DVD to show the skills and experiences you have gained. One young person has already completed 50 hours of volunteering.'*

### **Local Area SAQ3**

Two programmes were set up as part of Valuing Employment Now to develop support for young people with learning disabilities to move into paid employment.

The Getting a Life<sup>28</sup> programme ran from April 2008 to the end of March 2011. It was set up to show what needs to happen so that young people with a severe learning disability achieve paid employment and full lives when they leave education.

Fourteen local partnership sites were selected to run Project Search<sup>29</sup> – a model which helps disabled people secure and keep paid permanent jobs. It is particularly suited to people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

## Transition into adult life and independent living

Transport, housing and leisure activities are important elements in a young person's life as they establish the pattern of their adult life. The TSP has focused on all of these. In relation to housing, an important element has been to encourage housing departments to participate in multi-agency steering groups. In Year 3 of the programme, 78% of local areas reported that senior managers from the housing department were signed up to the protocol and had a responsibility to deliver. This represented a significant increase from the 54% reported in Year 2.

Most areas now include transport as a key component of strategic planning for transition and most also report that they support individual young people to develop their skills to travel independently. In some areas, this has been a particular focus of interest:

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<sup>28</sup> Getting a Life <http://www.gettingalife.org.uk>

<sup>29</sup> Project Search <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/odi-projects/jobs-for-people-with-learning-disabilities/project-search.php>



*'Travel skills training is crucial for access to employment, mainstream services, school and college. Over 100 disabled young people in York now travel independently to school and college after being taught the skills to use public transport, walk or cycle. The overall aim was to redirect money spent on home to school and college transport to training disabled young people to enable them to work towards independent travel...'*

### **TSP Case Study**

<b>Are transport needs a part of individual transition planning?</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	120	79.5%	122	84.7%
In development	28	18.5%	21	14.6%
No	3	2.0%	1	0.7%

<b>Do you have a transport policy that outlines transport provision for disabled young people post 16?</b>	<b>SAQ 2 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	83	55.0%	103	71.5%
In development	39	25.8%	28	19.4%
No	29	19.2%	13	9.0%

## Tracking and supporting young people

Young people who do not meet the criteria to receive support from adult social care services are particularly vulnerable and most likely to be 'not in education employment or training' (NEET). The TSP has maintained focus on this group by asking for hard data about the percentage of young people with disabilities who are NEET in questionnaire returns. Local areas are able to produce numbers if their Connexions service identifies young people with disabilities on their database. The following return is representative:

*'NEET numbers as of the end of October 2009 are 4.4% of 16-18 year olds (103 individuals) of this number 18% have learning difficulties and disabilities (19 individuals). In the age group 19 years 3.3% of the population is NEET (23 individuals) of which 26% have learning difficulties and disabilities (six individuals).'*

### **Local Area SAQ 3**

Where a Connexions database maintains records on all young people with a disability up to the age of 25, reports can be run off frequently to check the

current EET or NEET status of individuals. This information is vital to targeting and providing support for young people who are NEET and, where appropriate, encouraging them into education, employment or training.

The vulnerability of this group and the importance of services working together on their behalf was raised several times in interviews. For example:

*'Universal services that aren't accessible cost a huge amount of money. Young people who fall through the gaps at transition and who cannot access universal services are vulnerable and may end up living chaotic lives, misusing substances and entering the Criminal Justice System. They end up costing society a great deal more money than is necessary.'*

**TSP Named Adviser**

## Summary

- Effective transition relies on tracking young people after they leave school, particularly as they move on from their first college placement or training.
- Transport and housing are often essential elements in achieving a successful transition into adult life.
- Opportunities for employment and work experience sometimes improve when expectations are challenged.
- Where employment, education or training are not appropriate, aspirations for young people, and the link between transition planning and Short Break services is critical to making leisure services more accessible.
- Appropriate and timely support cannot be provided for young people who are NEET if data systems cannot identify young people who are not on the social care register but are in need of help.

# Section 6: Learning from TSP

*'There has been relatively little research on the effectiveness of transition services. However, evidence suggests that some factors may improve transition. These include co-ordination between agencies ... transition workers or teams ... involvement of young people and their families ... good information ... and support for young people which includes a focus on their own aspirations and ambitions.'*

**Sloper et al.**<sup>30</sup>

*'There should be only one indicator or criterion of successful performance: satisfaction with the service.'*

**Getting it right for Children and Young People. The Kennedy Review**<sup>31</sup>

The two quotations above indicate complementary approaches that are critical to service improvement. One is to identify features of service provision associated with effective delivery. The other is to use feedback from young people and families.

The TSP identified five focus areas to support local areas in identifying appropriate development priorities:

- participation of disabled young people and their families
- effectiveness of personalised approaches
- joint assessments processes within children's trusts and adult services
- realistic post-16 opportunities for living life
- strategic joint partnership working.

This report has drawn on self-assessment questionnaires from local areas in Years 1- 3 of the TSP. The questionnaires were structured around the focus areas set out above. Analysis of this material yields the following conclusions:

## *At operational level, young people and families need:*

- early and proactive engagement by services that builds in enough time to plan ahead and make any necessary arrangements
- information about the transition process
- information about the options available
- a relationship with a transition support worker who provides information, advice and guidance and who can act as a lead professional or key worker when necessary – particularly when many different people, agencies and appointments are involved
- continuity of support, advice and guidance and consistent messages

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<sup>30</sup> Models of Multi-agency Services for Transition to Adult Services for Disabled Young People and Those with Complex Health Needs: Impact and costs. Sloper, P. et al (2010)  
<http://php.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/summs/transitions.php>

<sup>31</sup>[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_119445](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_119445)

- a clear pathway that flags the assessment procedures that are coming up and explains why they are necessary
- transparency about any relevant eligibility criteria for services
- a person-centred planning and review process
- a holistic approach that considers all aspects of life
- a single transition plan to which all other assessment procedures contribute
- a range of viable and meaningful options to choose between
- mentorship by young people with special educational needs or disabilities who have already made a transition to the next phase of life or by parents/carers with relevant prior experience
- meaningful opportunities to experience life in college, university, the workplace or residential settings before making choices.

### *At operational level, staff need:*

- detailed knowledge of the services and opportunities available to young people with disabilities
- a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and how they contribute to the transition service
- information about the transition process and familiarity with any paperwork used in the local area
- training and support to deliver a person-centred approach to transition that works in partnership with young people and their families
- an understanding of disability equality issues
- training and experience to communicate effectively with young people with a range of disabilities
- an operational manager to whom to report on transition issues
- time and capacity to do the job
- the support of senior managers

### *At strategic level, local areas need:*

- a multi-agency steering group
- a multi-agency transition protocol
- a multi-agency transition pathway
- a development plan (where appropriate)
- a named transition lead with the time and capacity to do the job
- reliable data about the young people approaching and passing through transition to support the planning and commissioning of services
- mechanisms to consult with service users and include a service user perspective in planning and decision-making at every level
- quality assurance measures that tap directly into the experiences of young people and their families and recognise the importance of this area of work to the effective and economic provision of other public services
- information about the aspirations and preferences of young people from person-centred planning to inform commissioning decisions
- a mechanism to track unmet need and collect longitudinal information about outcomes for young people and families one, three and five years after using the Transition Service

# Section 7: Conclusion

*'Separate services, separate departments, separate budgets, separate targets. All these things conspire to make it a competitive, rather than a collaborative system. Improving transition for young people with SEND is about establishing shared values, and winning hearts and minds.'*

**TSP Named Adviser**

The Transition Support Programme succeeded in raising awareness of the challenges involved in transition, particularly when the young people involved have a complex range of support needs.. The TSP also ensured issues for SEND young people remained a priority in local areas and across service planning.

*'I'm always very careful ... to spell out that it's a national Transition Support Programme because ... it gives the work more gravitas and underlines that this is a national priority.'*

**Local area TSP Lead**

*'Last year we made a ... corporate decision that transition was going to be a priority area for development. It was at the time we were due to complete a self-assessment questionnaire for the TSP. It was obvious that this was going to be a much more high profile area of activity than it had been before, so we needed to invest more management time in it and broaden ... remit of the existing service.'*

**Local area Assistant Director**

TSP encouraged local areas to identify a transition lead, formulate a development plan and return information on progress. This had an obvious impact, particularly as the programme provided some ring-fenced funding to increase managers' time and capacity to focus on this area of work and find workable solutions.

*'Funding from the national Transition Support Programme has enabled us to invest time and resources into developing a new transition process. The regional network support has given us advice and guidance at pivotal times, and raised awareness about transition. This awareness has enabled increased involvement from strategic leads, which has ensured continued momentum.'*

**Local Area TSP Lead written comment**

Several local areas highlighted the increased impetus and practical help that TSP named advisers and SEN Hub meetings provided:

*'The input from our TSP named adviser has been invaluable. It's the balance between monitoring how the TSP grant is being spent and the support and challenge she provides. She's a mine of information and has been able to signpost us to examples of how things have been done in other places so we're not doing things in isolation. I don't feel I have to show our best side and talk up everything when we meet. We can have an open and honest debate about how things are going and what to do next.'*

**Local Area TSP and AHDC Lead**

*'Our TSP named adviser has been really helpful in supporting me to use the NTST materials about developing a protocol and she's signposted me to protocols from other places so we can learn from good practice elsewhere.'*

**Local Area TSP Lead**

These comments are in line with Year 3 responses to questions about the TSP.

<b>What support from the Transition Support Programme have you found useful?</b>	<b>SAQ 3 Local areas</b>	<b>%</b>
TSP Named Adviser	131	91%
SEN Regional Hub meetings	88	61%
Website	102	71%
TSP Information Line (phone and email)	30	21%
TSP Email Updates	86	60%
Resources	72	50%
Other	31	22%

## Seeking out and using feedback: real people, real lives

The marked success of the AHDC programme in encouraging participation by young people and their families in shaping services makes it more likely that service providers will seek out a service user perspective and use it to guide development. However, there is an important, specific point to be made here. 'Good' transition services 'keep it real' by:

- monitoring and recording unmet need
- tracking the experience of individual young people and families through transition in order to identify barriers and solutions
- tracking individuals longitudinally (say one, three and five years after they have moved into adult life) to evaluate the longer-term impact of good and bad experiences of transition on future demand for public services.

## Positive impact

The SAQs provide evidence of the substantial progress that was made over the three years of the TSP programme:

- developing and providing appropriate information for young people and families about the process of transition and the options available
- developing and agreeing a coherent multi-agency strategy for service improvement, expressed as a multi-agency transition protocols and pathway(s)
- increased transparency, achieved by publishing protocols and pathways
- increased consultation with young people and families about how the experience of transition might be improved
- increased participation by service users in shaping services at every level
- monitoring attendance and encouraging participation in Year 9 reviews
- extending and embedding the use of person-centred approaches to planning with young people, particularly in special schools
- developing a local transition team
- including adult services in the planning and delivery of transition
- workforce development – particularly in relation to person-centred planning and the capacity of IAG advisers to meet the needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

In many local areas it was the case that the operation of the TSP encouraged the development of better data about children and young people in transition.

The high value local areas place on the exchange of experience and practice with colleagues from other places is reflected in the observation from 50 areas that some kind of ongoing regional forum focused on transition issues would maintain momentum and help them continue to develop their practice (Carter, 2011)<sup>32</sup>.

## Continuing challenges and issues

Some recurring themes were highlighted by interviewees that indicate continued difficulty with:

- co-ordinating the activity of health practitioners and health transition teams with the work of other agencies
- extending the expectations, ethos and practice of person-centred approaches to planning into mainstream schools
- sharing information between agencies and teams to prevent young people and their families having to tell their story all over again when they meet a new practitioners or participate in a new assessment process
- ensuring all young people and families who need a key worker have one
- establishing a clearer understanding of the role of lead professionals and key workers and how this work interacts with the provision of information, advice and guidance that is already established in most local areas

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<sup>32</sup> Year 3 TSP Regional Activity Report. Carter, J. (2011)  
<http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/resources/regional.aspx>

- reconciling the aspirations and service requirements of young people with significant learning, behaviour or communication difficulties with the options available for adults in their local area.

## Legacy

In Year 3 SAQ returns, 90% of local areas reported being 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied with the support received from the TSP and many areas have made significant progress since 2007. Some aspects of development activity and TSP focus areas constitute a clear legacy for the future, including:

- increased understanding of the importance of the transition process in improving outcomes, particularly among managers with responsibility for strategic planning
- better information materials about local transition processes, pathways and about the options available
- better understanding of the impact and relative cost-effectiveness of information events like transition fairs
- changed expectations about the advantages of consulting with young people and families and incorporating a service user perspective into discussion and decision-making at every level
- high-level multi-agency agreement about how transition should be facilitated locally and defined arrangements for joint working
- increased understanding of and skill in using person-centred approaches.

Many local areas have reflected positively on the experience of completing self-assessment questionnaires as an opportunity to focus minds and review joint working practice. The TSP has responded by developing a version of the SAQ for local areas to use in coming years, as part of the resources being developed by the Transition Information Network for use by local areas from April 2011.

## Looking ahead

The greatest threat to consolidation of service improvement associated with the TSP comes from the dramatically straightened financial circumstances that many local authorities and their health partners now find themselves in. Budgets to fund public services are being significantly reduced. Many areas anticipate tougher eligibility criteria to unlock support from adult social services and less time and capacity to undertake transition work as a consequence of staff reductions. There is still much to do and in very challenging times:

*'It's going to be a challenging couple of years now as we try to implement some of the good practice we've developed through the programme. It may seem to some people we've already had a lot of time and a lot of support to get to this point, but we feel we're just beginning to implement things and do things differently.'*

**Local Area TSP and AHDC Lead**



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**The Council for Disabled Children (CDC)** is the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector in England, with links to the other UK nations. CDC works to influence national policy that impacts upon disabled children and children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and their families. CDC is a semi-independent council of NCB, and has a staff team reporting to its director. The CDC Council is made up of a wide range of professional, voluntary and statutory organisations, including disabled young people and parent representatives. CDC's broad based membership and extensive networks of contacts provides a unique overview of current issues. It also enables us to promote collaborative and partnership working among organisations. CDC hosts the following networks;

- The National Parent Partnership Network
- The Special Educational Consortium
- The Transition Information Network
- The Every Disabled Child Matters Campaign
- Making Ourselves Heard

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