

<i>item:</i>	6
<i>report:</i>	CYP43/08

SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS INTO YOUNG ADULTHOOD

by Marlyn Campbell

Summary

This report sets out the policy for the management of transitions between children's and adult's services, for young people with additional support needs. It has been agreed between Highland Council and NHS Highland officers, and by the Highland Council. The report confirms how good management of this transition is critical to various key agendas for both organisations but also makes clear the need to strengthen existing and create new partnerships with employers, colleges and development agencies.

1. Background

- 1.1 For many disabled young people, timely, comprehensive information and careers advice and guidance is necessary to ensure that they reach their goals when making the transition to adulthood. For a smaller but still sizeable number of young people, significantly more support is needed to help them meet their goals and take their place in society. Children and young people with the most complex needs require very carefully prepared and intricate packages of support as they move into adulthood.
- 1.2 At the moment the support that all of these young people receive is variable. Services sometimes struggle to provide information at the right time, coordinate their responses with other agencies and provide necessary support to young people and their families. Despite some good practice, some disabled young people do not end up in education, employment or training, or end up in the wrong provision with inadequate supports.
- 1.3 Research into good transition practice suggests that:
 - The process needs to be individual to the needs and aspirations of the young person.
 - The process needs to be spread out over a number of years starting at a review following a young person's 14th birthday, with reviews held annually.
 - Statutory processes for transition need to be used consistently.

- Adults' and children's services need to work together to ensure that young people maximise their life chances as they enter young adulthood.
 - Transition planning needs to be seen as a way to enable and support young people to plan with others to move towards and onto a new stage of life rather than from one service to another.
- 1.4 A wide ranging consultation was undertaken by Highland Council in partnership with Highland Children's Forum with young people, both with and without additional support needs, about their transition journeys. The outcome of this is the document '*It's MY Journey*' which has informed this policy initiative, and all of the associated documentation.

2. The policy and legislative context

- 2.1 The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 places key responsibilities on the local authority to support the transitions planning process, in particular with those who are assessed as having the most complex needs.
- 2.2 Social Work Services for adults also have specific duties and responsibilities under the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 to assess needs.
- 2.3 A major thrust of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 is to ensure coordinated multi agency support for those with significant and enduring needs, at all transitions including transition to adulthood.
- 2.4 Further developments within 'Curriculum for Excellence' have sought to ensure that all young people are supported to have more choices to enable them to acquire Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work. A new development within the *More Choices, More Chances* programme, *16+ Learning Choices*, seeks to ensure that all young people, well in advance of reaching their statutory school leaving date, are made an offer of appropriate post-16 learning.
- 2.5 This approach is fully endorsed by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which, with the inclusion of the Disability Equality Duty, which strengthened the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001), gave key responsibilities to Further & Higher Education establishments as well as employers to ensure better access to opportunities.
- 2.6 The implementation of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) strengthens multi agency working and the targeting of available resources to those in greatest need, to promote the best outcomes for all young people.

- 2.7 The Joint Highland Council and NHS Highland Transitions Policy, Procedure and Guidance will contribute to meeting the Single Outcome Agreement targets of increasing the proportion of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations, as well as:
- Increasing employability
 - Reducing poverty by supporting more people into sustained employment
 - Helping people live longer, healthier lives
 - Tackling the significant inequalities in Highland life

3. Joint NHS Highland and Highland Council Transitions Policy

- 3.1 The Joint NHS Highland and Highland Council Transitions Policy aims to provide a more coherent and accessible process for families, professionals and young people and ensure more effective use of available resources, in particular for those with additional support needs as a result of disability and/or complex health problems. A copy is attached as **Appendix 1**.

- 3.2 The policy provides a helpful framework for many of the key services within the two organisations, including:

Housing – which provides a range of accommodation and assists with the adaptation of properties, and support to young tenants.

Planning & Development Service and Chief Executive's Office – promoting employability, including within Council Services, and addressing disability within community planning processes.

Schools – which are critical to promoting the potential of the individual, and supporting the process of transition into young adulthood.

Social Work Children's Services – involving lead professionals, key workers and support staff, and the organisation of respite, home care, residential care and other supports to the child and family.

Social Work Community Care Services – who provide a continuity of support into young adulthood.

Community Learning & Leisure services – staff involved in youth development, community learning & development, sport, adult basic education, culture, and libraries, all have roles in relation to community based provision that can support individuals and families.

- 3.3 The policy provides a framework for other key documentation, including:
- **The Joint Transitions Procedure**, which addresses the complex legislative context for services with responsibility for supporting young people transitioning to adult hood at differing ages and the need to be pro actively responsive to their varying needs.
 - **The My Transition Guide**, which is a universal tool which complements the Getting it Right process. It is an inclusive approach to transitions planning for all young people, especially those with additional support needs and promotes ownership of the process by the young people most affected.

4 **Creating a Wider Partnership**

- 4.1 While NHS Highland and the Highland Council are two key agencies, there are a range of other agencies whose contribution is critical to the successful negotiation of the transition into young adulthood:

Action for Children (Formally NCH) – supporting young people to gain ‘More choices, More chances’.

Barnardo’s Springboard – supporting care leavers.

Careers Scotland – who, as an integral part of Skills Development Scotland, support young people into employment, and can provide dedicated assistance for those with significant needs.

Employers – providing both supported employment and other employment opportunities.

Highland Carers Project – helping carers support young people through transitions

Highland Employers’ Coalition - promoting employability

Highlands & Islands Enterprise – strengthening communities

Housing Associations – which can provide support as well as accommodation.

Job Centre Plus - provides help and advice on jobs and training for people who can work and financial help for those who cannot.

Skills Development Scotland - promoting employability, and supporting the delivery of the skills strategy through partnerships with training providers.

UHI and the Colleges – providing vocational training, and a range of educational opportunities towards a pathway from further into higher education.

Voluntary sector organisations and social enterprises – a range of other organisations, that provide direct support to young adults

- 4.2 Accordingly, it is proposed that Highland Council and NHS Highland host a Stakeholder Conference, before the end of this year, bringing all of these agencies together.
- 4.3 The purpose of this event would be to:
- Highlight the joint policy between NHS Highland and Highland Council.
 - Promote commitment from all of the key agencies to this issue – and the need for collaboration.
 - Consider a strategic infrastructure, that can promote the collaborative management of these various issues across all agencies, as part of community planning arrangements.
 - Consider a local structure to support the necessary local management of transitions.

5. Equalities Impact

- 5.1 The proposed approach will enhance the opportunities for all Highland agencies to promote and ensure equality for young people and young adults with additional support needs as a result of disability or complex health. It aims to contribute to improving outcomes, enabling young people to benefit from greater equality of opportunity, increasing their involvement and inclusion in society, and enabling communities to benefit from the contribution that young disabled adults can make, and fostering tolerance and understanding of diversity.

Recommendations

The Joint Committee is asked to agree to:-

- i endorse the approach; and
- ii the proposals for the establishment of this new partnership, including a major stakeholders conference later in 2008.

Bill Alexander

Head of Integrated Children's Services