

<i>item:</i>	8
<i>report:</i>	CYP47/09

## **IMPROVING THE TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN INTO ADULTHOOD – A MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE by Jon King**

### **Summary**

This report indicates developments in the co-ordinated multi-agency strategic and operational management of transitions for young people into young adulthood. The Joint Committee is asked to consider and endorse the various developments.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 All young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty five are subject to major changes in their lives amongst which the moves from pupil to employee and from dependence on parental care to independence can be the most challenging. The challenges faced by young people in vulnerable groups, including those leaving care and those affected by disability or illness are widely acknowledged. There is a further group of young people for whom difficulties only become apparent after they leave school. Initiatives associated with “Transitions” are intended to support all of these young people and where appropriate their families and carers.
- 1.2 Members of the Joint Committee will be aware of the very significant developments which have over the past two years been targeted at planning for and supporting young people as they prepare to make the transition from school. A Chief Officers group has recently been established to seek to improve understanding, coordination and co-operation between services and agencies throughout the transition years. In seeking to develop an appropriate structure to achieve those goals and therefore the outcomes for young people the Head of Operations for Community Care has been meeting with colleagues and reviewing existing workstreams, and this report summarises the outcome of that review.
- 1.3 By definition the young people are moving through the scope and jurisdiction of a wide range of services and agencies, and all of these have responsibilities which are wider than just this group of people. All of these services and agencies have strategic plans, targets, performance and governance frameworks and many are linked into formal and informal partnerships. There are at any one time also various local and national projects and initiatives. It is not the role of transitions management to replace these, but to ensure effective co-ordination and co-operation between them.

## 2. The Four Themes

2.1 There are four major headings or workstreams all of which require to be in place and complementing each other if vulnerable young people are to be effectively and sustainably supported to make the transition to adulthood. Not set out here as a separate heading is healthcare, although that may be regarded as the fifth theme.

### 1 Education and training

Leadership of this agenda sits with the Council Education Culture and Sport service, and targets and performance measures are set out within the ECS service plan. The theme is of course broader and involves work with partner organisations such as UHI, and elements are contained within or impacted by the integrated children's planning processes, specifically For Highlands Children and GIRFEC and projects such as More Choices More Chances.

### 2 Employment

The availability of suitable employment, and where required support to access it, is regarded as critical to achieving the desired outcomes for almost all young adults. Employment is generally the key to independence and social inclusion, but also is a major factor for many in their general wellbeing and a sense of personal worth. Responsibility for this agenda is spread across both local and national agencies including Job Centre Plus, HIE, and councils. A working group is in place and it is anticipated that a report will be presented to the Resources Committee in the very near future recommending the establishment of a pan Highland structure within the management of the Planning and Development Service. The development of a Highland Employment plan and performance management of that plan could in future sit within that framework.

### 3 Accommodation

Having a safe and secure place to live (which may be alone or with others) is essential for any person. A short briefing paper which summarises relevant and ongoing work in Housing is appended for members' information. The soon to be published Housing Strategy sets the agenda and performance framework not only for Highland Council but across the sector including Housing Associations and support to the private sector. Whilst accommodation is generally taken to mean housing it is important to address the potential contribution of other non housing based solutions such as the role group or care homes may have as interim provision for some people. Aspects of Housing and accommodation are also incorporated into the draft Joint Community Care Plan.

### 4 Care and Support

A small but important group of young people, particularly those with significant disability or illness, will require care and support in some or

all aspects of their life for example intensive personal care, assistance with managing money, support to access social and recreational opportunities. Plans priorities and performance measures for these services are being set out in the Joint Community Care Plan which has just been published in draft for consultation.

### **3. The Management Framework**

3.1 The four themes as outlined have to operate together at all levels from person specific to senior management and strategic levels. For example there is no point preparing people for jobs which don't exist, nor accommodating them where it is impossible to provide essential care they require. In Highland person specific arrangements and a Chief Officer Group are now in place. It is now proposed to create an area based structure to ensure robust connection and performance management, between those two levels;

#### **3.2 Person Specific**

This is the area in which most progress has already been achieved; the adoption and implementation of the transition planning policy and protocol previously reported to committee, underpinned by GIRFEC and the More Choices More Chances initiatives has already put in place clear arrangements for planning for individual children who are identified as facing particular challenges and risks as they become young adults. The major area for attention is to develop appropriate responses for those young adults who present at a later stage with difficulties, often including substance misuse, homelessness etc.

#### **3.3 Sub Highland**

There is no established single forum or accountability framework which either monitors transitions performance or seeks to address issues or implement policy across the broad agenda of transitions management. To fill this gap it is proposed to consult with relevant partners to seek to establish 3 Area Transitions Management Groups whose role will be to;

- ⇒ Monitor performance against targets agreed by the Chief Officers Group and report this to COG
- ⇒ Operate as a problem solving forum to seek area solutions
- ⇒ Make recommendations to COG for strategic development or action

Each TMG should comprise Area ECS, Housing, Community Care, Children's Service and CHP managers and the appropriate area lead on employment.

Each TMG will invite participation by relevant local partners, including from the third and commercial sectors. It is anticipated that the groups will only require to meet between 2 and 4 times per year. Each group should appoint a chairperson who should attend and report to the Chief Officers group at intervals to be determined by that group

#### **3.4 Highland wide**

The recently formed Chief Officers Group comprises;

- The Director of Social Work -Chair
  - The Director of ECS
  - The Director of Housing
  - The Assistant Chief Executive
  - The Director of Community Care NHSH
- and senior managers from;
- Skills Development Scotland
  - Highland Employer Coalition
  - Inverness College / UHI
  - Highlands and Islands Enterprise

3.5 Subject to the outcome of proposals concerning employment development it is proposed that the Director of Planning and Development is added to the membership.

3.6 The role of the Chief Officers Group is to drive forward performance to ensure effective co-ordination and co-operation between the agencies and services under each of the four themes set out above. The COG should identify priority performance targets within existing strategic and operational plans which are relevant to young people in transition, monitor these through the Area Transitions Management Groups, and through the membership take issues for resolution to the relevant governance structures.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Significant improvements have been achieved in bringing attention to focus on the needs of young people between the ages of 15 and 25, and there is a wide range of local and national initiatives and strategic planning which is beginning to benefit them. The extent of these initiatives and developments poses a major challenge to everyone and it will only be through concerted management action to co-ordinate and where possible integrate these that they will be effective in delivering improved and sustainable outcomes for the young people. The framework outlined above is intended to bring a consistent pan Highland approach to ensuring that progress across all four themes is linked together to achieve that outcome.

#### **Recommendation**

The Joint Committee is asked to consider and endorse the various developments.

**Jonathan King**  
Head of Operations (Community Care)

## **The Role of Housing in Transitions**

This paper aims to identify links between transition planning and housing; current activities and possible actions which could improve transitions processes.

There are a number of housing options in Highland which could be suitable including:

1. Existing Highland Council (THC) and housing association (HA) mainstream tenancy
2. New build THC and HA mainstream tenancy
3. Specialist housing association tenancy e.g. Key Housing
4. Privately rented housing (note – discussions are underway about developing ‘mid-market’ rented housing for people in employment in Highland
5. Privately owned housing – e.g. low cost home ownership via shared equity mechanisms

Support and / or care can – in theory - be delivered to anyone living in any of these options.

6. Residential homes / SWS supported accommodation (these are not covered by the rest of this note as Housing & Property do not have a role in relation to these).

### Transitions Planning Context / Service Development

The Council’s preferred housing solution for people with community care needs is via mainstream housing with floating care or support if required.

Funding for new build affordable housing is expected to be very limited in coming years whilst pressures on housing from people with high levels of housing need are increasing. Support / care funding is also limited. Therefore there is desire to ensure that housing designed to meet a specialist need is developed **only** where there is a sustainable demand and sustainable / viable services. This includes extensively adapting existing housing. There is a desire to identify locales where such factors are in place.

Equally there is a need to ensure access to services by ensuring that allocations to people with community care needs are sensitive to where workforce and facilities to offer their care and support are.

There is a new emphasis on finding alternative housing for households requiring high cost adapted housing (rather than adapting ‘unsuitable’ housing).

Most young people don’t leave home until their mid – late 20’s.

There is a wide range of housing related transition information available on the internet and a number of national resources who can provide support.

## Relevant Current Activities in Relation to Accessing Housing

The following activities aim to assist anyone / any household with community care needs.

Highland Housing Register's (HHR) Allocation Policy - the route to the majority of Council and HA housing - has been refined to ensure that high levels of points are awarded to people with care and support needs in a range of situations (see appendix 1). Along with other points that they are likely to qualify for, this should enable applicants to move to the top of the housing list and increase their chances of being housed quickly when housing is required.

HHR partners will shortly be starting to introduce an approach which helps housing applicants to access a range of housing options (i.e. not just THC / HA housing) - 'housing options approach'. Associated services are in place to help people access private rented housing e.g. rent deposit guarantee scheme.

Personal planning arrangements are being developed which should link to accommodation planning arrangements – as well as support etc.

A protocol for accommodation and support for young people leaving care is in place which sets out expectations; the various roles of those involved; procedures etc. It is a model which could be adapted for Transitions.

HHR partners have developed a database which includes detailed information on applicants with needs for specially designed housing to plan for: new build housing; adaptations and; allocations. It is being used at a 'Special Needs' Inverness, Nairn and Badenoch Development Forum Meeting involving SWS, Health and Housing Development Officers. There is a desire to hold these focused meetings regularly in all 3 areas<sup>1</sup>.

### Actions

These proposed actions – broadly set out in the Joint Community Care Plan and forthcoming Housing Strategy - link directly to and / or should also improve transition planning. There is a need to agree (who and) how they will be taken forward.

**1. Identify 'priority service development' locales** - Jointly with SWS and NHS Highland, review areas: develop profiles of services and housing with a view to agreeing:

- Locales in which service development will be prioritised / supported – e.g. with an identified current and future need and demand; existing and sustainable facilities and services and a workforce to provide care and support.
- Where housing solutions (e.g. wheelchair housing) are required, are possible and could be sustainably supported - including where co-

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<sup>1</sup> Some local SWS and Health officers attend the Local Housing Development Forums.

location of mainstream housing should be encouraged to improve access to services / reduce costs; identification of land opportunities from partners.

- A development agreement approach for specific projects to assist in making sure that capital and revenue / support funding is dovetailed.
- And - understanding where pressures / future pressures on housing in each area are.

**2. Agree forward planning arrangements** – agree processes to improve local on-going planning links with SWS and NHS Highland e.g. identifying specific households who might require highly adapted housing or arrangements to forward plan house moves. Making sure that triggers for housing advice are in place so that advice etc. can be delivered.

**3. Improve information and advice** including:

- Ensuring that arrangements, within the services involved in transition planning (e.g. Housing; the relevant lead officer) are in place to help people plan their move e.g. reviewing housing options for people with community care needs; helping those whose adaptations are too expensive etc.
- Making sure that people know where to get information / advice / assistance from to help them meet their housing needs. This includes accessing home ownership options better – requires awareness of these options and people to link with (e.g. Ownership Options) **and** ensuring that resulting houses are suitable and well located.
- Developing ways of raising awareness and managing households' expectations e.g. where they are offered housing / where they are planning to move to; adapting existing housing – that aspirations may no longer be met.

**4. Disseminate policy direction / changes to those involved in development and adaptations**– e.g. affordable housing development expectations; design etc.

**5. Update and disseminate allocation related changes** e.g. to HHR procedures; policies on sensitive allocation of adapted housing etc.

**6. Encouraging private sector solutions** – (meeting to be organised by Planning and Development Services with SWS and NHS Highland).

Housing & Property to develop a case management approach to dealing with people who are homeless / at risk of homeless and who have community care / support needs. This will build on the approaches used in GIRFEC and the Care Programme Approach.

## 7. HHR Allocation Policy - Care and Support

You will receive up to a maximum of **50 points** if:

- You have an identified need for independent living and where you are living is no longer appropriate, for example: in a residential care or nursing home, a hospital, in supported accommodation with a care package, or in the parental home with a care package **(50 points)**
- The Council has a statutory duty of care in terms of your follow on accommodation for example, you have been a looked after child in a care or kinship arrangement **(50 points)**
- You need access to specialist support services **(20 points)**
- You need to move to provide care and support services, for example, through kinship care arrangements **(20 points)**
- you need to move so that a carer can live with you to enable you to live independently **(10 points)**
- you need to move to receive care from a friend or relative to enable you to live independently **(10 points)**
- you need to move to provide care to a friend or relative to enable them to live independently **(10 points)**
- you or a member of your household needs to move to be nearer facilities or services to maintain independent living **(10 points)**

Eligibility will be based on evidence of your circumstances from an appropriate professional.

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