

TRACKING STUDY OF TRANSITION MEETINGS

Young People with Disability

Secondary Education to Adulthood.

This small study was undertaken in order to ascertain whether the needs of young people and their families were being met by the current systems of transition meetings and transition planning and preparation.

“Whilst a child’s life is shaped from earliest years, the most crucial period in determining the future is during the transition from school to adult life” (Changing Childhoods?-Same as you? Chapter 3 page 59).

“Difficulties mostly arise because of a failure of planning mechanisms to deliver a continuum of support. For young people this can result in a crucial period in their lives with no clear direction or goals” (Changing Childhoods?-Same as You? Chapter 3 page 60)

In most cases the study found that the transition meeting process was valued however there needed to be a more formal structure which gave information on what could be expected, therefore creating a standard that would meet everyone’s needs.

Why

This study was seen as a practical option to obtain an overview of the meetings process for transition for young people from secondary education to adult life who have disability and associated additional support needs.

The study examines the structure, composition and outcomes of the process of a transition meetings for children at various stages of transition, and their families.

It is hoped that the results of this overview will as part of a wider consultation process advise the guidance for practitioners and inform those within the process.

Who

Four young people of both sexes who have additional support needs as the result of disability aged between 16 and 19 years in transition from secondary school to adult life. These young people attended a range of settings:

- Special School (school for children with additional support needs as the result of learning disability)
- Resource base with in main stream school (a base within main school provision which supports children through support for learning to access main school provision and address areas of educational need in a group or one to one)
- Main stream school

How

By considering the following 5 key areas (See App1):

1. Who drives the process of transition?
2. How does the transition meeting meet the needs of the person?
3. When and how are others drawn into the process?
4. How are the youngster, parents/carers enabled to contribute?
5. How does collaborative work assist the process?

These key areas were then broken down into the Question Template to be used to record responses (See App 2). It was agreed that the template would be used to record responses from those attending the meetings and for the interviewer to record any observations.

Working jointly with Jane Baines, Development Officer Support for Learners we:

- Contacted head teachers to inform them of the content of the study and seek approval (See App. 3).
- Discussed the proposal with teachers at named schools and sought their advice and assistance to identify pupils who would meet the criteria of the proposal.
- Contacted via school, parents by letter, enclosing the proposal for the project, to seek permission in the first instance for the youngster to be part of the project (See App. 4).
- Following receipt of the permission slip we contacted the young person to explain reason for undertaking the project.
- sought invitations to attend transition meetings for these pupils as observers.
- Interviews with the young person, parent, teacher and in some cases the social worker using the question template in appendix 2 to record responses to the conducted questions asked.

Outcomes

- Using the evidence gathered to document good practice and make recommendations for transition planning and meetings.
- Document and make recommendations regarding practice issues which have proved difficult to control, have created stumbling blocks, or have had a poor outcome for the young person.
- Determine and make recommendations concerning future needs for the transition planning and meetings process.

When

To be completed by August 2007

FINDINGS

Throughout this text quotes from participants will be highlighted in italics. Good practice statements are highlighted in bold italics.

1. Who drives the process of transition from secondary school to adulthood?

Who arranges Transition Meetings?

- Two families and pupils felt education had this responsibility
- Two felt the responsibility lay with Social Work
- No other professional was considered to have any responsibility for transition from secondary school to adulthood

Summary

In four cases, two transition meetings were arranged by education staff, one by adult Social Work and one jointly between Looked after Children's Reviewing Officer and education.

In the mainstream school the support for learning teacher within the base took the lead in the organisation of the transition meetings.

In the Special school and in the Specialist Unit the lead was between Education and Social Work Looked after Reviewing Team, and in Special School adult Social Work team assumed the lead.

The reason for adult Social Work intervention in Special School was that the young person had a learning disability and associated complex health needs had had no social work intervention to date. The adult Social Work team took lead in the organisation of this complex transition plan.

Who is invited to these transition meetings?

- In all cases ***young person, parents/carers, teacher, social worker***
- Child and Family Social Work, physiotherapist, paediatrician, voluntary sector, careers, educational psychologist, Psychiatrist Adult Service, general practitioner, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist.

Summary

In all cases a selection of the above people participated in the transition meetings those highlighted in bold italics attended in all cases and can be seen as the core group.

Venue for meetings and who leads them

- In mainstream and in the specialist unit the meetings were led by the deputy rector.
- In the special school the meeting was lead by adult social work service.
- In the resource unit, the lead was shared between education and social work looked after reviewing officer.

Summary

In all cases the meetings were held in school and during school hours. The lead was spread evenly between education and social work service.

Method of invitation to transition meetings

- Pre set date which were stated at the bottom of the minute of the meeting
- Pre arranged date then followed by a letter
- Telephone call
- Email

Method of responding to invitation to attend

- Tear off slip attached to the letter
- Email
- Respond at the meeting during setting of pre arranged date
- Email and telephone calls

Summary

"No idea who will turn up"

The methods used to request attendance at a transition meeting varied and there appeared to be no standard method.

Parents felt that there was a poor response by others to confirm if they would attend or not. One parent was not aware of the method used to signal if the person would attend or not.

Is information requested from those unable to attend?

- Yes, reports are requested
- No, reports are circulated from those not attending
- Invitation letter usually requests information from those unable to attend
- Don't know
- No reports are requested
- Never to my knowledge
- Normally the paediatrician will give a written report
- Needs to be a more formal structure
- Expectation that reports come in time for the meeting

Summary

Generally there was no expected method of reporting back however there was an expectation that feed back would be given. In one case information was requested, in another the parent did not know. The paediatrician always gave a written report, and there was an expectation that reports would be available in time for the meeting not necessarily before the meeting...

Is any information requested from any source prior to the meeting?

- From the Resource Allocation Panel (A panel of people from Adult Social Service who allocate funding to Care Packages determined by Social Work Staff to address the need of the Young Person)
- Health service for funding
- Medical information
- Depends on the purpose of the meeting
- No/Never to my knowledge
- Yes various names given e.g. education
- Information is gathered at the meeting and verbal feedback is given
- No Thinks reminder of actions given prior to meeting
- Yes information re visual impairment and psychology

Summary

The theme emerging was no one in this small study seemed to expect written information from those unable to attend. Often verbal feedback from those unable to attend the meeting was given to the chair and relayed to the meeting. Written reports from Paediatricians and education were available as a matter of course, and there was verbal feedback via social work from Resource Allocation Panel regarding funding applications.

Is there an agenda for meetings?

- Previous meeting minute acts as an agenda
- Focussed plan drawn up from school discussion
- Social Work proforma agenda
- Individual Education Plan
- Not one that is in evidence
- Previous report minute is the agenda

Summary

There is a form of agenda at most meetings and this is normally the minute of the previous meeting that has gone before. In one case the mother of the young person was sent information regarding the meeting, before the meeting, this is seen as good practice.

How is the agenda distributed?

- As a minute of the previous meeting
- Discussed at the beginning of the meeting
- Mother has hers sent prior to the meeting
- Sometimes headings are discussed at the start of the meeting
- Minutes of last meeting action points and Any Other Current Business

Summary

The minute of the meeting is often handed out at the next meeting and this forms the agenda for the current meeting. On one occasion a minute of the meeting was made available to the mother and other participants prior to the next meeting. This followed a request from the mother for this to happen so that she could be better prepared.

2. How does the meeting meet the needs of the young person and family?

Does the agenda meet the needs of the young person and their family?

- Yes the minute is adjusted to accommodate AOCB
- Probably not
- *Yes "but benefits-reminders would have been helpful"*
- *"Not usually- x refuses to attend-agenda set by the school"*
- *"Yes the agenda does take account of our needs"*
- Feels that not everything he wants is included in the meeting
- Could be better
- Would benefit from minutes of meetings being made available before the meeting
- Schools set the agenda family have to raise verbal issues
- Yes always discussed with the family before the meeting

Summary

The minutes from the previous meeting act as an agenda therefore there is no immediate facility to record current needs, other than during the meeting. Participants felt that it would be

a better system to always have a record of the meeting as soon as possible following the meeting. It was generally felt that an agenda would be of benefit to the family and the young person.

Who is the designated minute taker?

- *“never received any until the last meeting when I requested them”*
- Social Work
- Member of the support for learning staff
- Designated key worker or social worker
- Principal teacher
- Looked after Children’s Reviewing officer
- Head teacher
- This would be allocated at the beginning of the meeting

Summary

There was no appointed minute taker. On the whole, the role was given at the meeting, except for the meetings chaired by the Looked after Reviewing Officer.

How are actions accrued from the meeting?

- By discussion and request
- Just noted in the minutes
- Do not know –no evidence of an action plan in operation-not explained to me
- Actions are put on the young persons computer
- Minutes are typed out and sent
- Bullet points at the end of the meeting
- Word of mouth
- Based on client need

Summary

All the actions were noted ad hoc however were based on the needs of the young person. The methods of gathering action points varied, however they were all relevant. The main method of recording action points was at the bottom of minutes. One person noted that the action points were “by word of mouth”.

Are these actions formally assigned in a document to a person for action?

- No they are not assigned to a person formally
- No not always clear what the purpose “emphasis” of the meeting is
- *“No accountability seems in evidence to me -no action plan seems to be in place-only suggestions noted”*
- Actions are formally assigned
- Sometimes
- No
- Typed out and sent to the relevant people
- Yes
- People agree as individuals to take things forward

Summary

In some cases actions were formally assigned. All actions were agreed by those attending the meeting but not in the main, formally assigned to anyone. For those not attending the actions were sent out to them in the minute. As stated by one parent there seems no accountability from people assigned actions.

Do these actions have a due date for reporting back?

- No
- No date- no formal agreement
- No formal date –but agreement that actions were immediate
- School monitoring in between
- Generally these would be picked up at next six monthly meeting-- processed and progress (noted)
- No- There would be discussion at the next meeting
- No- just the next meeting
- No -but an expectation of feedback at the next meeting
- Do not seem to not discussed at the next meeting

Summary

Generally there were no specific dates given for reporting back on actions, the school assumed the task of monitoring in between meeting dates, however this was patchy and the consensus seemed to indicate that action progress would be picked up at the next meeting. This meeting could be up to six months away.

Is there a detailed method of reporting back detailed e.g. in writing, verbal as an assessment?

- No
- Written report
- *“No agreements ever seem to be reached or documented as to how, in detail we plan to co-ordinate what each person is doing to meet X needs for independence and readiness for university”*
- Yes
- No information is requested to be channelled through the social worker/case manager
- Verbal /do in writing
- Written report from school
- No method requested self directed response
- Nothing till next meeting

Summary

In the majority of cases there was an expectation that those assigned tasks would respond and give feedback on progress. This information was on the whole not requested in any specific format; in fact the decision to respond and the method chosen appears to be self directed. No one person attending the meeting assumed the role of collating progress. **Schools always produced written reports as did paediatricians.**

Who is designated to ensure that reports, assessments, actions etc. are completed in a timely fashion for the next meeting?

- No-one
- Social work agree to chase up actions
- Principal teacher education

- Social worker LAC
- *“This is not a designated role”*
- Expectation that this will happen
- Case manager social work

Summary

The responsibility for this appeared to fall to only two services, namely social work and education. It appears not to be a designated role within the transition process.

At what point are funding requests made?

- Poor feed back—paper work
- Laughed loudly
- Application for care package-approved in principal --ask for health contribution –brick wall- no one willing to confirm whether this is possible.
- As and when
- Direct payments in place no adult social worker appointed no single shared assessment as yet despite age –over 18.
- End of February?
- (Age) 18 still no funding request at the any meeting re transition.
- Made by the social worker?
- As soon as the assessments complete 9-12months before transition
- Although x was at the meeting and funding was discussed no package was offered and no support by social work to put a funding package in place
- No idea

Summary

No one person appeared to have an idea of exactly when this process should be undertaken. On one occasion an “approval in principal “was sought from the resources panel. Generally there was a feeling of a “brick wall” ethos, and that no one was sure of why things were rejected — when payments should be re assessed — feelings of frustration, that things did not move quickly enough and that funding was considered too late. Single Shared Assessments (This assessment is the method used by Adult Social Work Service to assess and record needs in order to determine ways of supporting need) were not in place soon enough. Others felt they were totally in the dark with regard to funding as a whole.

3. When and how are key people drawn into the process?

Who are the core group of meeting participants?

- Social Work, School Support for Learning Teacher, Parents/Carers, Young person, Health Service, Occupational therapist and Careers Service
- Voluntary Service School nurse Community Nurse Centre Staff G.P. Psychiatrist
- College Staff
- Adult respite staff residential, respite care manager children’s service

Summary

In all cases the core group at the transition meeting were the teacher, young person, social work and one or a combination of other professionals and voluntary agencies with a remit to meet the needs of the young person and their family.

(Voluntary Services such as Falcon Project, Crossroads, and Youth Clubs etc.)

(Adult Services such as Adult Respite Care services, College, Adult Health services etc.)

How is the decision taken to invite another person?

- Negotiate
- At the request of the parent or school
- *"Up to me it is my meeting"*
- Group decision-head teacher or self-mum would feel ok re inviting
- Parents would ask but letter from school invites to bring whoever
- Based on a need identified
- School and parents
- Occasional request from a health discussion-- as a result of the Education plan--social work plan
- Collective decision

Summary

On one occasion the young person stated that it was "up to me it is my meeting". In the majority the need to invite another person was based on an identified need for the young person or the family and there was discussion between those present as to who would meet the need and then who was to be invited. The decision seemed always to be a collective one, apart from the one school who wrote a letter inviting parents/young person to bring who they wanted.

Who invites this person?

- Teacher usually
- NHS, Education, teacher, social worker
- Social worker/parents/school
- Principal teacher as an action from the meeting/discussion/school
- Don't know
- Chair of the meeting
- Care Manager

Summary

The general consensus was that a variety of people would / could assume the role of inviting some one to join the group to meet an identified need. No one was formally assigned the role as a matter of course and that the decision of who would undertake this role was arrived at, at the meeting.

Is their presence time limited (at the meeting)?

- Depends on the activity
- (Do people come for only one or two meetings?) Yes/often cannot attend as too short notice
- Yes
- Discuss need to continue to attend
- Do not know
- No dealings-social work informal agreement?
- Not aware

Summary

Some were aware that the role identified would be time limited; others were not sure how this decision was arrived at, other than it depended on the activity/ action to be undertaken.

Is the scope of each persons work clearly defined?

- Never
- Teacher would know so would X

- Yes it is
- Not really
- Defined by the job they hold rather than the need of the pupil
- Each task has a defined role
- At this meeting each person has defined tasks
- No overlap

Summary

On the whole there was an understanding that the role the person undertaking the actions had determined their work with the young person. Role overlap was mentioned as a difficulty and some felt the role /task was not clearly defined.

Who defines the scope of the work?

- No one
- The meeting would agree
- Discussed
- Professional intention through the needs of the client
- Joint discussion
- Each action is defined
- The professional in discussion at the meeting
- Not sure what workers do
- (Who says what they should do) Not sure

Summary

It was thought that work to be undertaken was defined by the person assigned the task to meet the need in association with the meeting. Some were unsure how this was determined, and one person said that the work/action to be undertaken was clearly defined.

Good practice should always dictate that the action is clearly defined with a named person, stated time to begin and review date as standard.

4. How the youngster, parents and carers are enabled to contribute?

Has a person Centred approach been adopted?

- Yes in the main-however (feels that)people at the top do not adopt this approach
- Yes the young person does not like to attend but gives his views and thoughts to parents and Support for Learning prior to the meeting
- Feels everyone works to make sure X is at the centre of the plan
- Yes
- Young person is at the meeting
- Yes the client remained at he centre if the meeting throughout
- Absolutely
- No - person attended-large meeting at times unable to make eye contact with the speaker-questioner
- Discussion always included the young person-professionals always directed their comments to the young person depends on who you speak to and your definition of person centred. Can a professional really attempt person centred planning without knowing the persons real difficulties and information gathers from others?

Summary

Everyone felt that the young people were at the centre of the meeting. However it was stated that some professionals worked with the young person without having a true picture of them. In one case it was felt that there was not an information gathering process in place to give a true picture of the young person. Venue and seating arrangements made person centred interactions difficult at times

How is the young person prepared for meetings?

- He is asked if he wants to attend and if he refuses there is no further discussion
- Social worker/mother teacher
- Family and school
- Teacher and social worker through discussion and information sharing
- Parents and staff talk X through issues- lengthy process not just a meeting
- Teacher by informal chats about –meetings-the reports from physios ETC. read these to the young person in the month leading up to the meeting along side social work careers
- Teacher, mother, voluntary organisation
- Community nurse

Summary

Generally young people were prepared for the meeting in a variety of ways to meet their own individual needs. A variety of people undertook this task either individually or as a group taking on parts of the preparation. On one occasion the young person was asked to attend he said no, and there was no further intervention offered.

How are the parents/Carers prepared for the transition meeting?

- Notes in the home school diary, Social work
- Listening advocating and highlighting
- They are not
- (How is your mum prepared for the meeting?) Don't Know
- No one--- would welcome help
- Informal during visits to school telephone chats—explanation
- Prior to the meeting by social worker and the teacher
- By being invited to the transition meeting no agenda no list of people attending-no explanation of what is to be discussed apart from it's about transition from school

Summary

This question got a mixed response. There were some examples of Good Practice some had a good practice standard of preparing parents as a matter of course through informal chats at school, home to school diary entries, through telephone calls and home visits. Others had no such preparation and would have welcomed it.

Good practice should determine that parents are prepared for the meeting through both informal and formal means as standard by agreed service/services that collaborate.

When does preparation for transition take place for the young person parents/carers?

- First transition meeting took place in February 2007- vague discussion about looking at transition following higher exams in May- invited party's school, speech and language therapist and careers-not parents.
- Pre-meeting by parents and school
- Prior to the meeting no defined time
- Informal at home if appropriate social work and careers

- Phone calls no formal process at school and at home
- In terms of this transition by telephone/ joint visits
- *Not soon enough*
- With the pupil over time

Summary

For the young person the preparation is undertaken over time and is tailored to their individual need. For parents this is again patchy and it seems some have good practice standard of working alongside the parent. Others it seems involved parents too late in the process. No formal standard appears to be in operation.

Who takes responsibility for this preparation?

- Don't know a combination
- Care Manager
- School still trying to organise
- Teacher
- Social Worker
- Parents
- Other organisations do not know X well enough-- School will have to continue
- Joint responsibility Social worker, Teacher and home
- Collective responsibility

Summary

The responsibility seems to be with social work, education and parents. Most felt that this was a collective responsibility, however again there was no formal standard to expect. Agencies taking over responsibility or brought in did not have the knowledge of the youngster needed to assist the process of transition.

Good practice determines that young people and their families/carers should be prepared by named people over time in a way best suited to meet their need prior to all transition meetings. When more than one service is involved in this preparation then they must collaborate.

Is advocacy used formally or informally?

- No felt it is not needed
- No
- Parents advocate
- No formal advocacy service mother advocates on behalf of X
- Social worker has Advocated on behalf of X and on behalf of the family
- Mother has advocated on behalf of X
- Used informally

Summary

In the 4 cases we studied, there was no formal advocacy; informal advocacy was used by a mother and social work. There was a feeling that advocacy was not needed in these cases.

How is information shared prior to the meeting?

- Informally there would be more benefit in a more formal approach
- Not shared
- Written, one to one verbal
- Circulation of school notes sometimes
- Speaking to others

- Not paperwork verbal
- It is not other than school feedback
- By telephone face to face email reports
- Informal; discussion with the family and reports
- Always have the teachers report, social worker calls me to discuss
- Information sharing does not seem to happen to any great extent out with the meeting

Summary

In general there seems to be a need for a more formal approach to information sharing. Although on the whole people did communicate there was no standard approach to information sharing however it did happen as a matter of good practice by most

Who takes responsibility for answering questions from the young person, parents /carers following the meeting?

- This job does not appear to be given to anyone but as a parent I can call the school or the reviewing officer to discuss issues arising from the meeting. X does not seem to be able to discuss the meeting as he finds the issues difficult to deal with so he prefers to try to ignore them.
- Review officer will ask before the end of the meeting if you have a question social worker always offers, teacher will ask following the meeting
- No one--- but feels like that would be a benefit
- Teacher /social worker
- Social worker /teacher following the meeting
- X feels his mum does this
- Care Manager informally--- combination but feels like this should be a formal role

Summary

This role is not a formally allocated however it does appear to be managed locally as good practice following some meetings. Generally this was a role which was considered necessary and one which would be valued both by parents and young people.

Good practice determines that debriefing should be given priority following all transition meetings and should be an allocated role as standard.

5. How does collaborative work assist transition?

Is the preparation work with participants undertaken collaboratively?

- No
- Yes respite school talk to each other
- Yes teacher, mum and social work
- Yes school and parents
- Yes Social Worker by telephone to school both talk to each other
- School and parents
- The preparation work appears fragmented as each professional seems to have different ideas about preparing X. No one seems to be co -coordinating the practical task of working out who is doing what

Summary

The general feeling was that collaborative work was undertaken in the preparation of young people and by a core group of parents, school and social work staff. One response suggested

that this work could be undertaken better and that the task of preparation could be better co-ordinated. The suggestion was that it would be good to have this undertaken as an expectation of transition planning and preparation.

Good practice determines that as a standard co-ordinated, collaborative approach makes for better preparation of young people and their families.

How does collaborative work help the process?

- *“Faster outcomes when collaboration happens”*
- Provides a more cohesive service
- Allows for a differing knowledge base to provide an overall picture
- *“Crucial-youngsters with complex needs –cannot divide up whole person- must work holistically”*
- (How does working together help?) *“Makes me understand and I can have a point of view”*
- Working collaboratively works well—sing from the same sheet-all in agreement
- Everyone’s views are heard makes for a more holistic intervention.

Summary

The overwhelming response from all was that collaboration assisted outcomes in transition. The quotes above state that there are very specific outcomes to collaboration *“faster outcomes when collaboration happens”* and *“make me understand-I can have a point of view”*.

Good practice determines that collaboration assists positive outcomes for the young person and is view by all as a standard

Which areas of the transition process are best assisted when undertaken collaboratively?

- All of them-funding –care package-health continued education training needs
- All areas information, knowledge about moving on
- (Which bits of your meeting are helped if people work together?) All
- Equipment transfer and money (*“money people should the meeting and give their findings in writing”*)
- School and young person are the best collaborators
- (Poor collaboration leads to) lack of knowledge of the young person from other agencies
- Physiotherapy and independence skills ---all areas
- All areas of transition benefit form a collaborative approach
- Information sharing and service access
- Careers education leisure
- (Poor collaboration leads to having to) Stay on another year at school as no one is doing anything

Summary

All areas of transition are seen to have best outcomes when collaboration takes place, and this activity was seen as positively assisting and enabling the transition process for young people. There was a stated need for the Resource Allocation Panel should make their findings about care packages known in writing or attend themselves to discuss decisions.

Which disciplines work collaboratively?

- Careers, education, leisure and social work
- School, paediatrician, adult services, GP, social worker and community nurse
- School parents and sometimes Health
- Social worker, teacher and careers

- Social work, education and nurse
- School Support for learning teacher and home
- Health, Social Work, Child and family, Adult social worker, Careers patchy
- Mum, Social Worker, Teacher and Falcon Project

Summary

Above are examples of the services which our participants viewed as working collaboratively. In the majority all services were seen to promote collaborative working to assist positive transition. Social work service and education were seen to have pivotal role within the collaborative process.

Note specific areas of collaborative work

- Meetings with the centre and interagency information sharing
- None
- Community nurse information sharing (with others)
- Paediatrician adult services re epilepsy
- Children's ward Raigmore Hospital with adult ward Raigmore Hospital
- Preparation of school and college
- Support for learning and home, helping the youngster with life skills and communication
- Physiotherapy+ Occupational therapist (paediatric),+ some Social Work services, +Voluntary action groups, +Falcon Project and Crossroads
- Centre+ school +community nurse+ school nurse+ social worker+ psychiatrist+ GP
- Careers +Falcon Project
- Support for Learning Development Officer Support for Learning + Mother
- CHIP+ the information pack for parents

Summary

A number of agencies were noted to work collaboratively examples as noted above. As can be seen the agencies noted to have worked in collaboration with others the young person and families/carers are many and varied.

Conclusion

By considering these five key areas

1. Who drives the process of transition?
2. How does the transition meeting meet the needs of the person?
3. When and how are others drawn into the process?
4. How are the youngster, parents/carers enabled to contribute?
5. How collaborative is the process?

The study concluded the following:

1. Who drives the process of transition?

- In all cases Education and Social Work were seen to have a pivotal role in transition planning meetings. Although views were divided on who actually arranged meetings, the core group was seen to be the young person, parents/ carer's, education and social work all other disciplines were seen as attending when needed.
- In the majority invitations were sent via letter or as a result of the attendance list at the last meeting. Email was used as a reminder of the meeting date, time and venue. Apologies were via a tear off slip at the bottom of the letter, email or telephone, no method was seen as adequate and people still failed to attend with no explanation.
- There was no expectation that information or reports would be made available prior to the meeting. There was an expectation that medical information / reports would be requested and supplied. Generally both the minute and agenda were one and the same and they would be given out at the meeting. In one instance the minute of the meeting and reports were made available to the mother and young person.

2. How does the meeting meet the needs of the person?

- The agenda for most meetings has the ability to accommodate the needs of the young person and the family and there are good practice elements throughout. It would be of benefit however to have a standard that the minute is made available prior to the meeting. The family should have the opportunity to prepare for the meeting with an appropriate agenda and be able to submit their items for discussion before the meeting.
- The minute taking responsibility is devolved to either education or social work. As a good practice measure, minutes should always be made available to all those attending the meeting before the meeting.
- The method of accruing actions appears to be patchy and parents and young people are not always clear as to how these agreements for actions to be assigned are agreed.
- Actions do not seem to be assigned by the person chairing the meeting, but are assigned at the bottom of the minute following discussion at the meeting
- The actions do not have any formal start or review date assigned to them.
- There is no expectation as to what sort of response to the action is expected e.g. report, assessment of progress in writing or verbal feedback.
- The role of ensuring that actions are followed through is not formally assigned during the meeting. No one has the role of co-ordinating reports etc

- In response to the question concerning funding applications, respondents did give evidence of good practice; they seemed to have a clear understanding of when to make application. Although this is not universal and parents and young people seem not to be aware of when or how this is to happen.

3. When and how others are drawn into the process?

- The core group meeting for transitions is variable dependant on the needs of the individual but would always include the following people, the young person, their parents /carers, teacher, social worker.
- The decision to invite another person appears to rest with the professionals in the group. The needs of the young person dictate who is invited through discussion and negotiation.
- The person tasked to invite others into the process is unclear and perhaps needs to be seen as a role for one individual at the meeting.
- The person attending has no clearly defined time frame for attending meetings and there is no clear reviewing mechanism for this other than discussion at the meeting. The scope of work to be undertaken is defined by the job description.

4. How the young person, Parents/carers are enabled to contribute?

- A person centred approach was always undertaken, close attention should however be given to the size of the meeting and the seating plan so the young person can see who is talking and be heard see when responding.
- Preparation of the young person and their parents/carers does take place by variety of people. A formal expectation to have minutes of previous meeting available prior to the next meeting would assist preparation. Not everyone felt they were adequately prepared and the system for preparation should be one that is anticipated and not so informal. Preparation for the transition meetings was patchy and in some cases not undertaken soon enough.
- The responsibility for preparation seemed to fall to social work, education and parents, no other organisation was mentioned. All used advocacy informally.
- Information was shared by all in an informal manner with only one instance of reports and other information being given prior to the meeting. There is a stated benefit to having a more formal information route.
- Responsibility for answering questions or clarifying actions does take place but has no formal structure although the people who are seen to take responsibility for this are education staff and social work staff.

5. How does collaborative work assist the transition process?

- Collaboration is seen to be fragmented although there are specific links between school and home and these links are extended to social work and community nursing.
- Faster outcomes are noted when collaboration occurs and it is seen to mean young people's needs are dealt with holistically.
- One young person felt it helped his needs to be better known and that it helped him to voice these.
- All areas of transition were seen to benefit from a collaborative approach to transition.

Other information obtained as a result of this small study highlighted the following:

- The “*money deciders*” (Resource Allocation Panel) should make their decisions about funding in writing in order to afford better understanding of how decisions are arrived at and this would in turn make it easier to appeal the decision.
- One family saw Careers Scotland and the teacher as the main planners for transition and they felt that they should have more involvement in the process. They felt that it needed someone with a good knowledge of their particular cared for youngsters needs and that this was lacking by one or all of the transition planners.
- It was felt that the family's contribution was undervalued. They also felt that there was a mistaken belief that the professionals were working in a person centred manner with only some of the information.
- The relationship with school and organising college could be better if social work attended important meetings. There was an inability to name an Adult social worker, which resulted in no support or advice on funding.
- Other concerns noted were about Moving and Handling for parents, which should be available going into adulthood.
- Worries that there will be nothing there for after school for this particular young person and that that often leads to feelings of depression at the thought of moving on from school

Getting it right for every child “stressed the need for assessment and planning to consider the context which young people inhabit, both risks and opportunities. It pointed to the importance of them developing qualities such as resilience, sociability and problem solving skills and of professionals consulting effectively, sharing information and taking joint action” (Count us in -- WE'RE STILL HERE HMIE May 2008)

The key factors to assist seamless transition and positive destinations from school to adult life include the following features

- *Learning experiences which engage and motivate young people and encourage them to attend;*
- *Appropriate and relevant curricular pathways, personalised to meet individual need;*
- *Positive and supported relationships with staff;*
- *Recognition of, and respect for young people's emerging adulthood;*
- *Planned development for employability*
- *Nurturing of personal qualities such as confidence and resilience*

- *Listening to young people and responding positively where possible;*
- *Close tracking and monitoring of progress of all learners those with individualised educational programmes and co-ordinated support plans; and*
- *Recognising and celebrating individual achievements within a range of on texts and communicating these to young people themselves and to potential employers and selection agencies. (Count us in—WE'RE STILL HERE HMIE may 2008)*

In order to build on the good practice demonstrated in Highland by those who base their work on collaboration, co-operation and communication and considering the proposed outcomes of the study as detailed:

- Using evidence gathered, document good practice and make recommendations for transition planning meetings
- Document and make recommendations regarding practice issues which have proved difficult to control, have created stumbling blocks, or, have had poor outcomes for the young person
- Determine and make recommendations concerning future needs for the transition meetings process

The information from young people, parents and professional has informed the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Good Practice for transition meetings must as a standard include the following:

1. The core group should always include the young person and their supporters if they wish to participate. Their views should always be sought and included in the meeting. School staff should maintain a pivotal role within transition meetings.
2. Invitations to attend meetings should include a method of responding the recipient's intention to attend.
3. Information should always be requested from those working with the young person. The method of giving this information should be stipulated and given a due date.
4. Minutes and reports should be made available prior to the meeting date for everyone especially the young person and their supporters. A person should have the designated role to co-ordinate this.
5. A formal system of preparation for young people and their supporters for transition meetings should be standard. This should meet the needs of the young person and their supporters.
6. Actions must always be based on the needs as identified by the young person, their family or others in association with the young person.
7. Actions should always be assigned to a named person, stating a date for commencing the action and a date for review.
8. A person centred approach should always be paramount with issues like where to have the meeting, size of venue and seating plan for the meeting considered alongside the young person.
9. Collaboration should be encouraged at all levels of the transition process. Parents and young people's contributions should always be sought, valued and considered.
10. Resource Allocation Panel should make their findings in writing to the young person and the family /supporters in order to afford a better understanding of their decision and how it was reached.

**Marea Foulis
Jane Baines**

(July 2008)

Tracking Study criteria for secondary school to adult life transition for children with disability.

Each of the Scope headings as detailed are divided into Key Issues. These are the areas that will be addressed in the examination of materials generated during transition and will be used in the interviewing of any participant during study of each transition meeting.

1. Who drives the process of transition?

Key Areas

<u>Identify:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who arranges the meetings?• Where these meetings are held.• Who is initially invited and the method of invitation. E.G. letter, word of mouth, telephone, pre- set date.• How people acknowledge attendance.• How people send apologies.• If there is a need to send information to the meeting via report or other means prior to the meeting or if unable to attend.• If there is an agenda for the meeting and how this is distributed e.g. prior to, during, no agenda.
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2. How does the meeting meet the needs of the person?

Key Areas

<u>Identify:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the agenda met the needs of the person during the transition meeting.• Who is delegated to minute take?• How actions accrued from the meeting are documented.• If these actions are assigned to a person to action.• If these actions have a due date for reporting back.
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3. When and how others are drawn into the process?

Key Areas

<u>Identify:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The core group of meeting participants.• The decision is taken to invite another person.• Who invites this person?• If their presence is time limited.• Whether the scope of each persons work clearly defined and by whom?• What works well?
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4. How the Youngster, Parents and carers are enabled to contribute.

Key Areas

<u>Identify:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whether a Person Centred Approach has been adopted.• How the youngster is prepared for the transition meetings.• How parents/carers are prepared for the transition meeting.• How this takes place.• Who takes responsibility for this preparation?• Is Advocacy used formally or on an informal basis?• How information is shared prior to the meeting.
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5. How does collaborative work assist transition?

Key Areas:

<u>Identify:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with participants undertaken collaboratively?• How collaborative work assists the process.• Which areas of the transition process are best assisted when undertaken collaboratively?• Which disciplines work collaboratively?• Specific areas of collaborative work.
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SECONDARY TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE**SCHOOL** _____**DATE** _____**NAME** _____**Criteria**

Each of the Scope headings as detailed are divided into Key Issues. These are the areas that will be addressed in the examination of materials generated during transition and will be used in the interviewing of any participant.

1. Who drives the process of transition?**Key Issues**

<u>IDENTIFY</u>	<u>RESPONSE</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who arranges the meetings? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where are these meetings held? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is initially invited? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the method of invitation. E.G. letter, word of mouth, telephone, pre- set date. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do people acknowledge attendance? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do people send apologies? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is information requested from those unable to attend? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is information requested from any source prior to the meeting? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there an agenda for the meeting? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is the agenda distributed e.g. prior to, during.? 	

2. How does the meeting meet the needs of the person?

IDENTIFY	RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the agenda meet the needs of the person/ family?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the designated minute taker?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are actions accrued from the meeting documented?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are these actions formally assigned in a document, to a person for action?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do these actions have a due date for reporting back?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the method of reporting back detailed E.G. in writing, verbal as an assessment?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is designated to ensure that Reports, Assessments, Actions etc. are completed in a timely fashion for the next meeting?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At what point are funding requests made?	

3. When and how others are drawn into the process?

Key Issues

IDENTIFY	RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who are the core group of meeting participants?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is the decision taken to invite another person?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who invites this person?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is their presence time limited?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the scope of each persons work clearly defined ?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who defines the scope of work?	

4. How the Youngster, Parents and carers are enabled to contribute.

Key Issues

IDENTIFY	RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a 'Person Centred Approach' been adopted? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the youngster prepared for transition meetings? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the parents/carers prepared for transition meetings? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When does preparation for transition for youngster/ parents/ carers take place? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who takes responsibility for this preparation? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Advocacy used formally or on an informal basis? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is information shared prior to the meeting? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who takes responsibility for answering questions from youngsters/ parents/ carers following the meeting? 	

5. How does collaborative work assist transition?

Key Issues

<u>IDENTIFY</u>	<u>RESPONSE</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the preparation work with participants undertaken collaboratively?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does collaborative work assist the process?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which areas of the transition process are best assisted when undertaken collaboratively?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which disciplines work collaboratively?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note specific areas of collaborative work.	

(Appendix 3)

Director of Education
Culture and Sport: Bruce Robertson
Contact: Marea Foulis
Telephon 01349 863441
e:
Fax: 01349 865637
Email: Marea.Foulis@highland.gov.uk
Our Ref: MF/JLA
Date:

Dear *(Head Teacher)*

My name is Marea Foulis; I am the Transitions Co-ordinator for Highland Council, in post for a period of one year until June 2007. My remit is to determine the pathway and any training issues that become evident for a seamless transition for children with disability from school and into adult life.

I will be undertaking the work detailed below alongside Jane Baines, Development Officer for Learning Support.

We have had preliminary discussion with *(teacher's name)* and she has expressed an interest in participating. This work will involve tracking three children from various school settings throughout their transition year. These children will have complex needs which will encompass physical difficulties, medical needs and or learning disabilities.

Please find attached, for your information the Proposal for the work to be undertaken and the expected outcomes. A copy of the letter intended for the parents/carers of the children who will form the focus of the study is also included.

If you require discussing the work further, or objecting to the work being undertaken, please do not hesitate to contact either Jane or myself at the contact points detailed below.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

MAREA FOULIS
Transition Coordinator
Marea.Foulis@highland.gov.uk
Tel: 01349 863441

JANE BAINES
Development Officer Support for Learners
Jane.Baines@highland.gov.uk
Tel: 01349 863441

(Appendix 4)

Director of Education
Culture and Sport: Bruce Robertson
Contact: Marea Foulis
Telephone 01349 863441
:
Fax: 01349 865637
Email: Marea.Foulis@highland.gov.uk
Our Ref: MF/JLA
Date:

Dear

My name is Marea Foulis; I am the Transitions Co-ordinator for Highland Council, in post for one year. My remit is to determine the pathway for a seamless transition process for children with disability transiting from school to adult life. I will be working alongside Jane Baines, Development Officer for Support for Learning.

We will be following the transition progress of three children during the 2006—2007 school year transiting from various school settings.

I am writing to request your permission to track (*Childs name*) on her journey through the transition process, from secondary education into adult services. The tracking of (*Childs name*) will enable us to be able to determine the transition process, good practice and frustrations that occur and how these are addressed. This piece of work will assist the process of transition for others in the future.

Please find attached the Proposal for the work to be undertaken and the anticipated outcomes. It is not our intention to refer to or to name your child in the documentation or recommendations generated from this work.

If you agree to allow us to track the transition for your child please sign the consent form attached and return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope enclosed. Should you want to discuss this further please contact either Jane or myself.

Many thanks for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

MAREA FOULIS
Transition Coordinator
Marea.Foulis@highland.gov.uk
Tel: 01349 863441

JANE BAINES
Development Officer Support for Learners
Jane.Baines@highland.gov.uk
Tel: 01349 863441

TRANSITION TRACKING Study

Please sign below, to give permission for your child to be involved in taking part in the Transition Tracking Project from December 2006 until 30 June 2007 as detailed on the attached letter.

I give permission for _____ to take part.

Signature _____

Relationship to Child _____

Date _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Please return the completed form to Marea Foulis, Transitions Co-ordinator, Education Centre, Castle Street, Dingwall IV15 9HU.