



“Transitions need to be planned, progressive and holistic. A national framework should be developed which provides a coherent and co-ordinated approach across the country but which allows for flexible and responsive delivery at local level.”

[Aberdeen Cyrenians]

“There is a lack of co-ordination in planning and funding for bridging the gap between school, further education and employment. The whole range of bodies should be involved - education, health, employment service, LEC, local authorities and employers. All these bodies need to view provision from a social and economic perspective.”

[Real Jobs]

“To assist young people with special needs to make the transition, there should be a coherent strategy, a multi-agency approach, a lead organisation, access to information, reduction in duplication of work with the client, better information available to young people and their parents, and flexibility and a phased transition.”

[Association of Directors of Education]



4 Improving Transition

Agencies Working Together

The Issue

4.1 One of the major barriers experienced by young people and their parents in the transition from school to further education and training, and in subsequent transitions, is the lack of effective communication between agencies.

4.2 This was one of the most consistent themes running through all our consultation exercises and was the issue most often raised in our discussions with both individuals and agencies. It was clear to the Committee that young people, parents, practitioners and the voluntary sector experience frustration with the barriers presented by organisational and funding arrangements in different agencies. The problems caused by lack of communication between agencies can result in:

- lack of co-ordination of services: for example, when a young person may have the opportunity to attend a college but cannot have the need for transport or a personal carer met;
- lack of up-to-date, accurate information about the young person available to the education or training provider because there are no agreed protocols for passing on information. There may also be professional caution about passing on information and this caution is ultimately unhelpful to the young person;
- lack of co-ordinated and comprehensive information about learning opportunities, funding or support and advice services available to young people and their parents;
- lack of an overall plan which takes into account all the learning and support needs of the young person, shared and understood by all the relevant agencies. This can lead to duplication of learning, discontinuity and demotivation. It can also lead to insufficient time spent on development of personal skills and attributes.

4.3 These are only some of the consequences of a lack of communication between agencies. It can have a potentially damaging effect on young people who are likely to need additional support to make a successful transition to post-school learning, and on to employment. **The issue is how to tackle the fragmented and disparate levels of support, advice and information experienced by young people across Scotland.**

The Committee's View

4.4 Inclusiveness demands that the individual should be at the centre of the decision-making process of all agencies. The first and most important step in putting Inclusiveness into practice is to bring together the skills and resources of all the relevant agencies and organisations so that they operate for the maximum benefit of the young person. Organisational and funding structures should support the individual, not create barriers. An Inclusiveness approach requires that structures should be adapted to meet the learning and support needs of the individual.

4.5 Young people who have additional learning or support needs are, in the majority of cases, going to require either direct provision or support from more than one agency. A young person who has physical disabilities, sensory impairment or learning disabilities is likely to require more intensive guidance, perhaps from the careers service, or some additional equipment or extra assistance provided through separate funding from the NHS or Social Work Department. A young person who has problems in getting access to education or training because of social or financial circumstances, or low levels of basic or social skills, may require help from the benefits system, from the Social Work Department or some form of more intensive guidance and support.

4.6 Within an Inclusiveness approach to post-school provision, the young person should be able to get access to a whole "package" of provision designed to meet his/her identified learning and support needs. This can only be achieved if the "system" pulls together to meet the needs of the whole person. The way in which this is done should not be a matter of concern for the young person or their families; it should be the product of "joined-up" thinking between and across the various agencies and, more importantly, "joined-up" provision.

Implementing Inclusiveness Network

4.7 To address this fundamental issue the Committee has developed a proposal for an Implementing Inclusiveness network. The network should have leadership and strategic direction at national level and area networks across Scotland. The strategy for Implementing Inclusiveness should be taken forward at area level through the development of area strategies and operational frameworks, incorporating key worker support for young people and their parents/carers.

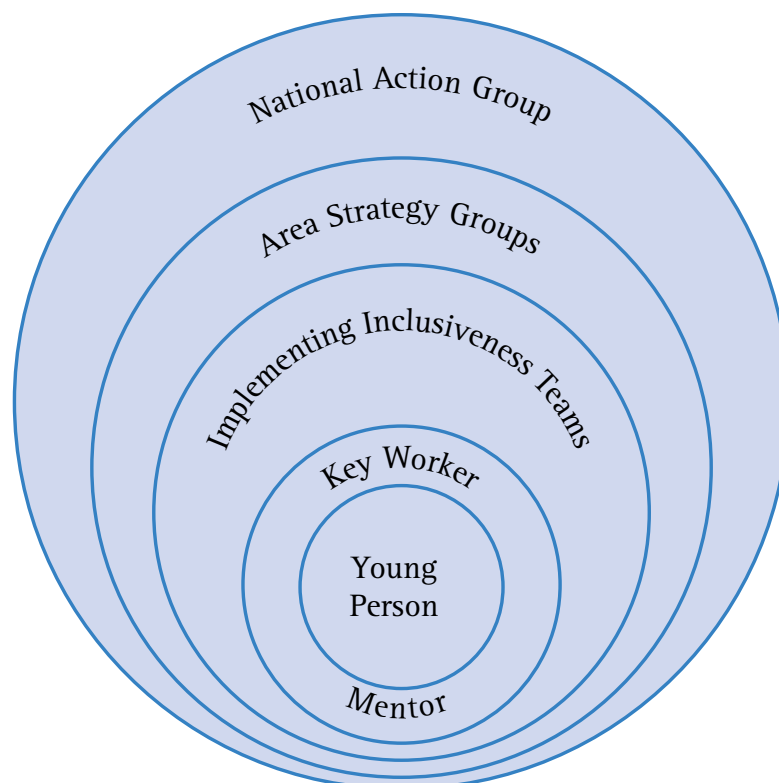
4.8 The purpose of the Implementing Inclusiveness network will be to ensure that all young people have access to guidance, further education and training opportunities and additional support. But it is also fundamental to our vision of Inclusiveness that there should be a consistent and coherent service available across Scotland. To achieve this, we believe that there must be a national direction and oversight of the new arrangements. The establishment of the new Scottish Parliament opens up the opportunity for the Scottish Executive to take a real and direct role in improving future learning and support provision for our most vulnerable young people. We, therefore, **recommend that the Scottish Executive should set up a National Action Group for Implementing Inclusiveness, to be chaired by a Minister, to set up local**

area networks and to monitor their effectiveness.

4.9 It is fundamental to the purpose and practices of these new networks that they should operate at both a strategic and operational level. The aim should be to ensure co-operation and co-ordination of activities; and to promote sharing of resources, which should include the co-ordinated application of funding. **The Committee recommends that there should be an Area Strategy Group for Implementing Inclusiveness that brings together all the relevant organisations and agencies in each area to ensure that young people receive all the learning opportunities and support services that they might require. The Area Strategy Group should set up an Implementing Inclusiveness Team to take forward the management and delivery of the strategy.**

Proposals and Recommendations

4.10 In this chapter we set out our proposals for action at national and area level. In Chapter 5 we set out ideas for key worker support arrangements. We set out below our recommendations for a National Action Group and area networks for Implementing Inclusiveness.



National Action Group for Implementing Inclusiveness

4.11 The National Action Group should be chaired by a Minister and drawn from high level representatives within The Scottish Executive Departments, further education, community education, the enterprise networks, COSLA, voluntary sector, employers, careers service and training sector. Consideration should also be given to the most effective mechanisms for getting the views of young people and their parents. They may find it difficult to put their views across in formal meetings. There should be a consultative mechanism which allows young people to put their views across in their own way.

4.12 The first task for the National Action Group should be to review the proposals and recommendations in this report. We believe that there are important aspects of our recommendations where it will be necessary to pilot different approaches to implementation. In the case of our proposals for area networks, it is our view that piloting of different models to meet different local circumstances is the way forward. **We, therefore, recommend that the National Action Group should set criteria for the establishment of the area networks. Within those criteria, there should be active encouragement for diversity of approaches designed to meet the needs of the area: rural/urban split; size of population; demographics; pattern of further education and training provision; and the community learning plans.**

4.13 While we discussed the idea of piloting different models for area networks in 6-8 areas of Scotland, we concluded that it would be inequitable to move ahead with improvements in multi-agency working in some areas, and not in others. **We recommend, therefore, that in the first 3 years of the area networks every area should be regarded as a "pilot".** The National Action Group should invite proposals for the formation of area networks on the basis of the agreed criteria. They should also require an evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed structure over a 2 year period. The National Action Group should then assess the effectiveness of the different models on the basis of the evaluations and their own regular monitoring reports.

4.14 By encouraging each area network to pilot a model appropriate to their own circumstances, the National Action Group will be well placed to assess what works and what does not, and to disseminate best practice. Investment in new structures will be analogous to the provision of venture capital to companies. Not all the innovations may prove to be worthwhile but the pay-off from those that do work should provide a worthwhile return on the initial funds. In the course of gathering evidence, we were impressed by the level of innovation displayed by colleges, training providers, social workers and others in the field. There is no lack of talent and imagination and it will be a task for the new area networks, led by the National Action Group, to foster that kind of thinking by supporting higher risk strategies and investing to succeed.

4.15 We discuss the arrangements for collaborative funding later in this chapter but we accept that there will be additional costs in setting up new co-ordination mechanisms and **we, therefore, recommend that the National Action Group makes money available for set-up**

costs to be awarded to Area Strategy Groups on approval of the plan. The total amount of set-up funds should not exceed £150k.

Area Strategy Group for Implementing Inclusiveness

4.16 The purpose of the Area Strategy Group should be to ensure that all young people receive the support that they require to meet their identified learning and support needs; and to make the transition from school to post-school provision, and into employment. The members should be drawn from high level representatives, including elected members of local authorities and Board members of careers service companies, LECs, colleges, training providers, employers and the voluntary sector. The main functions of the Area Strategy Group could include:

- bringing together high level representatives of all agencies which have a role in providing services for young people making the transition from school to further education, training or employment (schools, community education, careers service company, LEC, social work, voluntary sector, private sector/employers: and possibly others depending on local services profile).
- agreeing a strategy for provision of co-ordinated, accessible and appropriate guidance, education and training opportunities and support services to meet individual needs.
- agreeing joint funding to support the strategy.
- setting up an implementation team(s) to manage the implementation of the strategy and to co-ordinate the activities of practitioners from all the relevant agencies.
- setting up arrangements for key worker support to be available to young people and their parents/carers; and establishing a volunteer mentor network. This should include a training programme and guidelines for the key workers and mentors, and agreement of liaison mechanisms between agencies.
- ensuring that there are suitable locations where young people/families can get direct access to information and services e.g. through one-stop shops or centres which could offer a range of activities for young people but also include information centres or access to staff who are able to answer questions.
- identifying and addressing gaps in provision or in the quality of guidance and information systems, learning opportunities, and support services; and monitoring the quality of provision.
- monitoring implementation against the strategy objectives and reporting regularly (twice yearly) to the National Action Group on the progress and effectiveness of the strategy.

Key Issues

4.17 There are 3 key issues to be addressed in establishing area networks. These are:

- the designation of the area
- the designation of a lead agency
- the funding arrangements

Designation of the Area

4.18 The designation will depend on 3 factors:

- the size of the area: it should be sufficiently large to allow a strategic approach to services and to have adequate resources available within the area i.e. funding, learning opportunities and other support;
- the size of the population: it should have a large enough number of young people in the 16-24 age group to enable sensible strategic planning and to provide a client base for provision;
- the range of agencies: it should have the full spectrum of agencies at a strategic and operational level to allow both strategic planning and implementation.

4.19 There are 32 local authorities which have responsibilities for a wide range of services for young people including school education, social work, community education and housing. There is a case for asking local authorities to form the area networks because they are already charged with producing Community Plans, Community Learning Strategies and Plans and Children's Services Plans in consultation with other agencies. However, in our view, 32 Area Strategy Groups, which would require multiple representation from other key agencies such as LECs and careers companies, is too many.

4.20 There are 22 LECs and 17 careers service companies. We believe that the formation of area networks around these areas would be more manageable. In the lowlands area and Argyll and Bute there is a large degree of commonality of boundaries between LECs and careers companies. Both local authorities and LECs sit on the boards of careers services companies. There may be advantages in using the careers service company areas as the designated areas for area networks. In the Highlands, there is one careers service company which is co-terminous with a total of 6 LEC areas and there are 3 Islands careers companies. There is a case for separate area networks for the Islands which have their own LECs, local authorities and career service companies clearly focused on the specific requirements of their local populations.

4.21 The Committee is aware of the number of local partnerships which have been established in recent years. These include Adult Guidance Networks and Local Learning Partnerships as well as the more recent move towards Community Planning and Community Learning strategies designed to bring together the range of agencies in the local authority area with a specific focus on learning opportunities. Clearly, it will be important for the agencies which develop proposals for the area networks to take full account of the working arrangements of these partnerships to avoid duplication of effort and additional unnecessary burdens on resources. At the same time, however, we believe that there is a clear case for a network to promote and support joint working targeted at vulnerable young people who are at risk of exclusion if they do not receive support to become more actively engaged in post-school learning.

4.22 **We recommend that there should be 17 area networks based on the current boundaries of careers service companies. The Committee has taken the view that flexibility should be given to the agencies and organisations in the area to decide which agency would be best placed to facilitate the establishment of the area networks. This decision should be based on local circumstances.** The role of this agency is to initiate the process of planning and to co-ordinate the setting up of the area networks. The careers service company may be an appropriate agency to take on this task. However, once established, the Area Strategy Group should decide whether to nominate a lead agency.

Funding

4.23 This is potentially one of the most difficult, but also one of the most important, aspects of the area networks. A range of individuals and organisations have expressed the view that funding structures create barriers, sometimes quite unnecessary barriers, to effective joint working. Clearly, agencies have specific statutory responsibilities that require dedicated resources and there are issues of accountability. There is a perception, however, that there are other areas where administrative arrangements and funding systems could be made more flexible in order to produce maximum benefit for the community or the individual. Where there is joint funding, it is often targeted towards specific and relatively short-term projects. The establishment of area networks designed to help the most vulnerable young people in our society could be a catalyst for agencies to look seriously - and creatively - at how they can apply funding to meet their needs in a strategic, co-ordinated, and consistent way. "Joined up" funding would represent a major step forward.

4.24 The aim of establishing area networks is to ensure that agencies work more effectively together to provide the optimum level of learning and support for the young person. In our view, the objective should be to put in place a strategic and operational framework which will deploy resources more effectively rather than create demands for new resources. We believe that there is a case for pooling resources to ensure maximum benefit to the young person. This means pooling of money, staff, buildings and equipment. We make this point specifically because the difficulties experienced by some groups in getting access to buildings "out-of-hours" seems to us

to demonstrate how administrative and organisational practices create exclusiveness rather than Inclusiveness.

4.25 We fully acknowledge that pooling of budgets would represent a real change in practice for agencies and organisations. We believe, however, that pooling of resources, including pooled budgets, would create a far greater incentive to make joint working more effective. Where full pooling of resources is not currently practicable for legal or other reasons, an alternative is for members of the Strategy Group, or the Implementing Inclusiveness Team, to have delegated budgets from their "parent" agency. They could have authority to make decisions on spending, and on the management of staff and other resources. This would allow collective decisions on the allocation of individual agency resources to support integrated delivery. The management of pooled budgets would have to be governed by clearly defined objectives and criteria agreed as part of the strategic and operational framework. **We recommend that the National Action Group should give particular attention to the funding arrangements proposed in the plans submitted for formation of area networks and encourage the development of pooled resources.**

Implementing Inclusiveness Team(s)

4.26 The purpose of the Implementing Inclusiveness Team(s) would be to implement the strategy and put in place arrangements for appropriate multi-agency support for young people who have been identified as having additional learning or support needs.

4.27 We envisage that the Team would draw its membership from senior staff in the relevant agencies. The main task would be to ensure that there was an operational plan to take forward the strategy for the area. In large areas, there may be scope for more than one Team. The size, composition and remit of local Implementing Inclusiveness Team(s) will be a matter for the Area Strategy Groups.

4.28 The main functions of the Implementing Inclusiveness Teams could include:

- co-ordinating the activities of practitioners and supporting key worker arrangements including the agreement of protocols for liaison between key worker and other agencies.
- improving effectiveness of multi-agency working through information exchange and arranging joint staff training to
 - promote awareness of additional support needs;
 - increase understanding and knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of other agencies.
- making proposals to the Area Strategy Group for local joint initiatives to meet specific identified needs of groups of young people e.g. care leavers, homeless.

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- setting up local one-stop centres e.g. building on suitable youth information points which are already supported by community education providers, where young people have direct access to information.
 - reporting at least quarterly to the Area Strategy Group on performance with particular reference to gaps in provision and specific areas of need.

Monitoring and Review Arrangements

4.29 It will be essential for the success of the Implementing Inclusiveness network – at national, area and local level – that there should be robust and rigorous monitoring arrangements. We have already proposed that the National Action Group should require regular reports from the Area Strategy Group, and that the Strategy Group should require quarterly reports from the Implementing Inclusiveness Team. **We recommend that the National Action Group should consider and agree appropriate and regular monitoring arrangements for the Area Strategy Groups; and that the Area Strategy Groups should agree monitoring arrangements with the Implementing Inclusiveness Team(s). The monitoring should include the arrangements for multi-agency practitioner teams, key workers and mentors as described in Chapter 5.**

Involvement of Young People

4.30 The involvement of young people in the strategic and operational framework must be an essential element of developing an Inclusiveness approach. It would be perpetuating a policy of exclusion if no attempt was made to involve young people themselves in an area network aimed at improving the provision of learning and support for them. There will be no one, universally applicable, approach since, as we have described, the range of needs and abilities among young people is so diverse. There are some structured approaches, for example:

- A Youth Congress
- Surveys of young people
- Pupils' Councils
- Student satisfaction returns in colleges.

4.31 The idea of a Youth Congress which brings together a wide range of young people is an interesting one. In Stirling there is a Youth Congress which includes 12-25 year olds. It acts as a representative body and has access to the different parts of the Council structure on behalf of young people in the area. Members of the Congress can make direct representations at Council meetings. The Congress could also be involved in consultations with other groups of young people. Similar arrangements, with various titles, exist, or are developing, in most local authority

areas and form a network under the title Connect Youth. A steering group of young people, supported by national agencies and with funding from the Scottish Executive, is developing a national youth voice - the Scottish Youth Parliament - on the basis of the network and other youth agencies.

4.32 For young people who may lack the confidence to give their views in a more formal setting, there may be scope to draw on outreach work carried out by community education workers or voluntary sector organisations. Where there are one stop centres providing advice and information, there should be opportunities to get the ideas and opinions of young people as well as hearing about their problems. Youth information points are already developing this kind of activity. The creation of a volunteer mentor network might also offer a way to tap into the real concerns and anxieties of young people. Clearly, this would be a sensitive area and great care would have to be taken not to breach confidentiality. However, there may be ways to compile information about the issues that affect young people using the experiences of the mentors.

4.33 We recommend that the Area Strategy Groups establish both formal and informal mechanisms for engaging young people in the decision-making process about learning and support provision in the area and for gathering their views and ideas about future strategies.

Summary of Recommendations

We recommend that:

The Scottish Executive should set up a National Action Group for Implementing Inclusiveness, to be chaired by a Minister, to set up local area networks and monitor their effectiveness. (Paragraph 4.8)

There should be an Area Strategy Group for Implementing Inclusiveness that brings together all the relevant organisations and agencies in each area to ensure that young people receive all the learning opportunities and support services that they might require. The Area Strategy Group should set up an Implementing Inclusiveness Team. (Paragraph 4.9)

The National Action Group should set criteria for the establishment of the area networks. Within those criteria, there should be active encouragement for diversity of approaches designed to meet the needs of the Area: rural/urban split; size of population; demographics; pattern of FE and training provision; and the community learning plans. (Paragraph 4.12)

In the first 3 years of the area networks, every area should be regarded as a "pilot". (Paragraph 4.13)

The National Action Group should make money available for set-up costs to be awarded to Area Strategy Groups on approval of the plan. (Paragraph 4.15)

There should be 17 area networks based on the current boundaries of careers service companies. The Committee has taken the view that flexibility should be given to the agencies and organisations in the area to decide which agency would be best placed to facilitate the establishment of the area networks. This decision should be based on local circumstances. (Paragraph 4.22)

The National Action Group should give particular attention to the funding arrangements proposed in the plans submitted for formation of area networks and encourage the development of pooled resources. (Paragraph 4.25)

The National Action Group should consider and agree appropriate and regular monitoring arrangements for the Area Strategy Group; and the Area Strategy Group should agree monitoring arrangements with the Implementing Inclusiveness Teams. The monitoring should include the arrangements for multi-agency practitioner teams, key workers and mentors as described in Chapter 5. (Paragraph 4.29)

The Area Strategy Groups should establish both formal and informal mechanisms for engaging young people in the decision-making process about learning and support provision in the area and for gathering their views and ideas about future strategies. (Paragraph 4.33)