

4. Background

In analysing your response, it would be helpful to know your background. Please indicate the area which best describes your involvement with children from the options below.

Please tick box as appropriate:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Early Years | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Health | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Justice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent/Carer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Police | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Social Work | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Sport and Leisure | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Voluntary Organisation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

This response has been collated by ARC Scotland using feedback received from members of the Scottish Transitions Forum. The aim of the forum is to:

Improve the experience of people with additional support needs, particularly those with high support needs, as they go through life transitions. The forum has a focus on the transition of young people from school or college to adult life.

There are over 180 members of the Scottish Transitions Forum, including representatives from voluntary sector, Education, Social Work, Health, Academic Sector, Scottish Government and others.

The Scottish Transition Forum is facilitated by ARC Scotland.

Please note this submission may not reflect the views of every member of the Scottish Transitions Forum.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Progress and Challenges

Q.1 Do the findings of the evaluation broadly reflect your views about services for people with learning disabilities/carer?

Yes No

Please refer to other ARC Scotland responses.

Q. 2 Can you give examples, either locally or nationally, of what you think has worked well over the last 10 years of *The same as you?*

Please refer to other ARC Scotland responses for this information.

Q. 3 Can you give examples of issues in current work and/or policies that still need to be addressed?

Most members of the Scottish Transitions Forum report that transition to young adult life (particularly school and college transitions) continues to be poorly coordinated for many young people with learning disabilities. This can lead to long-term dependency on traditional service models and a lack of choice, control and independence for the young person and their family.

The need for a more coordinated and effective approach to easing the transition process has been recognised as a priority for many years, yet has still not been put effectively into practice. There is a complex legislative and policy framework surrounding transitions that often leaves professionals, young people and their families confused about what their rights are through the transition period.

Many Transition Forum members believe that accessible **good practice standards** for transitions should be developed in partnership with young people. This would condense the policy and legislative framework in accessible way. We agree with the Consultation Report (p58) that provision of accessible information is a Human Rights issue. We also believe that the application of the Transition good practice standards should be promoted and monitored by the Scottish Government.

Please see the relevant sections under **Q6 – Q10** for further detailed discussion around specific policy and legislative approaches.

Good Practice – Organisations

Q. 4 Can you provide examples of what you have done over the last 10 years, within your organisation, to improve services and access to services within your local area?

ARC Scotland established the Scottish Transitions Forum in 2009. The Scottish Transitions forum aims to:

Improve the experience of people with additional support needs, particularly those with high support needs, as they go through life transitions. The forum has a focus on the transition of young people from school or college to adult life.

It achieves this by :

- Bringing together people working in transitions for people with additional support needs.
- Identifying and sharing good practice, learning and resources.
- Generating new ideas, challenging our thinking and improving our work practice.
- Involving and consulting with people with additional

support needs and for their views to influence and guide the work of the forum.

- Working collectively to raise awareness, inform and influence approaches to transitions for people with additional support needs at a local and national level.

The Scottish Transitions Forum provides an information network around Transitions (see <http://scottishtransitions.org.uk/> for BETA site) that focuses on service providers and parents of individuals with learning disability and other additional support needs to help make sense of the policy and legislative environment.

Good Practice - Individuals

Q.5 What have you done, as an individual, to make positive changes within your local area?

Future Priorities - Healthcare

Q.6 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to better and more appropriate healthcare?

Transitions between health services continue to be problematic, particularly transition between paediatric and adult health care services.

There is loss of quality of information as professionals who have known the child and family well are replaced by those who don't know the family and can result in the retelling of information all over again.

Our National Health (2000) acknowledged that children with special needs were particularly vulnerable as they go through transition from specialist children's services to adult services.

One of the key recommendations was:

"We expect the NHS to work with partner agencies to ensure that this transition is managed sensitively and with attention to young people's needs."

The Same as You? Suggested that *"GP's, paediatric, learning disability and physical disability services should agree arrangement for people moving from child to adult services to make sure people have appropriate continuity in the health care they receive."*

The Transitions Forum believes that a key-working model should be adopted across all transitions services including health to ensure that information and quality is not lost as those with learning disabilities move between services. This should be included in good practice transition standards proposed in this response and monitored by the Scottish Government.

Future Priorities - Education

Q.7 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to better educational opportunities?

The existing education policy / legislative framework (GIRFEC, ASLA, CfE, MCMC) is perceived by Transition Forum as comprehensive and positive. However many report that this is inconsistently applied and there is confusion about how these initiatives overlap. This results in a lack of clarity about young persons and family carers **rights** throughout the transitions period.

There is also uncertainty amongst members about how the National Strategy for SDS will impact on this already complex framework. There is optimism that SDS has the potential to improve transition experiences, however significant concerns that eligibility criteria will change so young people will not get the resources they need to live independently.

Many Transition Forum members believe that good practice standards for transitions should be developed in partnership with young people. This would condense the policy and legislative framework in accessible way. We agree with the Consultation Report (p58) that provision of accessible information is a Human Rights issue.

We also believe that the application of the good practice standards should be promoted and monitored by the Scottish Government.

We are keen to ensure that that the priority theme (p60) to monitor 'post school destinations to inform policy making' acknowledges the often more significant and challenging second and subsequent transitions. **Transition Forum members wish to ensure that future policy recognises that transitions is a process rather than a school-leaving event, and that on-going support and planning is often needed at later stages, particularly when leaving post school FE College provision.**

Transition Forum members propose that that the 'named person role' in the proposed Children and Young peoples bill should continue to the age of 25 (rather than 18) for those "who need it". This would give young people with learning disabilities similar rights to looked after children under the act. A person with a learning disability may have little difficulty with accessing further education upon leaving school, however may require significant support to plan their future life upon completing FE provision.

Further to this, we believe there is need for clarity of definition for 'positive destination'. For young people with learning disabilities there is a risk that they become 'stuck' in this destination if planning does not recognise that this is part of a process, rather than an end point. This is particularly important for young people with more complex support needs. Individual's long-term goals need to be taken into account, which may involve several steps, and this is best done using personalised approaches.

There is a need for consistency in how these approaches are understood

and applied across children's, adults services and education. The differing terminology used between education and social care organisations is a cause for concern. For example, a social care organisations definition of 'person-centred plan' and 'key worker' may be very different from Educations'. The Consultation Report rightly observes (p17) that 'another significant challenge for pupils and families was that different communication and symbol systems were in use..'

We propose that opportunities are sought to bring together professionals who are working across the field of transitions to improve consistency in basic definitions and approaches to communication. ARC Scotland is currently actively seeking to increase representation from Education in the membership of the Transitions Forum and we welcome the reports' future priority (p60) that our work should be supported.

The Scottish Transitions Forum recognises the opportunity that the Curriculum for Excellence represents. This ensures provision to children with significant support needs (such as learning disability) with real opportunities to help with life-long learning, such as independent travel. There are currently many barriers to the full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, such as limited resources within an education environment. **Many forum members believe that the curriculum for excellence should be supported as much as possible by Scottish Government to provide real opportunities to disabled children.**

Curriculum for Excellence also dovetails with the 'Getting it Right' practices. Transitions Forum members believe that the education system should have a greater focus on planning and preparing for adult life as well as achieving academic outcomes.

More work needs to be done in education to embrace these principles of welfare within the education system. One route to evidence this learning could be demonstrated in young peoples participation in their Transition planning processes.

SAY recommendation 24 (To advise and help put Future Needs Assessment into practice) no longer applies as the Future Needs Assessment has been replaced with Coordinated Support Plans. Most forum members think these have been overly complicated and have led to no real improvement in the lives of young people with learning disabilities.

The Coordinated Support Plans (CSP) need to be brought in line with the Childs Plan as suggested by the Children and Young Persons Bill, with its promise of "one plan for one child". This would prevent the retelling of similar issues across the assessment life of a child with significant additional support needs. **We also propose that the CSP should be adopted by adult services and a duty be placed in legislation to enforce this joined up working of services.** This inference of planning directly links to SAY recommendation 26 concerning life plans.

The point at which transitional planning begins appeared variable. There is concern amongst professionals, service providers and young people that

starting too early, e.g. at age 14, leads to duplication of effort if the young person subsequently stays on at school until age 18. Starting too late, i.e. one year before the young person is due to leave school (as stated by the Additional Support for Learning Act (2009)) leaves little time to effectively engage the appropriate agencies and support. **The transition forum believes transition planning needs to be appropriate and proportionate and as person centred as possible.** This will ensure the plan aligns to the needs of the individual undergoing the process and this will need to be reflected in future policy.

Future Priorities – Independent Living

Q.8 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities are able to live independently?

Independent living in its fullest sense is understood as full realisation of employment, independent housing, financial and personal control of assistance, life style, relationships, educational qualifications and perhaps transport.¹ A lot of work still needs to be done to ensure that all of these areas are met for individuals with learning disabilities and other significant additional support needs. This planning should begin in the transition from school to rest of life planning (see above). The forum believes that appropriate and proportionate transitions planning at this stage will result in better outcomes in all these areas.

Future Priorities – Employment

Q.9 What still needs to be done to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to better employment opportunities?

As previously mentioned, we are concerned that the priority theme (p60) to monitor 'post school destinations to inform policymaking' does not acknowledge the often more significant and challenging second and subsequent transitions. **Transition Forum members wish to ensure that future policy recognises that transitions is a process rather than an event, and that on-going support and planning is often needed at later stages, particularly when leaving post school FE College provision to employment.**

Very few authorities have managed to integrate the policies of CfE Senior Phase; Getting it Right for Every Child and 16+ Learning Choices into their strategic plans and associated guidance. This may change with the Children

¹ Taken from the definition of independent living from the Scottish transitions website. Accessed on Sept 27 2012. (<http://scottishtransitions.org.uk/>)

and Young Peoples bill legislating for Getting it Right to be placed into Local Authorities duties. Where this did occur, the planning was largely envisaged as only the planning to the next educational step eg staying on at school, college or possibly a training provider. A longer-term view – with employment in mind – was consistently absent.²

Effective transitional planning is being demonstrated by the third sector through 'Inspiring Scotland' activity where young people with learning difficulties engage at 14 years of age for a 5-year transition programme. A trusted relationship is built up between the youngster, the school, family and training providers. A support worker was helping the young person to develop the necessary skills (e.g. independent travel and finance) and confidence through a structured programme. The extended work placements in which the young person engages is making employment a real possibility and some young people could access a college course at the end of the programme. Some participants had received offers of full time permanent employment before the programme was completed.

This long-term transition support model (or similar positive outcome based model) should be consistently adopted across local authorities. As yet achieving positive destinations for people with significant additional support needs represents somewhat of a postcode lottery and is a greater issue in more rural destinations where choice of resources may be limited.

Future Priorities

**Q.10 What other future priorities do we need to focus on?
(Please list these in order of importance with the most important first)**

Future learning disability policy should concentrate on the empowerment of individuals. As legislature moves to be more rights based, these rights will be embedded in the working approach of all organisations. This will hopefully move services away from a "risk/needs" based approach to a more general welfare based approach.

However, there is an issue around embedding rights and making sure that those rights are known about by those who they apply to. Empowering individuals with significant additional support needs who is a particularly important step. **We therefore think that for successful realisation of the UNRC rights, children and young people with learning disabilities need to be educated as to what these (and their associated duties) are.**

We believe that Self Directed Support has the potential to significantly improve young people with learning disabilities opportunity to have more choice, independence and control in their lives. **We therefore propose that the uptake of SDS amongst young people with learning disabilities is monitored and the impact that SDS has on their transition to adult life is evaluated.**

² Alan Haughey. Report on implementation from school to post school transitions. 2011