

# National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy for Disabled Young People

## A Statement of Intent: Summary

September 2023

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# Introduction

The Scottish Government are committed to improving disabled young people's experiences of the transition to adulthood, and will introduce Scotland's first National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy in this Parliamentary term.

This document summarises our Statement of Intent, which sets out what we think a strategy should focus on to improve transitions to adulthood for disabled young people. It is not the final strategy; it is an opportunity for you to tell us whether you agree with what we have heard so far, and whether the draft vision and priorities set out in the Statement of Intent are the right ones for the strategy.

## Why we need a strategy

We know, through our research and engagement, common experiences of the transition to adulthood for disabled young people can include:

- stress and uncertainty for the young person;
- difficulties transferring from child to adult services;
- changes in eligibility for services, and support arrangements;
- a sharp drop in support;
- inadequate transitions planning;
- lack of clear information about the transitions process;
- lack of joined-up working (such as communication and collaboration) between services and other partners;
- inadequate account being taken of young people's capabilities, views, needs and aspirations; and
- stress and difficulties faced by family members relating to their young person's transition.

**We want to change this narrative and are determined to make the transitions journey for every disabled young person a smoother and more positive one.**

## Who will the strategy be for?

**We propose the transition to adulthood will refer to the period when young people develop from children to young adults. This is not a single event, but a process which takes place over a number of years. It is a period of personal development which can involve changes in every area of life.**

We propose this strategy will focus on transitions planning and support during the period when young people develop from children to young adults (14-25 years), in line with ARC Scotland's [Principles of Good Transitions](#).

**We propose this strategy uses the same definition of disability as the Equality Act (2010). This means young people are said to be disabled if they have a 'physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities'.**

The Scottish Government is committed to the social model of disability that says that people are disabled by barriers in society; not by their impairment or difference.

## Vision

**Our proposed vision is that 'disabled young people feel happy and confident in the transition to adulthood, and are empowered and supported to control their own path to success'.**

## Priorities

We propose this strategy will seek to further embed the [Principles of Good Transitions](#) and the similar characteristics of good transitions published in our [literature review](#). The strategy will also seek to complement and help bring a more co-ordinated and joined-up approach to the existing policy and legislative landscape already in place to improve outcomes for disabled young people.

In order to achieve this, we propose a focus on five priority areas:

### **1. Choice, control and empowerment for the young person**

Disabled young people should be at the centre of planning and decision making for their future. Early transitions planning should be available to disabled young people and should adopt a holistic, person-centred approach to empower young people to dream big and identify and pursue their goals and aspirations.

### **2. Clear and coherent information**

Disabled young people, their families and others that support them should be aware of their rights and entitlements, and the support and services available during different points of transitions. The provision of national and local information should be clear and accessible.

### **3. Co-ordination of individual support and communication across sectors**

Support for disabled young people during the transition to adulthood can require a multidisciplinary and multiagency approach (e.g health, social work, education, third sector, employment etc). Support from trusted professionals and consistent relationships are key to effective support during this time. Communication across all partners involved in transitions – including disabled young people and their families – with clearly defined roles and responsibilities are vital for ensuring a smooth transition.

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## 4. Consistency of practice and support across Scotland

Professionals who support disabled young people during their transition to young adult life should work to incorporate the principles and characteristics of good transitions into policy, planning and practice to ensure consistency of practice across Scotland. Professionals should be given the support and guidance they need to explore and improve transitions practices. Disabled young people, their families and professionals supporting them should have access to learning opportunities to support better transitions.

## 5. Collection of data to measure progress and improvements

The measures of successful transitions to adulthood should consider life courses, in addition to traditionally-understood positive destinations. Data relating to young people's experiences of their transitions to adulthood should be collected, analysed and reported upon regularly in order to understand the extent to which young people are experiencing a positive and supported transition to young adult life.

## Next Steps

We now want to sense-check the scope, vision and priorities we have proposed in this Statement of Intent. If you would like to tell us whether you think they are the right ones or not, we have created a survey for you to do this anonymously. This [survey](#) will be open until 30 November 2023.

We will use any feedback we receive to help us to draft the strategy, which we aim to consult on more widely in 2024.

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