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Transition from School to Adult Life -for young people with Special Educational Needs

Transition from School to Adult Life for Young people with SEN

Leaving school and moving on to adult life and services can be a daunting time for all young people and their families. For pupils who have statements of special educational needs (SEN), a planning system and a transition protocol is available to help make that transition as smooth as possible.

School leaving age

The date a young person can leave school depends upon when they reach their 16th birthday. For example, if they turn 16 during the school year they can leave on 30 June of that school year.

However, if they have a statement of special educational needs they can remain in education until their 19th birthday.

Engaging and supporting the young person

How a young person communicates should not be a barrier to them contributing to their transition. Any planning should allow for them to contribute in the way that is most meaningful to them.

If it is felt that they don't have the capacity to make their own choices, families and professionals should look at creative ways to advocate their preference. This may include using visual supports, assessing and recording their reaction as evidence.

Thought should be given to how your child can be supported to reduce anxiety throughout the process.

Early decision making and support strategies can help.

This may include:

- new support staff working with them prior to the move
- visiting the new environment to meet staff and peers
- using social stories or visual supports.

The Transition Plan

Young people without a statement of special educational needs (SEN)

In some instances, a student approaching the age of 16 may have special educational needs which do not call for a statement, but which are likely to require some support if they go onto further education or training. To ensure that these students are able to make decisions, and to facilitate their successful transition, it is important that they have appropriate help and guidance. This may include the provision of school/ college links or work placements and should involve different local agencies.

Careers Wales provides careers advice and guidance for people of all ages, as part of this it focuses on supporting young people with SEN but without a statement. Careers Wales should provide schools with information which will help these students make successful transitions to post-school education, training or employment. Schools should consult as appropriate with Careers Wales and other services to ensure that detailed information is transferred to post 16 providers with the young person's consent and in sufficient time for the post 16 provider to put necessary support in place.

Schools in consultation with the representatives from Careers Wales, may wish to draw up Transition Plans to support this process, whether the young person remains at school post 16 or moves to alternative provision. There will need to be collaboration with the Local Authority staff and other professionals involved with the young person, to provide appropriate information for the plan.

(SEN code of practice for Wales, 2002)

Young people with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The transition plan is the document resulting from the transition review. It sets out the appropriate plans for a young person during the period of transition to adult life and should include arrangements for any special educational provision and for any other necessary provision (health, employment, leisure etc.) which will lead to a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood.

The Education Act 1996 places certain duties on the local education authority (LEA) in relation to the assessment and provision for children with SEN. The annual review in Year 9 is used to produce the transition plan. This requires the LA to work in partnership with agencies that may play a major role in the young person's life during the post-school years and must involve Careers Wales.

Parents of children with SEN/ALN are likely to be familiar with annual reviews of statements, but the transition review which takes place in **Year 9** has particular significance as it begins to prepare for the time when the young person leaves school. Whatever the age of leaving (for some this will be at 16 while others may leave at 18 or 19), the planning process is very important. Transition planning should be seen as an evolving process, beginning in Year 9 and continuing until the young person leaves school.

The transition review meeting (Year 9)

- Plenty of notice about the date of the meeting should be given
- Any written reports should be circulated to all those invited to the review at least two weeks before the meeting.
- Responsibility for issuing invitations to the review lies with the school.

The head teacher (or the person to whom this task has been delegated) must invite:

- The parent(s) or carers for the young person
- A relevant member of staff
- Agencies working with the family
- Social services
- Careers Wales.

Children's services will only attend if the child is an 'open case' i.e. an active case at that time. If they are an open case to the children with disabilities team, a member of the transition team may attend the review meeting, and all subsequent reviews, to assist in the planning for the future.

If there are other people you would like to attend, you can ask the head teacher to invite them. Careers Wales must be invited to the transition review and all subsequent reviews, as they are an essential agency involved in the

transition process. They will ensure that all future options are considered in view of the needs and wishes of the young person.

Good practice dictates that this review, and subsequent ones, should be conducted with a person-centred approach – in other words, centred around the young person.

Making your views heard

The views of the young person should be sought and recorded wherever possible. The young person may need support to contribute to the review and express his/her views. Ways in which this can happen should be fully explored. Parents can bring an advocate with them, such as a parental supporter. The young person may also wish to bring an advocate with him/her. It is advisable that parents think about some of the issues they will want to discuss prior to the review and perhaps write them down. It can be a difficult time, so notes can be useful.

If the review is to be conducted in a person-centred way, the relevant information should be sent home beforehand, and you will be asked to think about certain specific questions in advance of the review, and any issues will be discussed in the meeting.

Professionals' role in the Transition Plan:

Following the review meeting, the transition plan should be drawn up. There may also be an action plan, detailing who is going to do what and by what date – this needs to be overseen by a named person to ensure that all actions are completed in time.

The head teacher is responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating the delivery of the transition plan. Careers Wales will have the lead role in ensuring the delivery of the elements of the transition plan that relate to the young person's transition into further learning or employment.

A report from the review should be prepared by the head teacher and submitted to the local authority (LA) no later than **ten school days** after the review has taken place (or the end of the school term, whichever is the

earlier). Any recommendations made in the report should be clear and any relevant professional reports should be appended to the review report. The head teacher must ensure that the transition plan is drawn up; its delivery is then overseen by Careers Wales.

What should happen at each subsequent annual review?

The school will convene all subsequent annual reviews which will be similar to previous reviews. The transition plan will also need to be reviewed each time.

Year 10 (15+)

At this, and at all subsequent annual reviews, parents/carers and the young person will be notified of the review and asked if they want to make any changes to the transition plan. The process is:

- Careers Wales may attend.
- Careers Wales may visit the school and should interview the young person concerning their hopes for the future if they are leaving school at 16.
- The young person and their parents/carers should visit local college(s) to find out if these are suitable for their needs and also think about work experience.
- For young people with greater needs it will be essential to find out about what choices there are as these are more limited.

For all parents and young people it will be helpful to talk to others who have been through the process.

Year 11 (16+)

There is a need to determine whether there are any changes to the plan.

If leaving school and transferring to a local college or a specialist college outside the county, either at 16 or 19, Careers Wales will need to be involved (in relation to arranging funding if needed). The involvement of Careers Wales is essential at this stage. Some young people may not feel that college is appropriate for them. It will be important to involve the relevant people where other choices need to be made; i.e. social services, health professionals, supported employment via employability etc.

Year 12 (17+)

To determine whether the plan is still relevant and make any changes.

Year 13 (18+)

On the young person's 18th birthday, responsibility transfers from a social worker from the children's social services team to an adult care manager, if adult social care is involved. This may be someone from the transition team.

Involvement of those agencies and individuals who are likely to support the young person when they leave school is essential. This may include someone from a local supported employment scheme.

Once the young person is 18 they are covered by various pieces of legislation in relation to the services and information they should receive.

If the young person has continuing health needs, paediatric consultants may remain involved until the young person's 19th birthday, but the transfer to adult health services must be planned. A health action plan is a good tool to aid this transfer.

Year 14 (19+)

Careers Wales should attend this annual review meeting, together with any other relevant parties.

Careers Wales

Careers Wales provides guidance support and information regarding the opportunities that are available for young people in Wales for further education or employment.

Contact Details:

Phone: 0800 028 4844

Mobile: 029 2090 6800

Website: www.careerswales.com

Options for Young People 14-25

Between the ages of 14 and 25 young people usually have to make important decisions about their education, leaving home, getting a job and starting relationships. These decisions and changes can be both exciting and challenging. It can be an anxious time for some families; Young People may be concerned about what opportunities and services they can expect as an adult, and whether their needs will be fully met.

A successful transition planning process will help give a clear understanding of what opportunities are available for young people post school, and after 18. Young people can leave school legally at the end of June in the school year, when they reach the age of 16. From here, they can usually make their own decisions about what they want to do. Some will, however, need support with making plans. The main Post 16 options are:

- Staying at school can provide many opportunities and be a positive choice. Some young people are able to stay at school until they are 19. The adviser from Career Wales can give you detailed information about the courses and qualifications on offer locally.

- Attending a local college of further education while living at home is often the next step. Colleges can offer a very wide range and level of courses, both academic and work-related, which can be full or part-time. Many courses are designed to prepare young people for adult life by offering a range of vocational taster courses, the chance to gain qualifications and improve skills in Maths, English/Welsh and communication. Some students remain in their local college until the age of 25.
- Specialist residential colleges – Nearly all Young People with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can go to their local college. A very small number have needs which their local college cannot meet and, if the learner is aged between 16 and 25, the Welsh Government may pay for them to attend a specialist college, including residential courses, where appropriate. Where no local college is able to meet a Young Persons needs, the Careers Adviser will have information on how to apply for a place at a specialist college and how to get funding.
- Higher education will be an option for some young people whose academic ability enables them to access courses on offer. This could be at university, college or distance learning.
- Supported Work and Training – A young person can enter the world of work through supported employment or a training programme. There are a number of organisations that can help them find opportunities in real work situations. Many of these programmes can lead to nationally recognised vocational qualifications.
- Employment – Only a small proportion of young people go straight into employment from school .If this is the most appropriate option the Careers Wales adviser can help with job-seeking skills.
- Day Service opportunities may be the most appropriate option for some Young People. These are usually arranged in places where young people with a learning disability can pursue all sorts of interesting day time activities (often out of the day centre and in the local community). Here, they can make new friends, gain their own independence and become a valued member of the

community. Day services are usually provided by local authority social services or voluntary organisations. Services are usually provided by local authority social services or voluntary organisations.