

Transition from Childhood to Adulthood for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Background:

This review was commissioned by the Children's Services and Schools Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8th October 2018.

The purpose of the review was to investigate the transition arrangements between children's and adults' services for those with special educational needs and disabilities. The Task Group would make recommendations to improve outcomes for young people at transition stage as appropriate.

The key lines of enquiry were how the current transition process works, what works well and where there are areas for improvement to support seamless transitions.

The members of the review were Councillor Frieze (Chair), Councillor Nicholson, Councillor Butlin, Councillor Crouch and Councillor Curran. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools is Councillor Frost.

The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services explains that the transition from child to adult services can be a difficult time for young people, and that during this time, there may be many changes in a young person's life. These include changes from child to adult services, from school to further and higher education, and from childhood dependency to adult responsibility. Ensuring that the transition process and the change in services run smoothly is important for all concerned. It also notes that when a young person is transferred from children's services, support and care can be poorly co-ordinated and patchy and that multi-agency transition planning for young people is key to providing high quality transition services.

What the Review Group Did

The review group met three times in 2019, 7th January, 11th February and 6th March.

Prior to the meetings, information was gathered from various people involved in the transitions process. The information was in the form of responses to questions asking what was working well and what was working less well. This provided Task Group members with background information for the review.

At the first meeting the group heard from Jon Street, Head of Community Services, Adult Social Services, Charis Penfold, Director of Education Services Achieving for Children, Eammon Gilbert, Associate Director Commissioning, Achieving for Children and Grace Over, Participation Lead, Achieving for Children, accompanied by a young person, Anna.

At the second meeting the group heard from Dan Collins, Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, Adult Social Services, Prisca Cox and Lisa Train, representatives from the Post-16 Group.

At the final meeting, the group heard from Laura Turner, MENCAP, and Karen Lowry AfC Info/SEND Local Offer Website Manager. The Task Group then discussed the information received over the three meetings.

Current Situation: Children's Services

Achieving for Children (AfC) aim to secure a smooth and successful transition into adulthood for all young people aged 14 and over, who have special educational needs and disabilities. This will be those with an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) and those who are categorised 'SEN Support', whichever educational or employment linked pathway they choose. The teams involved in managing transitions are the 14 – 19 and SEND Preparing for Adulthood teams through their Next Steps programme.

The majority of young people in Richmond without special educational needs or disabilities move into post 16 destinations (usually Level 3 programmes). However, AfC's focus is on the vulnerable learners who may need help to make this transition, in particular those who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The SEND Code of Practice states: Local authorities have a strategic leadership role in fulfilling their duties concerning the participation of young people in education and training. They should work with schools, colleges and other post-16 providers, as well as other agencies, to support young people to participate in education or training and to identify those in need of targeted support to help them make positive and well-informed choices.

In line with this, AfC have a range of mechanisms to support transition, both pre- and post-16. These are summarised in Appendix A, grouped under areas of work, which collectively ensure that all SEND young people making the transition from pre-16 schools into more diverse post-16 pathways are supported and monitored in line with their aspirations and the outcomes set out in their EHCPs.

The Children and Families Act 2014, under its 'Preparing for Adulthood' requirements, makes clear that all public bodies should work towards developing independence in young people. However, while AfC supports all post-16 learners in Richmond with an EHCP, the other partner bodies that we work with will only support a small number of residents post-19, as their thresholds for accessing support are much higher than the duties place on Local Authorities.

Achieving for Children's Mechanisms to support transition are listed in appendix A.

Current Situation: Adult Services

The main legislation for transition of young people from children's services to adult services, and the statutory framework under which adult services is provided is The Care Act 2014 and its associated statutory guidance; complementary to which is The Children and Families Act 2014, which has added new duties to the Children Act 1989 to assess young carers and establish whether they are 'children in need' and to assess parent carers of disabled children.

The current arrangements are operationally based and are transactional between adult services teams (predominantly the Learning Disability Team where the bulk of eligible transitional arrangements move to). The Learning Disability Team hosts adults' services operational transitional arrangements. Young people with assessed mental health needs are managed by adult mental health services.

Adult Services mechanisms to support transition are listed in Appendix B

Recommendations

The Task Group heard that while there is good practice taking place around transitions, with independent travel, the AfC Information website and the new transitions panel, some areas for improvement were identified. These have informed the Task Group's recommendations below.

The Task Group heard that the main transitions policy document, 'Multi-Agency Transition Protocol' was out of date. Also, the original document presented to members, while helpful, did not appear to be aimed at a particular audience. Task Group members heard that this document is expected to be refreshed at a forthcoming 'away day' for AfC and Adult Services officers.

The Task Group therefore recommends that:

- The Multi-Agency Transition Protocol is updated with a view to providing the transitions information accessible to different audiences; professionals, parents and carers, and young people. This document should then be made available, clearly signposted, on the AfC Information website. This document should be updated regularly to ensure it is a live and relevant source of information for all those involved in the transitions process.

Recommendation 1

The Task Group was informed that due to changes to the organisational structure for service provision, with the commissioning of Achieving for Children to provide Children's Services for Richmond and Kingston, and the Shared Staffing Arrangement leading to Adult Services providing for residents in Richmond and Wandsworth, some organisational rigour, close working and governance was lost.

The Task Group therefore recommends that:

- Adult Services and Achieving for Children officers continue to work towards minimising any negative impact from previous organisational restructures, by including this as an agenda item on any relevant team meetings/away days and that feedback from the away day on 12th April is provided to Committee members.

Recommendation 2

The Task Group heard from parent representatives and a young person that it was particularly difficult to access information relevant to the transition process. The Task Group also received comments from health care professionals that the interface between services was not working as well as it could and that an information hub would be helpful. Officers from Adult Services noted that there was a lack of understanding regarding the different thresholds between Children's Services and Adult Services. The Task Group also heard from parent representatives that there was a lack of social and leisure activities suitable for young people moving into adulthood.

The Task Group recognised that the main source of information relating to transitions was held on the AfC Information website. While the Task Group was very impressed with the amount of information presented, and the work carried out by the SEND Local Officer Website Manager, it was felt that that the information available could be expanded and made more accessible.

The Task Group therefore recommends that:

A review of the AfC information website is carried out, with a view to:

- Reducing the number of main topic headings on the front page, and increasing the 'layers' under the headings. For example, 'inclusion and exclusion' could be described under the 'education' heading.
- More graphics, video clips of interviews and animations to make the information more appealing and accessible, particularly to non-professionals.
- The introduction of a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page, which could include questions from parents on transitions and different thresholds in Children's and Adults' Services
- The introduction of page(s) detailing what other organisations in the borough provide regarding social and leisure activities, such as Richmond Council for Voluntary Services, the People Hive, the Gateway Club, the Cabbage Patch social events and TAG Youth Club – using links where appropriate.
- Clear signposting to up-to-date policy documents by both children's and adults' services officers.
- Contact information for both Children's and Adults' Services to be included – generic office contact details where appropriate to avoid loss of contact should an individual move on.
- Parents of children with SEND to be involved in suggesting improvements to the website.

Recommendation 3

The Task Group also recommends that:

- information from both Children's and Adults' Services is produced on a transitions process leaflet, made available to parents/carers and young people through display in appropriate places (GP surgeries etc) and that can be passed to them by professionals at appointments/visits. The leaflet to include information about the differing thresholds, and contact details for the different services, as well as signposting the relevant websites.

Recommendation 4

The Task Group heard from a parent representative that it would be extremely helpful to have AfC and Adult Services meeting with them at the same time, as the decision-making process for post-16 and post-19 placements involves both organisations. Another parent representative commented on the lack of attendance at meetings about a young person's progress, saying that sometimes ten officers are invited, but only three or four attend. This causes delays in the decision-making process and created tension between families and professionals.

The Task Group therefore recommends that:

- An annual standing agenda item on relevant committees of 'transitions', where representatives of both services attend. Relevant committees to include Children and Young People with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties and the Adult Disability Partnership Board.

Recommendation 5

- Officers from both AfC and Adult Services, along with professionals from other organisations involved, should be actively encouraged to attend the relevant meetings relating to young people approaching, or going through, the transition process.

Recommendation 6

- A dedicated co-ordinator is appointed to support the cohort (15%) of young people and their parents/carers with the most complex needs.

Recommendation 6b

The disparity between provision that Achieving for Children and Adult Services can provide (due to limited resources) was mentioned as an issue by both parents and professionals, and the lack of awareness about this was deemed to be a communication problem. While this can be partly addressed by improving information to parents and carers (Recommendation 3), officers in AfC need to be aware of the financial restrictions Adult Services work under regarding transitions.

The Task Group therefore recommends that:

- The relevant AfC officers are fully informed of the different levels of funding available between Children's and Adults' Services.

Recommendation 7

The Task Group heard from parent representatives that the 'buddy scheme', while being an excellent initiative, needed improved co-ordination to provide continuity and reliability.

The Task Group therefore recommends that:

- AfC reviews where improvements can be made to the 'buddy scheme' and for Adult Services to review any similar schemes, particularly where this might impact on young people's ability to attend social events and work placements.

Recommendation 8

The Task Group heard from parent representatives that wide age ranges in provision of social events and respite care were not appropriate in some cases.

The Task Group therefore recommends that:

- Appropriate age group division is implemented (for example, under and over 30 years) to ensure activities and respite care arrangements remain appropriate for young people.

Recommendation 9

The Task Group was acutely aware that 'transition' is a wide-ranging topic, and that this review, being time limited, was only able to offer a 'light touch' review.

The Task Group therefore recommends that:

- Further update reports are presented to the new strategic committees (for both Adult Services and Children's Services) as soon as feasible in the coming municipal year. These reviews to include transitions issues around health and housing.

Recommendation 10

Contacts

Councillor Frieze, Chair of the Task Group, cllr.a.frieze@richmond.gov.uk

Hilary Gullen, Scrutiny and Governance Officer, 020 8891 7048,
hilary.gullen@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

Eammon Gilbert, Assistant Director, Associate Director Commissioning, AfC,
eammon.gilbert@achievingforchildren.org.uk

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Eammon Gilbert, Associate Director, Commissioning (AfC)
Dan Collins, Head of Mental Health and Learning Disability
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Jon Street, Head of Community Services, Adult Services
Paul Leonard, Parent Representative
Kevin Sears, Parent Representative
Prisca Cox, Parent Representative
Laura Turner, Richmond MENCAP
Lisa Train, Post 16 Group Representative
John Doherty, TAG Youth Club
Angelique Forrester, Acting Senior Social Worker, Transitions
Doreen Redwood, Lead Children's Health Commissioner
Dr Ben Wright, Consultant Psychiatrist in Medical Psychotherapy
Annabel Parker, Team Manager, Richmond Mental Health Social Care Team
Dr Karen Long, Service Lead, Frontline Services

APPENDIX A

Achieving for Children's Mechanisms to support transition

1. Pre-16: Next Steps interview programme

- The **Next Steps programme** began in 2017/18. The aim is to provide an hour-long interview to Year 11 learners with EHCPs, to support them (and their families) in exploring post 16 options through unbiased advice from Level 6 qualified careers advisers
- In 2017/18, 74 /94 year 11 Richmond learners with EHC Plans had an interview. The interviews took place in a number of settings, including schools in and out of borough, community and local authority offices and in the home
- The remaining young people who did not have interviews, either were those whose needs were considered to be too complex for Next Steps to be appropriate, or the families did not respond/want to take up the offer.
- The programme has been broadened in 2018/19 to include Years 10 and 13 EHCP learners (residents), as well as Year 10 and Year 13 SEN Support learners. This is due to external £104K of funding secured through a successful bid to the **Career Enterprise Company's Personal Guidance Fund** (one of 5 projects nationally in this year's funding round)
- In 2018 and up to January 2019, 30 interviews had been undertaken across Year 11, in good time to support post 16 choices for September. An early start was also made with the Year 10 learners, with 9 already having had interviews by January 2019 as well as 6 with Year 13s with EHCPs
- The impact of these interviews will be measured, taking into account other influencing factors, at the end of Year 1 (for Year 13s) and at the end of the project for the Year 10/11s.

2. Post-16 progression into adulthood

- 14-19 works closely with Preparing for Adulthood team in SEN to support young people into their adult destinations as defined by the national **Preparing for Adulthood** outcomes¹, which are: employment, independent living, friends, relationships and community, and good health.
- The SEN **Preparing for Adulthood team (PfA)** is responsible for managing and agreeing each EHCP and ensuring final sign off with families as set out in the statutory Code of Practice. The PfA team works on EHCPs from ages 14-25 and are also responsible for ceasing EHCPs when it is agreed that the young person no longer needs SEND support, e.g. when they go to university. The team attends annual reviews and are key partners in the post 16 panel arrangements as they are expected to know the needs of their allocated caseload - the whole team will attend

¹ <https://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/>

the panel. They also manage the process when young people turn age 25, which is when EHCPs expire, as the legislation only allows the Plan to be retained up to age 25. They will also provide a key contact if a young person feels they require an EHCP and will undertake the statutory 20-week assessment process, which may be necessary in the case of an acquired brain injury for example or a recent diagnosis of ASD.

- Based on feedback from young people and families, if a young person with SEND is capable of and is willing to work, our **SEND Opportunities Co-ordinator** can support them towards these outcomes into vocational pathways, i.e. traineeships, apprenticeships, Supported Internships and employment. The co-ordinator provides 1-2-1 support and helps young people with college applications including applications and visits, support with interviews and CVs and mentoring for the first 6 months of a programme. The co-ordinator also identifies and works with local employers to offer our SEND young people work experience, work programmes and in many cases subsequent employment opportunities. The co-ordinator also liaises with employers to help resolve issues in the workplace if needed.
- As of January 2019, 40 young people with SEND in Richmond are on vocational pathways – AfC aim to increase this number year on year so that more young people can build skills and experience towards employment. Three of our SEND learners are currently on a traineeship delivered by the Education Business Partnership (EBP) and 3 are on apprenticeships through Way2Work, AfC's in-house apprenticeship provider
- Vocational pathways are in the main fully funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency so represent no cost to the Dedicated Schools' Grant's high needs block.

3. Supporting young people with SEND/SEN Support who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and at risk of NEET (age 16 and 17)

- 14-19 focuses on Richmond learners who are at risk of NEET post-16, through tracking and offers of support. Our **Risk of NEET Indicator** is: those learners who do not achieve 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 or below ('non FL2'). While this model includes all learners of all academic ability, many learners from vulnerable groups fall into this category
- Schools provide AfC with projected and actual data in spring and summer respectively of non FL2 learners. We send them our **Opportunities Pack** (published in spring term and in time for GCSE results day), that sets out the local curriculum offer up to Level 3 and other sources of support². The summer edition sets out alternative provision and other sources of help. The Pack is relevant to young people who were SEN Support at school and who are SEND as it details the programmes and providers that can be accessed locally from Entry level. AfC is currently developing a SEND Opportunities Pack as part of the CEC funded project to deliver Next Steps (see above).
- 14-19 runs an annual **Summer Support Helpline** after results days to assist learners who have not reached the threshold to progress on to a post-16 programme. In 2018, 3 young people with EHCPs got in touch and the advisers signposted them to alternative courses and colleges where their qualifications would be appropriately

² Afcinfo.org.uk

matched. In addition, the advisers were able to give information on consultation procedures for meeting special education needs outlined in the EHCPs.

- There were **309 non FL2 learners** in Richmond in summer 2018 and as of mid-December, the majority of these (85.6%) are now currently in education/employment, with only 1.3% being NEET and 13.1% are Not Known (currently being tracked)
- 39% of non FL2 learners (120) were SEND/SEN Support.³ Of these, 28 had EHCPs and of these:
 - 23 have now gone into FE,
 - 2 are in school sixth forms
 - 2 are currently on an apprenticeship
 - 1 is awaiting a course at a college.
- 92 of the 120 SEND learners were **SEN Support** (i.e. did not have an EHCP but were recorded on their school's CENSUS as having SEN and needing additional support) and of these:
 - 67 are now in further education
 - 5 in school sixth forms
 - 2 are in an apprenticeship
 - 3 are in employment
 - 1 is on a traineeship.
 - 1 is NEET and
 - 13 have destinations not yet known to AfC
- Of the total SEND cohort together, 79.2% are currently in education or vocational pathways (although we are still tracking destinations so this is probably understated)
- Of the total Year 11 SEN Support from 2017/18 academic year there were 152 learners, of which 137 (89%) attended an in-borough school in either Kingston or Richmond last year. Of the 152 learners in total:
 - 93% are currently in education or vocational pathways
 - 3% are NEET and
 - 4% whose destination is currently not known to AfC
- In addition, AfC is focusing on **Looked After Children** and **Care-leavers**, working closely with the Virtual School and Care-leaver teams to tackle some of these cohorts who are NEET or whose destination is not known - currently 39% of Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers (CL) young people as of March 2018 (down from 42% in March 2017), which is lower than the England average at 45%.
 - The total NEET or Not Known cohort is lower in the age 17-18 cohort at 21% in March 2018 (down from 31% in March 2017). This is lower than the England average of 36%
 - Those aged 19-21, 46% are currently NEET or Not Known (down from 48% in March 2017). This is lower than the England average of 49%

³ Either learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan or who are designated SEN Support

- However, it is recognised that this is a challenging (and often transient) group to engage so our Education Business Partnership (EBP) is dedicating one day per week to supporting this group.
- For all learners aged 16-18 (and up to 25 with an EHC Plan) AfC fulfils its **statutory duty to track and support these** through phone calls, emails, texts, mailshots and 'door knocking'. All young people who are NEET and who are capable of and willing to engage, are offered advice over the phone and/or a face to face interview from a Matrix 6 qualified careers adviser in the 14-19 team. In 2018/18 our average Not Known in Richmond was 1.9% and NEET was also 1.9%.

4. Other sources of help with transition

- AfC's Education Business Partnership hosts an annual **World of Work** roadshow at which there is a dedicated SEND zone and time for learners to attend to meet providers and employers. Schools are offered free use of SEN Transport buses for the day for group travel. Details of exhibitors are provided to schools in advance so they can prepare their students.
- Independent travel is a vital adult and employment skill which promotes independence and equips young people to become more independent. For the past 3 years AfC have provided an **Independent Travel Training** programme to young people each year. Since April 2016, 19/38 Richmond young people have completed the training, with those who had completed by this time last year receiving certificates from Cllr Penny Frost in March 2018. Many SEND learners now travel independently from home to school as a result, using a public transport bus or train, with a pass provided (if needed) by AfC.
- Young people with SEND and families can access information about local services and provision to support them, through our Local Offer website.⁴ This includes a section on Preparing for Adulthood and the range of providers and learning provision that is available locally
- Support is also available for families with SEND through SENDIASS⁵, delivered by the KIDS charity which provides a free, confidential and impartial service. This includes information and advice on SEN/ disability law, personal budgets, local authority procedures for resolving disagreements and advice on financial benefits and support such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

5. Post-16 high needs funding panel

Created in 2015, the **Richmond post 16 high needs panel** meets monthly and looks in detail at each case from year 11 age 15 to age 25 with an EHCP. Partners from Adult Social Care, Preparing for Adulthood⁶ and CCG Health attend each panel. The panel agrees the appropriate placement for each young person individually and signs off the funding for post 16 educational placements in **all types of settings**⁷. This panel was recently cited in the Kingston SEND Ofsted report as an example of good practice in joint commissioning. The

⁴ https://www.afcinfo.org.uk/local_offer

⁵ <https://www.kids.org.uk/richmond-and-kingston-sendiass>

⁶ Part of the SEN team, PfA works with learners from year 10 upwards

⁷ i.e. SPIs, independent and independent special schools, maintained and maintained special schools, FE Colleges, re-engagement provision and bespoke provision

key thing about this panel is that it looks exclusively at post-16 options and has already had an impact along with the Next Step interviews in reducing the number of young people in continuing in school placements while increasing numbers going into vocational pathways in line with their ambitions to move in to employment as adults.

The Panel works as follows:

- Focuses from September to December on planning for the subsequent year's learner destinations by 'tracking' learners from Year 11 upwards and confirming their aspirations
- From January to July, funding decisions are made as a result of the integrated commissioning process between the above agencies
- Where learners do not appear to have a destination planned, information and advice can be provided through 14-19's qualified careers advisers.

The impact of these joint commissioning arrangements to support successful transaction

- In 2017/18, the Panel agreed 242 high need placements from age 16 to 25
- In 2017/18 we agreed 23 such placements for which there was an adult social care (ASC) component and after the ASC contributions being signed off by its own funding panel
- Joint commissioning with the CCG has also resulted in 11 learners funded through Continued Health Care (CHC) funding in 2018/19
- Providers are asked to sign contracts annually and each learner's package is supported by an individual Schedule 2 – in line with audit and accountability requirements and Ofsted expectations
- The 14-19 team leads on the commissioning and contracting for post 16 high needs placements to agree placements (i.e. for those with an EHCP post 16 and for whom AfC and/or social care and health pays the 'top up' funding)
- Of the 242 high needs placements funded each year, 14% have contributions from social care and/or health.
- 14-19 work closely with Richmond's Learning Disability team (LD), who participate (through the high needs funding panel – see below) in the tracking of all Year 11s, 13s and 14s for the forthcoming academic year. The LD team can then identify young people who may need support into adulthood from age 14 and to ensure they have a well-planned move from children's services into adulthood through effective collaborative work between appropriate agencies (social care, health, education, third sector etc).
- A referral should be made to relevant adult services (social care, health, mental health etc) as the young person approaches their 17th birthday. Adult Services will determine whether an assessment for their services is then required based on this information, in which case an assessment should be completed prior to the 18th birthday. If the young person is found to be not eligible for a service, the named worker will ensure that they provide the young person with information about sources of support through signposting.

A small minority of young people with very high support needs will go into in to adult social care, often into supported accommodation. Where they are no longer accessing education or training, their EHCP will be ceased, but colleagues in adult services will continue to monitor and support those young people and will be able to give greater details about the arrangements and outcomes for those young people.

APPENDIX B

Adult Services Mechanism to Support Transitions

Achieving for Children (AfC) & Special Educational Needs team (SEN) usually make referrals to Richmond Adult Learning Disability Services (LDT) at age 17 years, although the LDT liaise with AfC and actively track the transition cases from age 15/16. (NB Guidance does direct adults and children's' services to work together from age 14 (year 9) to plan services together to enable the best transition arrangements for young people).

The Learning Disability Transition Social Worker works in partnership with AfC/SEN to promote a smooth transition for the young person and their parents/family over this period.

LDT undertake an assessment of care and support needs at age 17 and offer Carer's Assessment undertaking this when required.

LDT will meet the individual's care and support personal outcomes, but the challenge is that this must balance aspiration and everyone's views within the context of what adult services is required to provide statutorily in meeting prevailing assessed eligible needs and the priority to promote independence. This is where a tension can arise.

LDT attend regular meetings with AfC and other departments within Children's Services (e.g. Leaving Care Team) that form part of the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) reviewing process. This involves attending schools and colleges (local and out of borough) to plan the transition into adult services.

Richmond LD assess the young person before their 18th birthday to ensure that services are set-up in time for when they officially transfer to adult services (on date of 18th birthday).