

Title/Subject: Good Transitions – Improving Transitions Planning

Meeting: Integration Joint Board

Date: 4 April 2018

Submitted By: Head of Social Work Adult Services and Chief Social Work Officer

Action: For Decision

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The report informs the IJB of findings from consultation with young people and their families in the Partnership area about how we can improve the way we support young people with additional support needs as they move from children's to adult services. The relevance of recently developed national Principles for Good Transitions is indicated, and improvement actions are identified.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

- 2.1 note that a range of consultation events have been held with young people who have additional support needs and their family carers
- 2.2 adopt the framework of Principles of Good Transitions
- 2.3 remit the Chief Officer and officers to identify resources to create a strategic role to co-ordinate transition planning, implement the improvement actions and to create a Transitions Steering Group.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Transitions is the period when young people develop from children to young adults. This is not a single event, such as leaving school, but a growing up process that unfolds over several years which involves significant intellectual, emotional and physical changes. During this period young people progressively assume greater autonomy in many different areas of their lives and are required to adjust to different expectations, places, routines and experiences.
- 3.2. Young people with additional support needs have the right to be valued as individuals and lead fulfilling lives. They have the right to contribute to the economy, access and participate in their communities and benefit from an inclusive society. For young people to do this successfully they need the right support to make the transition into young adulthood.

3.3 A range of legislation and policy underpins the rights of children and young people in transition. This includes:

- Good transitions planning enable the exercise of human rights entitlements under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Keys to Life – the national strategy on learning disability which has four strategic outcomes, a healthy life, choice and control, independence and active citizenship
- The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 enables professionals from multiple agencies to plan together to meet a pupil's needs and to co-ordinate their support towards agreed learning targets
- The Additional Support for Learning (Changes in School Education) Scotland Regulations 2005 governs transitions within a child or young person's school career
- Under the GIRFEC Framework (Getting It Right For Every Child) effective transition planning may form part of an intervention to support the achievement of the child's wellbeing outcomes.

3.4 [Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Delivery Plan](#)

The Delivery Plan aspires to there being '*support services that promote independent living, meet needs and work together to enable a life of choices, opportunities and participation,*' consistent with the principles of Self Directed Support.

Good transition planning is of central importance to the achievement of these outcomes by young people who have additional support needs. Poor outcomes can result for example from the need for transition planning being identified late or from poor coordination across the service system. For young people and their families their outcomes are important, not which part of the service system has responsibility for an intervention. The development of Self Directed Support and the implementation of revised eligibility criteria and the redesign of younger adult's support services are related developments which provide favourable context for the development of outcomes focused transitions planning.

3.5 **Closer To Home Strategy**

Children and Families Social Work are developing a 5 year strategy which seeks to ensure better outcomes for vulnerable young people with assessed needs. The principles of the strategy are based on good quality support for children/young people and their families which take into account the strengths and assets they have. The focus is to provide services within our communities and to ensure that they meet the needs of our citizens by providing maximum opportunity for them to participate in delivery and design. The enabling approach of the strategy fits in seamlessly to the aims and ambitions in social work adult services.

3.6 Transition planning involves coordination within and across large services including education, children's social work, adult social work, health, housing, employment

services and the third sector. Across Scotland, as here in Falkirk, young people and their families provide feedback that they can find it challenging to navigate a way through the stages of transition. The 2016 Joint Inspection of Services for Children reinforced the need for improved transitions between children's and adult services and consequently transitions forms part of the improvement plan arising from the Inspection. The present report sets out proposals to bring forward meaningful action in response to that feedback.

4. CURRENT POSITION IN FALKIRK

4.1 Work which has been undertaken in Falkirk to explore what works well and how we can improve has included:

- consultation with young people and their family carers
- dialogue within and across services and,
- analysis of processes and demand for support in respect of the cohort of young people who are approaching school leaving age in 2018.

4.2 Young people with additional support needs and their families find the transition to adult life particularly challenging. These challenges are exacerbated by:

- insufficient planning
- unclear pathways
- organisational barriers
- limited options.

4.3 Effective co-ordination of transition planning and support at a local level is critical, particularly for those with learning disabilities or multiple complex needs. The lack of joined up working between professionals is the biggest challenges in effectively supporting transitions. Where effective partnership working does exist, it makes a significant difference in the transitions experience for young people.

4.4 The work has identified opportunities for improvement across several themes:

- ability to plan ahead for young people who have particular support needs including (but not exclusive to) housing needs and specialist health needs
- effective management of information, for example a local single shared database
- all services have a clear understanding of their role, with steps taken to avoid duplication or late commencement of planning processes
- transition planning starts earlier than the year the young person leaves school and that it continues past 18 years
- adult services can engage with young people and their parents/carers at an early stage in order to provide information about Self Directed Support and encourage people to start thinking about this
- young people flourish when being directly involved in their transition plans
- schools and other services appreciate a single point of contact re transition

- knowledge of transition planning across the services is limited
- work is co-ordinated and has time dedicated to it

4.5 In January 2017 the Association for Real Change [Scotland] published a framework of Principles for Good Transitions. These were developed in conjunction with the Scottish Transitions Forum and endorsed by the Scottish Government. The framework consists of 7 principles:

- Principle 1: Planning and decision making should be carried out in a person-centred way
- Principle 2: Support should be co-ordinated across all services
- Principle 3: Planning should start early and continue up to age 25
- Principle 4: All young people should get the support they need
- Principle 5: Young people, parents and carers must have access to the information they need
- Principle 6: Families and carers need support
- Principle 7: A continued focus on transitions across Scotland

4.6 The above principles are consistent with what we have learned in Falkirk from consultation and review of practice, as set out in paras 4.1 to 4.4 above. The framework provides an approach to transitions which can be shared by all professionals at strategic and operational levels, linking up the legislative areas and different professional concerns.

4.7 Principles 1-6 set out set out timely, realistic values which can be adopted and embedded, setting a clear line of sight to the necessary improvement. By adopting Principle 7 the Partnership are committing to becoming part of a wider programme of change, with many other Partnership areas likewise embarking upon improvement plans.

4.8 The Board is asked to adopt the Principles for Good Transitions across the Partnership to guide service delivery and practice and signal our commitment to excellence in transition planning.

4.9 In July 2017 the Association for Real Change [Scotland] published '[Facing the Future Together](#)', their report on young people's experience of transition planning in Scotland. The Facing the Future Together research found that there is general agreement on the essential elements that would make a difference. These are:

- starting the person centred planning process early
- honest communication about the available options
- opportunities for the young person to 'try out' college or work
- effective communication and coordination of services (especially between child and adult services)
- building young people's confidence and life-skills by listening to them and involving them
- a single consistent point of professional contact
- appropriately trained staff.

4.10 **Priorities for Action**

There are inter-professional considerations associated with the move from children's to adult services. These include a collaborative approach to identifying and achieving positive destinations in education or employment, managing housing changes, reviewing healthcare needs, managing risk and providing information. This will require in some cases a co-working approach between agencies, with the young person at the heart of the process, and with appropriate engagement with family carers. Timely commencement of transitions planning will require early engagement and a stronger presence by children's and adults' social work services in and with schools.

4.11 Those responsible for planning and delivering support for children and young people with additional support needs include:

- Women and Children's Directorate and adult health
- Children and families, justice and adult social work services
- Education – secondary, further and higher
- Housing services
- Employment and training services
- Third sector organisations
- Public sector services
- Scottish Government

The incorporation of the Good Transitions principles would require a focus on staff development for the workforce across all of the above service areas.

4.12 A key success factor in improving transitions planning is the effective management of information. There is not currently a local single shared database which produces high quality information on the population of young people who now, or in the near term, will need support with transitions planning. There is consequently risk that the Partnership is not kept fully informed of issues which could potentially have significant impact on outcomes for the population of young people who require transition planning support. Management of information and the development of a shared framework for measuring performance is therefore identified as an opportunity for improvement activity.

4.13 **Participation**

There is need for services to genuinely hear the voice of the young person more clearly in the transitions process so they can exercise their right to choice and control. At present, those most involved in agreeing personal outcomes and future plans for young people do not always have sufficient time or the range of communication skills to meaningfully engage with all young people, particularly those with more complex communication skills. Young people may have different plans and views than those of their parents or carers and social workers. Advocacy services need to be considered and offered for every young person with additional support needs. The Chief Officer report (section 12.1) notes the Mental Welfare Commission publication of the Right to Advocacy report in March 2018. The

recommendations for services set out in the report will be considered as part of the transitions planning work.

4.14 The areas of work that require focused improvement work include:

- promoting the role of advocacy
- optimising the increasing support opportunities flowing from new technology and online resources
- support to family carers through carers' assessment, and recognition of the importance of the young person's relationships with their family
- employment opportunities and a comprehensive approach to welfare rights and income maximisation
- ensuring timeliness of planning
- redesign of processes for transfers between the children's and adults' service systems
- provide information to schools, parents/carers and young people at an early age and have a presence within local schools where necessary.

4.15 Learning from good practice elsewhere, the two pillars of most successful approaches to support co-ordinated transitions are the development of a specific job role focused on transitions co-ordination and the development of local transitions networks.

4.16 To provide optimum conditions and maximise the opportunities for effective joint working we must develop an ambitious Transitions Steering Group. The group will have a clear definition regarding scope of responsibility and inclusive membership; outlined in the terms of reference. This will include progressing the improvement work identified above.

4.17 The Board members are asked to remit the Chief Officer, Head of Social Work Adult Services and the Chief Social Work Officer to identify resources to create a strategic role to co-ordinate transition planning, implement the improvement actions and to create a Transitions Steering Group, including the terms of reference for this group.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. The consultation work with young people and their families found optimism about the future and enthusiasm around how Good Transitions can be achieved. There is consensus, described earlier, about how improvement can be achieved. There is also a realistic appraisal of the extent of effort and attention that will be required across all of the services who share a role and responsibility. This work will be enabled and facilitated through effective coordination, which has been identified as a gap in present arrangements. This gap requires to be addressed through a commitment of resource to a dedicated transitions coordination role which will support a Transitions Steering Group bringing together the different parts of the service system.

Resource Implications

The report notes resource to be identified to progress this work.

Impact on IJB Outcomes and Priorities

The proposed actions enhance capacity for delivery across all 5 local outcomes set out in the Integrated Strategic Plan.

Legal & Risk Implications

The proposal enables the enhanced delivery of key statutory duties [see para 3.3] and the 2016 Joint Inspection of Services for Children.

Consultation

Extensive consultation has taken place with young people, carers, parents, services and various relevant organisations to identify the challenges which exist in Falkirk and how we can work better together to improve the transitions process.

Equalities Assessment

The proposal will promote equalities.

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List of Background Papers