



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* EDINBURGH



## Post – school transitions of people who are deaf or hard of hearing October 31<sup>st</sup> 2013

### Post event summary

This briefing paper summarises the main themes of discussion from the above event. It does not necessarily reflect the views of NDCS.

### 1. A need to improve transitional arrangements

#### *Varied reasons for lack of transitional planning*

- Many young people do not identify with being deaf and reject support, therefore may not have support or planning in place
- YP without an IEP slip through the system, transition planning tends to be focussed on those with the most complex needs
- Partnership working is the key barrier - there can be gaps between key organisations – these need to be filled to ensure positive transitions can happen.
- Information for parents and young people is key (particularly in relation to those from low socio economic backgrounds) so that self-advocacy can happen
- Decline in number of young people receiving Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs) which undermines young people's legal rights to access transition planning
- However, the research also highlighted that even those young people with CSPs did not always have a transition plan, therefore wider issues at play too

#### *Importance of continuity of support*

Transition planning should start earlier, having someone to advocate for young person throughout their school experiences is essential, transitional planning is only as good as the support experience that comes before it.

#### *Importance of person-centred planning*

Simply having a plan doesn't mean that positive outcomes will necessarily follow – plans must reflect what young person and family want, and should focus on end goals. Planning needs to also *lead* somewhere – from research the path to/from HE seems clear, the path to/from FE is more problematic.

#### *Limitations of means of redress/appeal*

A paradox within the current ASL tribunal system is that young people who feel they have not had transitional planning arrangements put in place or fully implemented can only take this to tribunal until the age of 18. A young person over 18 would have no legal route of redress if they felt failed by transitional planning.

#### *Strengthen guidance around education planning*

We need to be clearer about which children are eligible for transition planning and which aren't (i.e to whom the duty definitely applies). Current arrangements are too vague and resources too scarce. There is also an inequitable distribution of resources according to socio economic background.

Similarly, we need more clarity around the issue of accountability – who owns transitional planning and who should be responsible for ensuring that it happens?

#### *Supporting the recommendation for local transitions forums*

Scottish Transitions Forum have recommended setting up local transitions forums which may help solve some problems around partnership working – this recommendation should be supported in recognition of the fact that the main barrier in this area seems to be failures in partnership working. It was also recognised the Template for Success could be a useful tool.

## **2. A need to address social isolation of deaf young people**

The impact of deaf young people in Scotland being educated in mainstream schools is that many are not socially included.

The stigma attached to deafness may be a particularly acute barrier and the impact it has on young people's resilience, their capacity for self advocacy and their ability to access information. There is a need for peer education to help remove stigma – we need to work harder to create deaf friendly schools and there is a role for deaf role models to help build confidence and resilience in deaf young people.

Self advocacy seen as key issue - information and action is required to support young people to understand their rights.

Importance of early years on long term outcomes and social isolation – e.g. family sign language is vital – deaf young people need to have language skills from young age.

## **3. Impact of socio-economic status and BME**

Related to social isolation is the issue of socio-economic status, particularly in terms of expectations and self-advocacy. Higher socio-economic statuses benefit from both higher expectations of support services and more regular use of self-advocacy to meet those expectations.

Accessible information provision and empowerment of families and young people is crucial to transcend boundaries set by socio-economic status. However – important to keep in mind that young people have a right to advocacy even if this doesn't come from their parents.

Within BME community groups there can be much stigma around deafness, where families and children do not accept deafness nor put in place the support required. Many young people in BME communities are not registered deaf or blind. Role models within these groups are crucial to breaking down this stigma.

## **4. Lack of specialist support within mainstream settings**

Is it appropriate and sustainable to expect mainstream teachers to meet the specialist needs of pupils with additional support for learning requirements within one setting?

With the shift away from Records of Need, and with the decline of CSPs, it is difficult for teachers to know exactly what support is required by each individual they are responsible for teaching.

#### *Specialist workforce provision*

There are wider issues around workforce characteristics such as ageing population and funding – future area of work to map outcomes of young people around workforce provision in the area? There is also a

fundamental lack of social workers for the deaf, especially those who have a specialism to work with children and families.

#### **5. A need to improve data collection and statistics**

There is a need to improve how we use statistics and join up data collection in Scotland – existing data sets should be combined where possible. More importantly though, we should be looking at how we use data not just how it is collected and published.

This links to how information is collected and used by the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening programme. This data should inform local authority service provision and planning. This would improve how statutory agencies can identify and support deaf children and young people in their area.

Importance of utilising systems like Skills Development Scotland's Data Hub – to improve our knowledge of location, outcomes and needs of 16 – 19 year olds.

#### **6. Bridging gap in experiences between FE and HE**

Support, choice and pathways out of HE seem to be better and clearer for young people than in FE, how can we bridge this gap?

Reduction of college places is having serious impact on young people and the choices they are faced with on leaving school - need for transparency and accountability here.

A need to identify the areas of good practice happening in FE and make those models known to other institutions.

How do we make sure that students who are DHH are included in mainstream courses and are not kept on access-level courses, which may change their names but in essence stay the same? Avoiding revolving door situation.

#### **7. Need to focus on *delivery* of good policy intentions**

Local authorities, employers and FE and HE institutions need to have clear and public commitment to Equality Act.

Values and attitudes are key in this discussion – the connection to between what people say and what they do, should be explicit and held to account. Public authorities should make clear their values and attitudes to delivering services and this should be held to account.

There is a need for cultural change in agencies involved in transition, working in silos is embedded in local and health authority practice. While Scotland has good progressive policy – it is prevented from being effectively implemented by this practice.

Ministerial level action is required to improve how the Scottish Government works in more joined up ways.

Accountability is key – there was a wide ranging debate about who should be responsible in terms of transition planning, and other areas involving Named Person/Lead Professional.

The introduction of Single Outcomes Agreements means that we have significant variation across Scotland in how services are delivered.

How well are Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) doing in implementing ASL and what are the opportunities to join CPPs and influence them?

Useful to test cases and obtain rulings that strengthen legislation to support deaf children and young people. Useful also to collect case studies of good practice and share this across sectors to improve delivery of legislation.

#### **8. More effective use of limited resources**

The issue of resources remains central, in particular recognising that there are a number of agencies utilising resources to the same ends but they don't necessarily co-operate. This needs addressing.

#### **9. Importance of engaging with employers**

More work needs to be done around engaging employers and supporting them to employ young people with additional support needs. Deaf awareness amongst employers is clearly a barrier.

Suggestion of setting up local 'pathways' of support for deaf young people – designed, set pathways into employment with supportive employers. It was felt that this might be problematic in terms of reducing choice but that it also might have benefits in terms of opening up other opportunities and providing structure where currently there is none.

#### **10. Actions/follow up:**

- Transitions are a long term priority for the Additional Support for Learning Advisory Group, which has identified 9 problems and 9 solutions around experience of transitions of young people with additional support needs. Need to move forward with these recommendations.
- Scottish Government Attainment Team currently looking at Learner Journey, can research feed into this?
- Report Laura Meikle from Scottish Government currently preparing report around recommendations in this area - can research feed in?