**Preparing for Adulthood for young people with disabilities in Manchester**

Manchester Council has been a pathfinder for the national SEND reforms, which provided an opportunity to get to grips with issues new legislation raises. One advantage of being a pathfinder was to find out what worked well and could be implemented at scale, and what worked less well and needed to be refined or abandoned.

This case study explores the key learning points, methodologies and outcomes in the context of person centered planning.

**Background**

From April 2015 there will be two key pieces of legislation that will affect disabled young people preparing for adulthood and their families – Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Part 1 of the forthcoming Care Act. Both Acts have the same emphasis on outcomes and person-centred practices when considering assessment, planning and support. They require a multi-agency approach to planning and commissioning, fully coordinated with the young person and their family.

It is therefore vital that when local authorities and partners are planning for implementation of the reforms that both Acts are considered together, with an emphasis on joining up processes where there are links between them. This is to ensure:

* Continuity of support so that young people and families don’t feel like they are falling off a cliff when they transition from children’s to adult’s services.
* Young people and families are not faced with a duplication of assessments and planning that requires them to tell their story over and over again.
* Effective and cost efficient use of resources.

From September 2011 until September 2014 Manchester Council was a pathfinder for the national SEND reforms focusing on preparing for adulthood for young people aged 14-25. This has provided an opportunity to get to grips with issues raised by the new legislation raises and trial new ways of working before the majority of other authorities.

**Key issues identified**:

1. **Working on a new early help strategy –** to ensurethat the needs of young people with disabilities relevant to their adulthood are identified at an early stage to allow for speedy intervention and prevent those needs from escalating.
2. **Positively managing expectations –** the support that is on offer from adult services in many cases differs from that provided by children’s services. Manchester are working to ensure that families understand what will be different from an early stage in the transition planning process.
3. **Improving the information, advice and support available -** so that young people and families feel prepared, are able to make informed choices and be in control of their lives.
4. **Workforce development -** ensuring that person-centred practices are embedded across the authority and in partner agencies.
5. **Increasing numbers of young people with disabilities participating in work -** Both pieces of legislation identify participating in work as an outcome for all young people with disabilities. Manchester has been focussing on how to achieve this.
6. **Developing post-16 personalised packages -** will provide the support required to achieve the person-centred outcomes agreed for young people.

**What Manchester is doing to address the key issues:**

**Implementing Preparing for Adulthood reviews** for pupils from year 9 upwards. This review is being rolled out in schools to develop and review the Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans. It does this by gathering information with a variety of person-centred thinking tools on a young person’s aspirations for their future. This information is then used to agree collaboratively with the family and young person, clearly defined person-centred outcomes, which are recorded in the EHC Plan. To support scaling up of this approach, there is training available in person centered planning/approaches, key working, and using one-page profiles to gather information.

In many schools **Planning Live** sessions are happening with groups of young people, their families and professionals. Planning Live is an event that can:

* Raise aspirations
* Develop individual person-centred outcomes
* Provide information and advice to students and their parents about local provision
* Gather information on aspirations to inform commissioners

Feedback from Planning Live events is very positive:

* Students now have higher expectations of support available as they move into adulthood
* Students expressing their opinions and being listened to
* Families felt better supported through the ‘planning live’ events and a feeling they are partners in the transition process rather than ‘bystanders’

They have focused on ways to increase the number of people with disabilities accessing employment and have developed a **0-25 employment pathway.** This includes providing good quality information on employment on the Local Offer and showing young people and families how personal budgets can be used to support this outcome**.** They havedeveloped Supported Internships as a way of getting young people into paid work. Manchester, jointly with the Department for Education ran a work experience project, ‘Inspired to Work’ aimed at the 14-19 age group and involving 8 mainstream and special schools. The project focused on raising aspirations of young people and their families, offering real work experience, and increasing disability awareness amongst employers.

Manchester has recognised that parents may require different levels and types of support to enable them to be fully involved in the process. Information Advice and Support Manchester (IAS) which is run by parents is a first point of call for parents wanting advice, information and individual support about the special educational needs system or about issues relating to the young person’s health and social care. Using a hub approach they offer drop-ins in community locations where families can get face-to-face advice.

**Solutions**

A key piece of work has been to increase the personalised post-16 provision available to meet the needs and deliver the desired outcomes of young people. The starting point is to agree the personalised outcomes. The next question is what provision is required to meet these. In some cases the answer may be found entirely within the courses and curriculum already on offer at local colleges. At the other end a highly bespoke solution may be required. A mix and match approach may be developed, such as two or three days at college combined with two or three days supported work experience, or independent travel training, or independent living skills, in each case that have been bought in specifically for the young person. This is working particular well with young people who have social, emotional and behavioral needs who find 5 days a week in a college environment too challenging.

Manchester is now looking to build these initiatives to develop an all age disability strategy, which will include an offer of employment for young people. In some cases this might be part-time or voluntary work. It will also include raising the aspiration of employment from primary school age.

**Appendix A**

There are two resources that can be used as evidence of the examples above that are not mentioned in the text. They are listed in the table along with a URL so that you may access them.

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| Details of a Planning Live Event at Lancasterian School | <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/media/286219/lancasterian_pathfinder_script_june_13_final__version.pdf> |
| A good practice toolkit around the Preparing for Adulthood Review | <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources/pfa-resources/the-preparing-for-adulthood-review> |