

SCIE conference 2005: Workshop 7 - Helping young people with learning difficulties move into adult services

Workshop 7, 'Helping young people with learning difficulties move into adult services' was facilitated by North Somerset People First, Norah Fry Research Centre and the Home Farm Trust. The workshop looked at what young people, their families and carers/supporters need to know to help young people through transition, and how the young people want the information to be delivered.

The workshop attendees were asked to identify things that were important for young people through the transition process. The following were identified:

- what is transition
- young person's views
- parents' views
- who can help
- what choices are available e.g. accommodation, training, employment
- how flexible and creative choices can be
- access needs
- legal rights and responsibilities
- changes to benefits
- what happens when something goes wrong / how does the young person make a complaint
- important for friends and family to continue to have contact
- social networks/friendships
- health and safety
- dealing with homesickness for those who have moved away from home

The key issues from the discussions were:

- It is important to listen to the young person's wants and needs when creating plans.
- It was agreed that young people's progress should be tracked and followed up. This would also help to see impact on local services.

- The options and choices for young people with learning disabilities can be very limited. This does not help develop the young person's independence as choice is taken away from them.
- The young people want transition to cover all aspects of adult life not just social services.
- Resources should be needs led not the other way round.
- The prospect of young people having an individual budget, as outlined in the green paper, may help other choices and options to open up to young people. However, there was concern about creating hope for young people and families, which cannot be funded. This could lead to a 2 tier service which would be good for school leavers and those new to the system but not as beneficial to existing service users.
- Need to value carers and supporters - not forget the day-to-day things they help young people with.
- Parents who have fought for inclusion in mainstream primary and secondary schools often find the options their children want from adult services are not available to them.
- It is important for young people to work with people who have experience of dealing with people who have different needs. Also important to spend time explaining and going through things with the young person.
- It is important for young people to have the support of their families and friends.
- It would be helpful if local authorities set up databases of services available to young people in their area.