

VALUING PEOPLE

Support Team

Section 11

How can person-centred planning help?

A person centred approach to transition – some key ingredients

This advice, based on experience in several areas, should be read in conjunction with the DOH person centred planning guidance. The Valuing People Support Team web site has an increasing amount of materials referenced, much of which can be downloaded, including some of the tools of person centred approaches referred to here. This advice also assumes that Partnership Boards have undertaken activity as recommended in the PCP guidance, including awareness raising with people with learning disabilities and families and the training of facilitators.

What does Valuing People require?

“Local agencies will be expected to have introduced person-centred planning for all young people moving from children’s to adult’s services by 2003”.

In accordance with the PCP guidance this planning should be facilitated independently of professional/agency assessment to determine eligibility for resources and services. For this to be of most use to young people it would need to take place in such a way that it could influence assessments which determine eligibility and allocation of statutory resources. This means that local systems will need to look to the timing of the availability of person centred planning and to ensuring the necessary overlap with assessments.

NB: Of course person centred planning must never be compulsory. We are therefore here interpreting the VP requirement as meaning that all young people should have the option of plans being facilitated independent of assessment and that local agencies must act to make this possible. Given the potential usefulness it would be expected that the numbers of people taking up this

option would increase over time. In the event that people choose not to have a plan facilitated (or lead one themselves) they should be able to expect that professional assessment and planning will take place using person centred approaches.

A person centred approach

In order to deliver on Objective 2 of Valuing People, the partner agencies will have to continue to build good local systems for supporting transition, as set out in this pack. Person centred approaches can best make a contribution within such a framework of joint vision and working (see accompanying article for more detail) but it is crucial not to wait for the perfect local system before making use of person centred approaches (see below).

Research over the past ten years has consistently shown that young people and their families feel that they do not have much influence over the planning that takes place in the later school years and as they move into adulthood. They often feel that they are being processed (sometimes smoothly, sometimes not) and that the focus is too much upon transferring them into a narrow range of predetermined post school options. A person centred approach aims to:

- Offer opportunities for young people and their families to plan more broadly, starting with questions about their life aspirations in adulthood and how these might be pursued. From this starting point the potential contribution of professionals and agencies can be explored. (It is crucial for all participants to be clear that person centred planning is not synonymous with assessment and care planning – not everything in a person's person centred plan will be the business of or responsibility of service agencies)
- Assist service agencies, over time, to commission and provide services and supports that increasingly shift towards a better match with young people's aspirations

Applying a person centred approach to transition

In applying a person centred approach in transition there are three interrelated elements that need to be addressed:

1. To discover:

- what is important to the young person?
- what support do they want and need?
- what are the young person's dream and aspirations?

2. To explore what could be possible:

- what might be best practice in people getting the lives they want (where they live, work and education, social lives etc)

3. To explore what is practical and possible locally to achieve the things that are important to the young person?

There are many ways of addressing these three elements and much will depend on local circumstances (see below). We recommend that, as part of local arrangements for improving transition, joint agency groups work towards introducing person centred approaches into their joint activities from the year nine review stage. This fits with the Code of Practice transition planning process, co-ordinated by schools and Connexions personal advisors. Different agencies have their own statutory and organisational requirements (Framework for Assessment, APIR, Section 47 Assessment etc), but these can and should incorporate person centred approaches and be conducted in a person centred way.

There are many simple and practical ways of introducing person centred approaches into transition planning work. Some examples are:

- Learning logs – based on what has worked and not worked for a person in activities, these can be used to help get really clear about what is important to people
- Communication section (from Essential Lifestyle Planning). This offers a way of clearly and simply recording our best guess of what people mean when they communicate without speech
- “Listen to me” – This is a process for people to begin to develop their own person centred plan

(See DoH guidance on person centred planning for more examples www.doh.gov.uk/vpst)

By incorporating these approaches into the transition planning process, the involved agencies will be able to:

- Help young people and their families build an increasingly clear idea of how they want to live their lives as adults, what specific actions are needed to progress their aspirations and who can help
- Become clearer about how the services and supports that young people are eligible for can support their aspirations during the final years at school – and take action flowing from this
- Build towards a plan that can be used to shape adult services and supports at school leaving

Developing a plan

We recommend that, as young people reach the last two years at school, they should be offered the opportunity to turn the learning and activities of the previous work into a full person centred plan, using one or more of the main styles. This can then be a powerful aid to the person and their family and should also be used by professionals and service agencies within their formal assessment and service planning systems

With each family/young person we would suggest action is taken to work out:

- What information you already have that contributes to learning about: what's important to the person; what support they need, what are their hopes and aspirations?
- What information you still need to gather
- Work out, on a person by person, family by family basis which way of gathering information will work best (given your local context and resources). For example:
 - Link a facilitator with a family and decide whether the young person can be supported to plan directly (eg using “Listen to Me”), whether the family want to lead the plan (eg using “Families Leading Planning”) or whether the family/young person would prefer the facilitator to begin the plan

Or

- Have a “getting started” day and invite families and young people, care managers, Connexions PAs etc. Demonstrate Path, Maps and ELP and different ways of completing plans (people leading their own plans, families leading planning, independent facilitator). Support the young person and family to choose the style of planning (ELP, Path, Maps) and way of starting.
- Provide what people want eg link to a facilitator programme or “Families Leading Planning” programme or “Listen to Me” programme
- Support planning then work out how to help people learn about what is possible
- Alongside planning support people to consider what might be possible for them There are many options for this. For example:
 - Transition courses for young people/families (provided by families and advocacy organisations or others), after school transition clubs etc. These can support people to explore what is possible by having people who have their own home, are in paid work, contribute to their communities etc to come and share their stories
 - Partners in Policymaking or similar courses
 - Market place of possibilities
 - Group events where young people, families and professionals learn from each other
 - One to one information sharing, for example via personal advisors
- Then support the young person/their family to work out what needs to happen next, based upon what is important to them, what support they need, their aspirations, what might be possible and the ideas of what can happen locally. This is where a link to statutory assessments and care planning is vital. Local arrangements need to be made to ensure these are responsive to people’s person centred plans. There are options here around identifying what young people are eligible for from statutory agencies that is included in the plan and costing support plans to deliver. The option of direct payments should always be considered and opportunities to lever resources in

explored (for example applications to the Independent Living Fund)

Getting started

Depending on local circumstances it may well take some time to build up local agreements, ways of working and capacity to implement the use of person centred approaches over the last few years of school and fuller planning in the final years. Where you start very much depends on your local circumstances. Our experience strongly suggests that whilst person centred planning works best within a broader systemic local framework for improving transition, we must not wait until our systems are put together to our satisfaction before implementing person centred approaches. Indeed getting going with person centred approaches can powerfully inform desired system developments. The learning helps us to start from what we are trying to achieve rather than an assumption that certain specific systems activities (eg developing joint assessment) will automatically and of themselves lead to desired improvements.

Because these are new ways of working, it is advisable to start small and build from success and learning. So we would suggest starting by looking for good local work. Can you find examples where families and young people would say “that worked well for me”, where the experience was a good one and good outcomes were achieved. Can you find local professionals and workers who would endorse this from their own point of view? Ask who was involved and what did they do?

A good starting point would be to then create opportunities to link the people involved in this successful work, with some young people and families who are keen to take a different approach to transition. In the very first instance you might be looking for only perhaps five or six families to start exploring this new way of working. We would strongly suggest that in the early stages this a “volunteers only” activity and that the most enthusiastic and talented local facilitators are the first ones linked to families and young people. Careful explanation is needed about the different roles and functions associated with person centred planning and formal assessments.

Learning from person centred planning

The accompanying diagram shows how starting to implement person centred planning can fit into a process for delivering on objective 2. The key learning that needs to be extracted is about:

- How can we continue to develop our planning with people in ways which work increasingly well to improve the experience and lead to better individual outcomes (as defined by young people and families)
- What do people's plans tell us about changes to our services and service systems that we need to pay attention to in order to allow more of what is in people's plans to happen? This needs to be learning taken within individual organisations and across the partner organisations (see accompanying article for examples). We would advise that the means of collecting this learning are kept simple. For example meetings with some young people and families who have gone through the process asking them what worked well and what could be improved. Another suggestion would be to meet with plan facilitators and care managers/professionals to explore how service commissioning and provision can make adaptations to fit better with what is important to people (see accompanying article for examples)

What might it take?

Thinking here about the planning with people over the last couple of years at school. If you have say 20 people in each of the last two years that you wish to offer the opportunity of planning to, one example approach would call for:

- 1 or 2 people who can allocate reasonably substantial time to person centred planning (they may well be working to support pcp in other areas as well eg day service modernisation). These people would need to be trained facilitators and able to do say 5-6 of the plans each themselves each year
- 5-8 facilitators who could do 3 plans a year each
- Some resources, especially in the early stages, to buy in training around approaches such as Families Leading Planning, Listen to Me, Life by Design or similar. Localities should aim to become increasingly self sufficient in this over time

This example focuses specifically on the person centred planning elements and does not include the resources needed, for example for exploring possibilities.

Martin Routledge and Helen Sanderson

Connecting Person Centred Planning and Service Development Projects

Example – Transition from Childhood to Adulthood

An example, connecting one of the Valuing People objectives and a priority for use of person centred planning can illustrate how Partnership Boards might proceed.

Government Objective: As young people with learning disabilities move into adulthood, to ensure continuity of care and support for the young person and their family; and to provide equality of opportunity in order to enable as many disabled young people as possible to participate in education, training or employment.

In order to achieve this objective, Valuing People:

- Highlights the new roles and responsibilities of the Connexions service
- Requires that person centred planning is introduced for all young people moving into adulthood from 2003
- Requires that each Partnership Board identify a “champion” for transition within its membership
- Reminds involved agencies of the need to have/develop effective links between childrens and adult services in both health and social care, with particular responsibilities for Director’s of social services

This is a challenging objective for a number of reasons:

- A wide range of agencies and professional groups have some part to play in supporting people “in transition”
- There has been a degree of policy and organisational fragmentation both nationally and locally. To date self advocates and families in many areas have been very disappointed at the apparent lack of coherent connections between Education based transitional reviews and planning and the activities of other agencies and professionals.
- Self advocates and families still report a lack of options designed around their individual needs and aspirations –

particularly in key areas such as further education, employment, leisure and housing

Partnership Boards will have to take action at both strategic and operational levels and across children's and adult services in order to make progress. They will need to connect person centred planning into developing interagency arrangements.

In order to make progress it will be necessary to develop an improved organisational context with:

- Clear joint objectives based on desired outcomes for people with learning disabilities
- Simple protocols in key areas to ensure role clarity
- Organisational arrangements that help keep joint efforts on track and problem solve the inevitable difficulties which will arise – for example multi-agency steering groups with significant involvement from people and their families to ensure continued focus on better lives for people
- “Soft” elements such as away days and reviews amongst participants to help people to value each other's contributions

These arrangements will be necessary but not sufficient. A problem that often arises is that the understandable focus on organisational and professional coherence can leave the key issue – better supports and outcomes for people – relatively unaffected. It is quite possible to improve administrative smoothness without significantly changing lives. It is noticeable that when self advocates and family members have been involved in these transition development efforts, they often have a different focus, more likely to start from goals than systems.

What is the role for person centred planning in transition?

First it will be necessary to review, from different perspectives, how person centred current transition arrangements and outcomes are:

- Do people and their families have real opportunities, at all stages, to influence planning for their futures, based upon good information and with appropriate support?
- What currently happens in this locality when people leave school? Do people have a range of choices and options similar

to those of people without learning disabilities? Is support designed around the expressed aspirations of people and their families? Are non-specialist organisations and agencies strongly involved in designing support and providing resources? Are people from minority ethnic communities or people with “complex” needs supported to access the same opportunities and choices as others?

This type of analysis is likely to throw up significant challenges to local commissioners and providers of service as well as to non-specialist partners such as Education, Housing providers, employment agencies, Leisure providers, the Connexions services, the Learning and Skills Council. These will have to be addressed over time.

Having undertaken such a review it will be necessary for Partnership Boards to consider the development and use of person centred planning in order to improve transition supports:

- It will be important to increase the power and influence of young people and their families. Currently people often complain that they have little opportunity to base transition planning around what is important to them and that planning is often more like processing from one system to another. Supporting people to undertake or lead their own planning can shift this situation. There are instances, for example, of advocacy organisations assisting people to prepare their own plans/attending key meetings with people and of training for families and self advocates in doing planning for themselves. Allied to these planning initiatives there are linked supports such as advocate or family-led information programmes, involvement from direct payment support agencies, advocate and family leadership training
- It will be necessary to bring together players from different agencies to ensure that input is available and co-ordinated and that roles are clear, for example between teachers, children’s social workers, Connexions personal advisors, health professionals, care managers etc. These players will have to agree to use approaches in their planning that are increasingly person centred in their methods and their outcomes including some specific styles and materials

- It will be vital that key services are involved at as early a stage as possible in transition planning and especially as supports are being designed for people.

Training and support

In planning to improve transition arrangements, those taking responsibility within the Partnership Board and beyond will have to link very closely with those responsible for developing person centred planning arrangements. They will have to undertake an analysis of the current capacity of the key partners to use person centred planning to build towards increasingly person centred supports for people in transition. Based on this analysis and on the agreements around objectives and roles, a plan for training and supporting key players to undertake person centred planning should be developed. This should be especially careful not to neglect training for families and self advocates, and should adopt the depth and breadth approach.

Implementation

With interagency agreements on roles and approaches and training, self advocates, families, professionals and staff will be in a position to start to implement and learn from person centred planning in transition. This not likely to be a linear process and localities will need to adjust their activities as they implement. Having said this it would make sense for the Partnership Board to require a review at the end of a year of implementation. Hence the sequence could be:

- 2002-3 Review current transition arrangements and outcomes; develop (or amend existing) joint agency agreements and systems; identify necessary training and supports and implement these
- 2003-4 Implement new transition arrangements, including use of person centred planning
- 2004 – Report to Partnership Board identifying learning from first year of implementation and making proposals for development
- 2004-5 Next steps for implementation

Example - Learning and action

The following example suggests ways in which a Partnership Board can take learning from using person centred planning to build increasingly person centred approaches in pursuit of the Valuing People objective

In one district work has been taking place for some time to improve transition supports. There is a multi-agency transition policy, a range of supporting protocols and systems, operational arrangements to aid coherence and co-operation. A steering group of managers, practitioners (specialist and non-specialist) and families meets regularly to keep the process on track and learn about what needs to change.

Service staff are starting to use person centred approaches and planning with people in transition and an increasing number of young people and families are being supported to develop and lead their own planning. Nominated workers have been allocated more time for planning with people in transition than previously. This has supported efforts to make the transition process more of a partnership. For example some have taken the transition files they use and given them to the young person and their family. They have used creative approaches to try to make sure that the process of exploration of possible futures is more owned and understood by the young person. Pictures, video, symbols and objects linked to options that are being tried or looked at have been used.

Also, in this district an external consultant has been employed to work with some care managers and support staff in developing the application of Essential Lifestyle Planning. Speech therapists are being used as consultants by care managers working with a group of young people who do not use words to communicate. The idea is to develop workers skills and identify approaches to effective communication with the individuals being planned with. Workers able to communicate effectively with people who do not have English as a first language are part of the transition team.

This is having direct effect for individuals with greater likelihood of more individually designed services ensuing. Local provider agencies have been enthusiastically involved and are finding ways to use their resources differently around individuals

The steering group oversees a process of checking what is happening to people as they leave school. Through this work they are finding out what people want that they are not currently able to get and are using this information to plan to make changes. They have identified some things that can be changed quickly – for example people were regularly saying that they found it difficult to move suddenly from some children's to adult services like short term support. The providers of the short term support therefore introduced opportunities for people to get to know them over a period of time. Other things have required medium term action such as:

- Developing further education provision which can be used by people with very significant disabilities
- Achieving the focussed involvement of key health professionals to ensure that people with greater support needs can access services and supports
- Designing greater flexibility into housing and support options
- Developing flexible supports which promote access for people from South Asian communities, including women's classes in community education
- Building coherent links between school based work experience and supported employment agencies to improve employment support

There is much work still to be done and the process will be continuous. New players have recently come into the picture – Connexions and the Learning and Skills council. Families and self-advocates are still finding their voices and will become more demanding of change. Direct Payments is in its infancy. This locality, however, has an established means of integrating these changes and the cultural and organisational changes that Valuing People identifies as a pre-requisite for reaching its objectives have begun.

This example shows how Partnership Boards can use person centred planning in the broader context of pursuing a key Valuing People objective. It is in this way that Partnership Boards should introduce person centred planning ensuring that it does not become an add on activity but rather a powerful instrument to support change.

