

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 23 JANUARY 2002 AT 10.30AM

Agenda Item No.

6(ii)

**TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN CHILDREN, SCHOOLS
AND FAMILIES FOR YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE**

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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Executive Member: - Robert Gordon

1. Purpose of the report

To respond to a member request for information on the transitional arrangements between Children, Schools and Families (CSF) and Adult Care Services (ACS) for disabled young people.

2. Summary

The report will set out the existing framework for the transition process, the present arrangements between Children, Schools and Families and Adult Services and finally the plans to progress this area of work.

3. Conclusion

The Select Committee may wish to discuss whether they consider the existing arrangements adequate to address the needs of disabled young people.

1. Framework

- 1.1 The framework for the transition process is set out in the DfES Special Educational Needs Code of Practice which was published in November 2001 and is effective from January 2002
- 1.2 The section on transition planning states that *'All those involved in the process should adhere to the principles which underpin the nature of transition and transition planning and the requirements of the young people and their families. Transition planning should be:*
- *Participative*
 - *Holistic*
 - *Supportive*
 - *Evolving*
 - *Inclusive*
 - *Collaborative*
- 1.3 The Connexions Service will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Transition Plan. The Headteacher will need to ensure that a Transition Plan is drawn up in consultation with the Connexions Service.
- 1.4 Department of Health Guidance 'Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century sets out the Government Objective for transition into adult life. It states *'As young people with learning disabilities move into adulthood,.. the agencies will need... 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.'*
- 1.5 The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2001 which came in to force in October 2001 has implications for services to young disabled people. One of the aims of the Act is to improve the assessment, preparation and planning for leaving care.

2. Present arrangements within CSF and Adult Services

- 2.1 There are various pieces of work taking place, involving both CSF and ACS, for young people with disabilities who are making the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- 2.2 The needs of those young people with severe learning disabilities are currently discussed by a multiagency group known as the Adult Link Group. This is chaired by the Hertfordshire Careers Service and has representation from FE colleges, post 16 units in special schools, careers, specialist employment agency and ACS. There is also ongoing discussion with the new Connexions service to ensure that the needs of disabled children are considered along with other vulnerable groups links with the 'Welfare to Work' strategy. There is a Regional Group which addresses transition, covering the DOH Eastern Region

and chaired by a representative from the DfES. Disabled young people are also included in the HCC protocol for 'Joint Agency Placements for Children and Young People with Complex and Extreme Special Needs' which was implemented in Sept 1999.

- 2.3 There are links between the CSF/ACS disability teams within the Quadrants to ensure that children receiving a service are assisted through the transition process. Regular meetings take place to ensure that essential information is shared. Most young people receiving a service from CSF, who are eligible for a service from ACS will remain in school until they are 19, and it is expected that during their final year they are jointly case-worked by both services. This ensures continuity of planning for the assessed needs of the young person. At present we are working to the document titled 'Protocols for the Transition Planning Process for Young People with Statements of Special Educational Needs in Hertfordshire' for young people accessing our local services.

3. Plans to progress this area of work

- 3.1 A high priority has been given to transition within the Children, Schools and Families structure. There is a specific unit to address the needs of young people and transition within the Development Division of CSF. The future proposed action to be taken in relation to improved planning for disabled young people has been set out in sections 4.4.4 and 5.6.4 of the Draft CSF Plan 2002/5.
- 3.2 In order progress this work in CSF we are currently in the process of appointing 2 transition development workers. These are new posts, which are funded from the Quality Protects budget and will be line managed within the Development Division of CSF. Their primary tasks are set out in the Draft CSF Plan 2002/5.
- 3.3 Action Plan 4.4.4 sets out the tasks for the setting up of an interagency transition service for young disabled people ages 13 – 25 years and 5.6.4 sets out the tasks required in setting up a pathway planning process for disabled care leavers.
- 3.4 The new Department of Health guidelines set out in 'Valuing People: A New Strategy for the 21st Century' identifies that there will need to be effective links between children's and adult services and they expect that Learning Disability Partnership Boards will identify a member with lead responsibility for transition issues. The Board in Hertfordshire is known as the Learning Disability Steering Group. The membership of that group has agreed that the Principal Officer for Disabled Children in CSF will be the identified member to take lead responsibility thus ensuring that there are effective links between children and adult services. The Steering Group have also discussed the importance of ensuring that there are more post 19 opportunities available to young people.

3.5 A transition into adulthood conference was held at County Hall in May 2001. This was planned in partnership with Mencap and was well attended by parents and carers of children, young people and adults who made up 85% of the participants. There were several speakers and a variety of workshops giving the parents and carers and some service users the opportunity to participate in discussion. An evaluation report setting out key issues and concerns confirmed what was known of the transition process and have been addressed in the Draft CSF Plan 2002/5. It was felt that individual and county needs are not clearly identified and that there is a need for:

- Available and accessible information
- Housing
- Further Education
- Careers
- Employment opportunities
- Respite
- Social/Leisure/Holidays
- Support Services
- Advocacy

3.6 It concluded that *'Hertfordshire County Council is committed to work closely with users of services, parents/cares, other agencies and interested parties. Also that if the key issues were identified but without dedicated resources, it is unlikely that the complex issues raised could be resolved effectively. A regular event will offer an opportunity to evaluate changes to service delivery and identify if they are currently meeting the need'*. A further conference is planned for 2002.

3.7 There will need to be discussion between CSF and ACS on the findings from the Best Value Review carried out by ACS on services to people with a physical and/or sensory impairment in order to act on any implications for CSF.

4. Summary

4.1 Transition planning for disabled young people has caused a level of concern for some time locally, regionally and nationally. The priority now given to the process within CSF provides a good opportunity for improvements. Although there is a great deal of emphasis in planning for young people with a learning disability there is an awareness of the need to plan for all young disabled people making the transition from childhood to adulthood.