



Report to People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date – 1 March 2024
Key Decision – No
Public/Private – Public

Portfolio – Councillor Elaine Lynch, Portfolio Holder – Lifelong Learning & Development and Councillor Lisa Brown, Portfolio Holder – Adult Social Care
Directorate – Children & Family Wellbeing and Adult Social Care and Housing
Lead Officer – Martin Birch, Director – Children & Family Wellbeing and Chris Jones-King, Director – Adult Social Care & Housing

Transitions to Adulthood

Summary:

An update and options to be considered to support the continued development of transitions pathways across Cumberland and to identify gaps and opportunities.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the information contained in this report regarding the activity undertaken is reviewed and the update is noted by the members.

Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. Background

- 1.1 Professionals across education, (including early year, schools, colleges and 16-19 academies), health and social care, have statutory responsibilities under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2015, to support and prepare children and young people with special educational needs into adult life. The LA and local health services should set out how they identify individuals and plan their support as they approach and move through to adulthood and transition between children's and adult's services to ensure that appropriate support is delivered in a timely and seamless way.
- 1.2 The Local Area SEND inspection carried out in 2019, identified that young people in Cumbria were not supported adequately with this transition. Since the inspection, improvements to services have been developed and implemented across services within Cumberland Council and across Health. This work is ongoing. Historically there has been a strategic oversight to the planning and monitoring of developments, through the Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Group which was implemented as part of the SEND improvement Programme.
- 1.3 Following the re-visit and reflecting the changing nature of the development work, the PfA Group was stood down, with focus on a business-as-usual approach. There remained some areas of development that need to be implemented and delivered as highlighted by the Continuous Improvement Plan for Transitions.
- 1.4 A Cumberland multi-disciplinary team meets on a bimonthly basis which oversees the day-to-day casework for those who are about to go through a transition between services or who are already within that process. Attendance at both groups pre LGR was mixed and did not always include a full representation of services across each area. Post LGR this has improved, and the group is now largely well attended. Engagement with Continuing Health Care has been difficult throughout.
- 1.5 Additional training and guidance has been carried out across SEND staff and with education providers through various platforms such as SENCo meetings and the SEND Conference.
- 1.6 New Annual Review paperwork focusing on Preparation for Adulthood has been co-produced with education settings and is now being used.
- 1.7 A Transitions Protocol which provides information and guidance to all families and young people on the various stages of transition is scheduled to go to the next Cumberland SEND Partnership Board for approval.

- 1.8 Cumberland is currently working in partnership with Westmorland and Furness to develop the pathways to employment for young people with SEND. This programme focuses on doubling the number of Supported Internships across the 2 authorities by April 2025. It is also aiming to develop employer engagement and the potential for young people with SEND to gain paid employment after leaving education.
- 1.9 A project request form (PRF) has also been submitted to investigate the opportunities to develop pathways to employment for those accessing Day Opportunities.
- 1.10 The PRF is also requesting that Cumberland Council offers Supported Internship placements to the current programmes which are offered by our 2 colleges and develops opportunities for paid employment in the long term for young people with SEND.
- 1.11 Work is continuing on the transitions dashboard through IAS (Adult Social Care's electronic recording system) to provide performance information relating to transition activity. This enables reporting about what stage individuals are at in transition, such as progress with Continuing Care and when assessment is undertaken under the Care Act. This will also enable tracking of individuals that fall into safeguarding concerns who are also undergoing a transition. In future we would want to start our transition planning in Year 9.
- 1.12 The activity dashboard on IAS has made significant progress. This has been slowed down slightly due to the time demands on the performance and systems teams due to the planned disaggregation of systems following LGR.
- 1.13 Although a review of the Social Care transport policy is underway, ideally any developments should be aligned with the SEND transport policy which is currently in draft form. Transport and the ability to develop independence around travelling are often overlooked in the planning and preparation for adulthood. The lack of these skills can limit the potential for attending further education, training and employment, including accessing programmes such as the Supported Internship scheme.
- 1.14 Cumberland lacks a formal framework for assessing and evaluating individuals' ability to gain these skills within its assessment process or later when they move into secondary education or are moving to further education. The majority of those who are supported with transport will continue to be supported for the longer term.
- 1.15 There has been an improvement in the timeliness of referrals to Adult Social Care's (ASC) Transitions workers where there is a potential Continuing Health Care need. In some cases, referrals now bypass adult services as individuals are in receipt of

appropriate funding by health whilst children and so arrangements are made within health in advance of their transition. In some cases, there is still a challenge for those referred through at 18 or above.

- 1.16 There is a need around a Housing Strategy to incorporate an element of transition planning for those who have a housing need from early on to those who may need assistance to take up a tenancy in the future. The STEP project which is currently underway is aiming to address some of these issues by taking a tenancy centric support-based approach to individuals undergoing a transition from 18-25. The STEP project is delivered by Home Group and has a proven track record in the Northeast. There is a working group involving ASC and Housing to see how this approach can be replicated in Cumberland.
- 1.17 Adult Social Care and Housing works closely with their commissioning team to identify individuals as soon as possible who might require long term support and accommodation arrangements post 18. Conversations can start as soon as year 9 transition planning in some instances, given the complexity of individual need. Whilst adult specialised commissioning discussions can start as soon as the academic year an individual turns 14, there can still exist structural barriers that make the move into specialised accommodation uncertain for people post 18. The regulatory relationship between OFSTED and CQC is illustrative of one challenge that exists in maintaining an individual in a placement post 18 or transitioning them to a more sustainable placement in advance of reaching the age of majority. Improving provision in relation to direct payments or personal health budgets, can be a means of addressing such challenges as well as providing families with a greater sense of certainty and control as an individual moves toward their 18th birthday. It is important to note that those individuals identified as likely to require a specialised level of accommodation and support early on in the transition journey, will most likely have a primary health need and as such it is imperative that NHS Funded care are part of the wider conversation.
- 1.18 There is a great deal of activity and partnership working across the county which relates to transitions and pathways to adulthood. What is lacking is a way to link this activity up and ensure that there is strategic oversight to direct the work, reduce duplication and increase the opportunities for young people.
- 1.19 Whilst this paper predominately focuses on the nature of Transition in the context of SEND to Adult Social Care support, it is important to remember that for some young people their experience of transition is defined by concerns pertaining to exploitation and safeguarding. Adult Social Care and Housing have worked closely with children's services to implement learning from Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Kate. As such a defined Transition safeguarding pathway has been developed. The pathway outlines responsibilities relating to when Children's Services alert Adult

Social Care and Housing around Transitional safeguarding concerns. The pathway also notes when Adult Social Care and Housing will link in with children's services in advance of a young person turning 18, to ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place for when an individual reaches the age of majority. This process is supported by Adults Safeguarding attending a Transitions meeting hosted by Children's Services and chaired by the Complex Safeguarding team.

2. Proposals

- 2.1. A working group to be established to bring together the various aspects of transition activity. The meeting held on 29th January 2024 led by Adult Social Care and Housing DAS outlined a number of areas that need to be aligned, however, a Senior Responsible Officer within the Council needs to be identified to take forward the schedule of work.
- 2.2. A Cumberland Policy for Transport and Travel Training is developed to support young people with developing independence. This will also offer potential financial savings to the associated budgets.
- 2.3. Cumberland Council agrees to supporting those accessing day opportunities and those with SEND with employment pathways by incorporating SEND into the recruitment process and offering Supported Internship opportunities.

3. Alternative options considered

- 3.1. Continue with developments to transitions and preparation for adulthood on a service-by-service basis, to allow individual teams to develop services in line with their own priorities.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 4.1. Coordinate the development of transitions and preparation for adulthood on a Cumberland basis through a joint strategic group. This will maximise opportunity for partnership working and joint commissioning, reduce duplication and promote a consistent approach across education, social care and health.

Implications:

Contribution to the Cumberland Plan Priorities – Providing accessible and trusted services that listen, involve and engage will contribute to our aim to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents; promoting independence and providing early help and services to support our residents to live well.

Relevant Risks – n/a

Consultation / Engagement – n/a

Legal – n/a

Finance – n/a

Information Governance – n/a

Impact Assessments –

Have you screened the decision for impacts using the Impact Assessment?

If you have not screened the decision using the Impact Assessment, please explain your reason

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Appendices attached to report:

- None

Background papers:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: