

Update on Transitions for SEND Young People in Devon

Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

That the Committee:

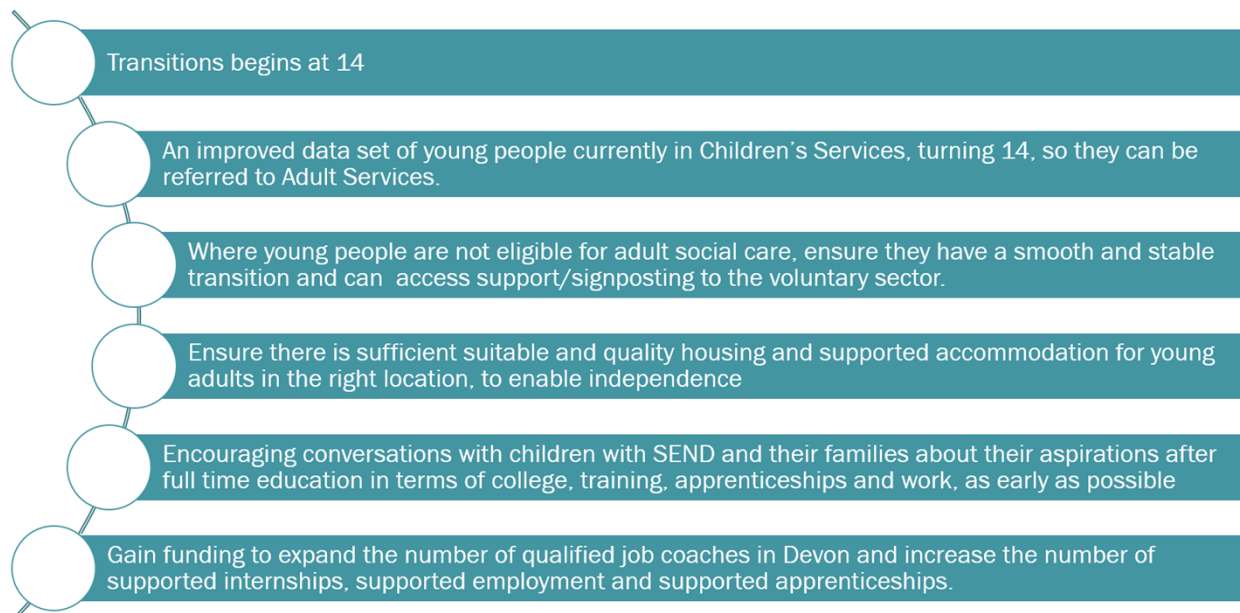
- 1.1 Note the developing position on Transition to Adulthood activity across the Authority, recognising the work underway to address the challenges raised by Scrutiny Committee in July 2023, but also the need for further acceleration in our response.

2) Background and Overview of Position

- 2.1 There are three primary cohorts of children and young people for whom formal transitions between children's and adults' services apply. These can be summarised as children with disabilities, children with SEND and children in care. As set out through the SEND Code of Practice (Jan 2015), underpinned by the Children Act 1989, the Children and Families Act 2014, and the Care Act 2014, Devon County Council has a statutory duty to ensure effective transitional arrangements and support for children and young people moving into adulthood. This includes preparing young people ahead of adulthood, providing relevant and high-quality information for young people and their families around the journey to adulthood and ensuring that relevant support services are planned strategically and collectively to successfully meet the needs of a young person as they progress, in relation to their care, health, employment, housing or further learning.
- 2.2 The Joint Inspection of the Authority's SEND Arrangements in December 2018 previously identified transitions as an area for improvement across the County, with a need to ensure that young people with a special educational needs or disabilities were better supported through the journey into adulthood, whether in terms of signposting, tailoring of support, or ensuring seamless and integrated planning of their next steps across Health, Education, Adult and Children services.
- 2.3 In response, Members and Officers formed the SEND Task Group in May 2019, seeking to inform and examine the key challenges and opportunities for improvement within the Transitions environment. Reporting in June 2020, the task force outlined a clear need to focus on a small but critical number of thematic principles; ensuring that services took a more person centric approach through the

Transitions process; working to put in place interventions and support to assist with the move into adulthood as early as possible; and seeking to ensure that all support and advice was aspirational for Devon's SEND young people.

Diagram 1 –SEND Task Group Recommendations (June 2020)



2.4 Following the publication of the SEND Task Group's report however, progress was relatively slow around key identified priorities. The onset of the pandemic in 2020 followed by a period of significant staffing change has seen action around Transition remain stop / start, often closely intertwined with wider challenges within our Childrens offer. The need for action was reiterated therefore in July 2023, with Scrutiny Committee again highlighting the need for concerted and timely action on Transitions activity.

3) Update of Transitions Activity

i) *Update on Activity*

3.1 Since July 2023, progress has been slow but sustained. An integral part of the improvement journey being taken forward by the Council to meet the needs of both our Safety Valve settlement, and the Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission inspection framework, officers and wider partners have spent the past 6 months mobilising and designing a range of activity to address the gaps identified by Scrutiny and other previous assurance processes. As such, activity over the last twelve months has included:

- **Implementation of SEND Transitions Operations Group** –Bringing together officers and representatives from across the Children, Adults, Education, Health and Parent Carer landscape, the Transitions Operations Group has sought to provide a single forum and point of contact to discuss and work together on Transitions matters. Reporting into the SEN Transformation Board and the

Strategic Transformation Board in house, the intent of the group is to align officers with a delivery role around SEND transitions in a single space.

- **Joint Post 18 Review Pilot** – Bringing together staff from across Adults and Childrens teams to take forward a joint approach to reviewing and commissioning activity for those reaching 18, seeking to learn and apply best practice from across both services and ensure joined up and consistent decision making around individual cases. 80 young people, parents and carers have been supported through review and transition in 2023/24.
- **Joint working with Team Devon and wider partners around Housing and Accommodation** – the Authority is working with Devon’s District Authorities to develop a joint and shared approach around housing and enabling services. This has led to an improved understanding of need and has made the case for the development of a few new small units, supported accommodation and improved options and support for those with more complex housing needs.
- **Shared Lives** – Ongoing work with Shared Lives South West around supporting young people with mixed / more complex needs to move towards independent living, whilst sustaining a support offer and assisting young people to develop the skills they need to progress into independent living.
- **Reaching for Independence** – Continued support from the Reaching for Independence service, working with young people with SEND between 17 and 25 (as well as wider adults) on a tailored basis to assist with the move towards independent living, employment and development of wider life skills.
- **Aligned work around disability employment** – Building on a small amount of external funding from DfE, work has been ongoing between adults and the economy team around facilitating supported internship and other structured placements. Over the course of a year 100 such placements have been supported with employers.

3.2 Whilst progress has been made around individual aspects of SEND Transition however, a number of priorities identified last July remain a work in progress. Key workstreams currently underway for 24/25 include:

- **Development of a Shared Transitions Protocol between Childrens and Adults Services** – Providing a shared understanding of transition and agreement of timeframes across Transition points, costs and activity between services within the Authority, improving the seamlessness and smooth transfer of young people between systems.
- **Development of a Single Route Map / Pathways Plan for Parents, Carers and Officers** – Development and publication of a single route map and guide to transition, setting out by age group the offer and stages involved in the transition across the Authority and partner’s services.

- **Reinforcement of Post 14, Post 16 and Post 18 Review Arrangements** – Building on ongoing activity in the Childrens SEND Service around improving the Statutory Process to focus on improving and enhancing the Post 14 review, and subsequent annual reviews. Seeking to focus teams currently working with young people and where appropriate from across core Transition services earlier to understand and work through the options and journey of young people into adulthood, including earlier work on housing, health, social care, education and other aspects of Transitions as appropriate.
- **Development of a ‘Single View of the Young Person’ Shared Data Approach** – joint work around a single organisational view of a young people, bringing together data from across Childrens’ teams and partner services (including education and health where available) to create a full picture of a young person. Providing a shared basis for better and more timely decision making and consultation with young people and carers.
- **Reinforcement of the SEND Local Offer, including Transitions Information** – Relaunch of the SEND Local Offer, with a renewed web presence and set of information for young people and carers to access.
- **Reorientation of Transitions Advice and Guidance Services and Support** – Work across the Authority to identify and align advice and guidance provision for SEND young people who are in the process of Transition. This will include a review of internal and external services and capacity to ensure that Devon’s offer is both comprehensive and better integrated moving forward.
- **Co-production** – As part of its approach to renewing Transitions and taking forward the wider transformation of its SEND services, the Authority has committed itself to pursuing a coproduction approach. Working in partnership with parents, carers and young people, Devon is seeking to ensure that services are shaped and informed by the people who use them. This includes membership by parents / carers of key steering and working groups around Transitions activity, as well as a strong voice in related strategy and governance arrangements moving forward.

3.3 In setting out the above, officers are aware that several elements have now been pending for several years. Unlike previous iterations of the above actions however, the priorities highlighted are now fully integrated for 24/25 within both the Safety Valve and SEND Transformation Programme within Children’s Services. Children’s and Adult services are carefully considering how work more closely together around critical transitions matters, with the new Assistant Director for Disability in Adults and the New Lead for SEN Statutory Services in Childrens taking a strong role in the codesign and development of shared approaches across services. This is being reinforced through close working with the Economy Service and health partners, supporting wider work around health, education and employability. Work is also ongoing around how best to orientate joint working across the Authority in terms of place, with careful consideration around how individual areas can be better supported to meet the needs of their specific cohort.

- 3.4 Transitions and its effectiveness is also to be a critical element of the forthcoming Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACAS) and CQC inspection of Adult Social Care, with the inspection framework focusing upon the risks that occur during transition, the provision of cross service protocols and escalation routes during key transition points, and ensuring effective contingency and joint planning. Ensuring that we have a clear narrative and shared position around these areas of work will be an important element of our preparatory activity linked to the CQC process and therefore adds additional emphasis to an acceleration of our shared work upon Transitions.

4) Options / Alternatives

N/A

5) Consultations / Representations / Technical Data

N/A

6) Strategic Plan

- 6.1 The enhancement and improvement of Transitions activity across the Authority strongly aligns with the Authority's four-year corporate plan, aligning with its intent to be the best place to Grow Up, Live Well and Prosper. Transitions, as a process, cuts across four of the plan's six priorities; supporting young people and their families to be ambitious and aspirational, tackle deprivation and inequality, improve health and wellbeing outcomes, and promote improved resilience of individuals and communities.
- 6.2 As set out through the SEND Code of Practice, a successful Transition to adulthood can be both transformational for the individual and their long term trajectory, but also offer significant benefits across services around independence, employability, education and health outcomes.

7) Financial Considerations

- 7.1 SEND Transitions is a significant area of spend for the authority, with around 40% of all SEND spend going on provision and support for our 16-25 cohort. Evidence also suggests that a young person that successfully Transitions to Adulthood costs adult services on average £200 less per week than those that do not. With 700 young people with EHCP plan reaching 18 each year, ensuring our expenditure and engagement around transitions is therefore as tailored and impactful as possible is a critical issue for the authority in terms of both value for money and driving future financial efficiency.
- 7.2 As part of this approach, DCC has identified Preparing for Adulthood as a critical element of its Safety Valve and wider Send Transformation approach. This includes

drawing on resources from across the Authority to take forward the core actions set out above, as well as sustaining and reinforcing (where affordable / appropriate) activity around the Statutory review process at 14, 16 and 18, within employability and educational support programmes, and ensuring the authority has an effective information and advice offer. The financial cost of this renewed activity has been absorbed by services, recognising its criticality to both the forward sustainability of the Authority and also our offer to Devon's young people and their parents and carers.

8) Legal Considerations

- 8.1 SEND Transitions is an area of statutory significance for multiple areas of the Authority, with responsibilities stretching across the Childrens, Adults, Education, Health, Housing and Employment policy areas. Underpinned by the Children Act 1989, the Children and Families Act 2014, and the Care Act 2014, alongside an array of wider legislation and structured guidance, Devon County Council has a formal duty to ensure effective transitional arrangements and support for children and young people moving into adulthood. This is also subject to a significant degree of formal scrutiny, including assessment via Ofsted, and consideration through the Care Quality Commission inspection regime.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)

N/A

10) Equality Considerations

- 10.1 Transitions is a crucial element of our support approach and offer to SEND young people. A successfully tailored offer, which enables independence, employability, educational progression, and improves health outcomes over the long term, both has the potential to significantly improve the life chances of individuals with a health or other need and reduce long standing disparities between those with a disability or long-term health condition and those without. A successful transition to adulthood reinforces confidence around multiple life skills and independent living factors.

11) Risk Management Considerations

N/A

12) Summary

- 12.1 The above provides a brief summary for Committee Members around current and emerging areas of work on the Transition Programme across the Authority, with a focus upon accelerating and embedding a reinforced approach to Transitions activity

between services. Officers would however welcome Committee Members observations, recognising the critical nature of this area of work.

- 12.2 In particular, Officers would welcome the Committee's support for the actions emerging from the SEND Transformation Programme between Adults and Childrens Services, seeking to provide a reinforced foundation for joint working across services on financial and statutory issues.

Name

Tandra Forster, Director of Integrated Adult Social Care and Health
Stuart Collins, Director of Children and Young People's Futures

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care and Health: Councillor Phil Bullivant

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Annex A: Transforming Adults Social Care – Transitions to Adulthood
20 July 2023