

# SUMMARY REPORT

New futures : New choices - Preparing for independence



Transition to adulthood project stakeholder event

Held Plymouth Guildhall 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011



Quotes from parents:

*"Find a way so we don't have to fight"*

*"What's important is having control of my life instead of trying to control everyone else's"*

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Not protectively marked

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Carol Pooley and Mrs McLean sharing their illustration of how they see services around the Young Person in transition from the Children with Disabilities team to Adult Social Care.

## **About this record**

The workshop was an experiment to bring together young people aged between 16 and 18 needing support, family parent / carers and council staff to find out what personalisation and choice and control means, so that all can work together to make changes.

## **The overall purpose of the workshop was to:**

- Explore our best knowledge and experience of change and great choices.
- Explore what it will look like when everyone is enjoying new freedoms and independence.
- Explore how we can make it happen.

## **Aspirations for the workshop**

- Young people are enabled to think about their choices, opportunities and potentials, building these into their plans for the adult life
- Parents achieve new awareness and understandings of the choices, freedoms and opportunities available to them and their children
- Carers, supporters and social workers achieve new insights and understandings about the choices, possibilities and future potentials for young people and their families
- All participants are motivated to move forward towards changing together.

## **And also**

### **That the day would be...**

Informal, enjoyable, friendly and respectful

Comfortable with breaks and refreshments

Creative with everyone working together and taking part

About doing only what one wishes to do

Pam Marsden, Assistant Director Adult Social Care, opened the event, welcoming everyone, introducing Lesley Moore and setting the scene for the day.

Pam explained that it was understood that moving from children and adolescent services into adult social care can be difficult and confusing and that already lots of work is being done to make the transition process better: however, it is recognised that there is so much more to do.

Pam added that as personalisation is being introduced into Adult Services we want to find out how to introduce choice and control through the transition process. Pam informed the meeting that this hasn't been done before so the day is about finding out what personalisation and choice and control means to those present so all can work together to make changes.

Lesley continued the address by suggesting the value of adopting a different approach and tackling problems from a new direction by asking...

- What do we know works well
- What can we do
- Are we really talking to the right people and really hearing what they have to say
- Those present to reconnect with wishes and hopes for the future.

Lesley explained that 'Appreciative Interviews' differ from traditional interviews in that the questions are simply guidelines that lead the person being interviewed to delve into the most creative, exciting and life-giving experiences of change. Lesley directed those present to find a partner, someone not well known to them, and talk with them for 30 minutes taking care to listen carefully and attentively, show curiosity and shine a light on things that work by prompting for the positive. Lesley suggested note taking of highlights, key points and 'quotable quotes'. After 15 minutes, pairs were directed to swap roles.

The questions varied, depending upon whether the person being interviewed was a young person, parent or social worker / supporter but all were invited to tell others at the table the highlights of the interview partner's story. The questions drew thoughts from the past, the present and wishes and hopes for the future.

### **Thoughts about the past for:**

#### **Young people**

Young people were directed to think about times in the past when they made good choices; for example how to spend their spare time and things they like to do best and also what and who helped them most when making those choices.

## **Parents**

Parents were directed to reflect upon a time in their life when they successfully overcame an uncertain and changing future; to reflect upon what happened? What did they do? What did others do? How did it feel and how did others behave? What made it successful?

## **Social workers and other supporters**

Social workers were directed to think about their best knowledge and experience of enabling someone to make a successful transition or change; a change which led to them making new choices about their life, or discovering new choices and freedoms and opportunities; what happened? What did they do? What did others do? How did it feel? How did they and others behave and what made it successful?

## **Thoughts about the present for everyone present:**

All were directed to think of what they most value about the way in which they are being supported or provide support to others to think about the future and the new choices that lie ahead.

## **Thoughts about the future for everyone present:**

All were directed to think about a new future full of choices and to identify three things that they wish for more than anything else.

To help set the context, Lesley spoke of the journey towards independence and adulthood and how this is an ongoing journey that we continue throughout life and as our children and young people grow towards independence, so the speed of change seems to increase. For young people approaching adulthood it can be an unpredictable journey in which they learn, often by trial and error, about who they are, what they want and aspire to, and most importantly: how to look after themselves. Recognition was also given for how the changes affect parents and carers and the ever changing 'job description' and how the former roles can be shared out differently with others.

The activity helped people who are unused to this style of communicating to learn about each other and share their thoughts and ideas. The activity was followed by a break where people were free to mingle or continue with their conversations as they pleased.

## **Identify the most surprising stories.**

After the break, each table had an opportunity to share their best and most surprising stories by coming to the front of the room and holding up any comments made on flip chart paper and talking through the meaning. Some people had expressed their ideas with words and diagrams and one young person drew a 'map' of his daily route to his community and places he likes to visit to emphasise the importance to him.

Ben's map.



Emma (a Social Worker in the Children with Disabilities team) is shown here below explaining how she would like to see a more cohesive assessment process with closer inter-agency working. Family carers had expressed their frustrations that they are asked the same questions many times over by different professionals and it can be exhausting for them and to some extent, intrusive of their privacy. They would like to see this changed and have one meeting with all the parties represented.



Some family parent / carers added other experiences that they had found unhelpful and would like to see changed such as use of jargon and misunderstandings about entitlements and where to go for help. Identifying some of the features of 'transitions' that were causing difficulties helped to move on to thinking about what a good 'transition' would look like.

## Imagining a new and different future

In this activity, all were asked to create visual images or other innovative forms of expression that illustrate what the most inspiring transition plan would look like. People were free to work with whomever they chose and it was suggested that the young people present may wish to work separately and bring their work together afterwards.



Lesley suggested we think about the day of the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. All the previous thinking and preparation had paid off and wishes and hopes for *new futures and new choices* are already beginning to happen. Everyone is enjoying the new freedoms and independence; and knows how to handle the changes, risks and bumps along the way. What does it look like?

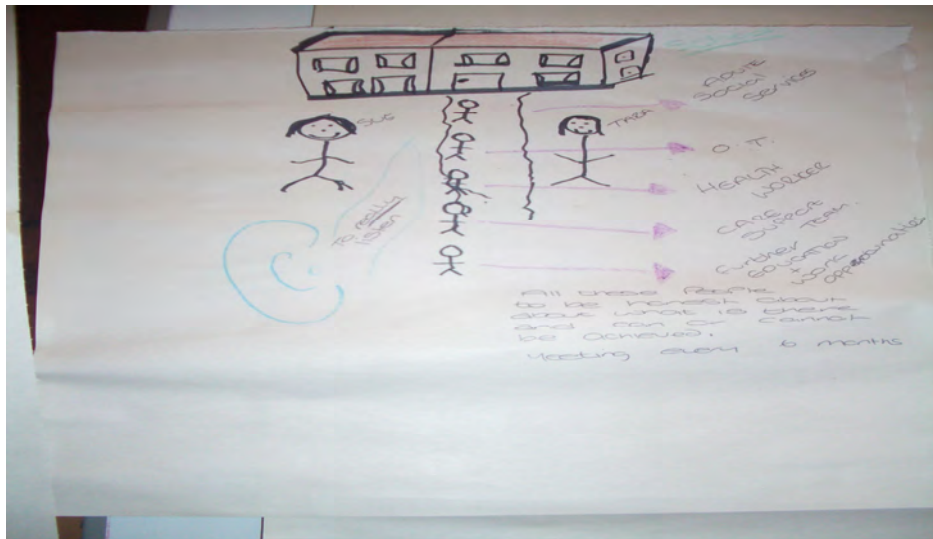
*"If you're not making a mistake, it's a mistake"* Miles Davies

Some parent / carers had the idea of presenting their hopes for the future as a birthday cake with each of the 18 candles representing a hope and aspiration for their child's future. The candles 'glowed' with positive ideas such as living independently, learning to drive, managing money, trying new things, good relationships, having control, paid work etc.



Two mothers, Sue and Tara worked together drawing a 'pathway' from school to Adult Social Services where a range of health and social care professionals are passed along the way. The message they wanted to send (they drew a very large ear) was REALLY LISTEN!

*"We want all these people to be honest about what is out there and what can or cannot be achieved...and we want meetings every 6 months"*



Sue and Tara

Ben viewed things from a different perspective; he was clear that he did not want to leave home, he is happy living with his Mum and accessing his own community, going to favourite places etc and thought that when he becomes 18, he wants to let his Mum know how great she's been. Ben's art work portrays his Mum as 'Supermum' in recognition of all she does for him.



Ben's Mum warmed to the theme and had a go at her own art work with a bit of encouragement and help from Paul who used the visual image of an 'Oscar' (bottom left)!



The idea of parents and carers juggling lots of different roles to manage it all was close to Ben's Mum's heart and it was agreed that all parents of young people with disabilities deserve an Oscar.

Whilst Ben was clear about not ever wanting to leave home, Nicola had other ideas. She was keen on the idea of having a flat to share with friends and live close to other friends and be able to go home to family for Sunday lunch. Nicola wants all the things that many other young people want such as a job, TV, boyfriend, parties, take-aways etc. Josh had help to illustrate his flat (next to Nicola's) and he also wanted TV/DVD, girl friend, able to choose his own bed time and have a tattoo.



Some parents and professionals worked together to illustrate how they would like the world to look around the young person as they become 18; as one stage evolves into another and brings the arrival of new opportunities, choices and challenges.



- Recognition as 'expert' about own family
- Treated as individual
- Help to think choices through
- Transition to begin at 15
- Real opportunities for supported employment
- Skills for life development
- Having safe places to live and meaningful things to do
- For our kids to be happy and settled in the future.

*"All we really want is for our kids to be happy and settled in the future"*

Mrs Morfey

Some parents and young people had to leave at 2.15 but those that could remain took a brief tea break and then moved on to the final aspect of the day: 'Moving to Action'.

## **Moving to Action**

### **What one small new thing will you do differently after today?**

Those that remained were mostly professionals from the Children with Disabilities team and Adult Social Care; however one young person and a few parents were able to stay and fully contribute to providing an answer to Lesley's question.

Ideas for working together to produce a better future for young people in transition from Children's to Adult Services included the following.

- A whole systems approach to include a cohesive process.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a database to capture the details of Young people aged 14 to 18 'in transition'.
- Family support for parent / carers of 16 to 18 year olds experiencing difficulties to support the relationship.
- Effective information dissemination using a range of media.
- A central 'one stop shop'.
- Specific, accurate and timely information to parents when needed.

- Coherent organisational structures in place
- HEAR what's being said
- Share stories of successful transitions
- Have consistent key workers
- Experiment with 'what's possible'.
- Keep people informed... keep the momentum
- Myth bust, give information about personalisation and what it means.
- Address the limited choices for children with disabilities in mainstream schools.
- Planning for independent living
- College courses that deliver appropriate outcomes
- Establish respectful relationships and find a way so we don't have to fight.

The event was brought to a close at 4.30pm and Pam thanked Lesley for facilitating and all those present for attending and contributing.

## **Appendix I**

### **Flip chart recordings from A.I Event 9 Feb 2011.**

#### **Paper 1**

Sports development: Making choices about activities.

Sports activity for short breaks-choice

Working together to support independence at home and school

Skills for life

Choice of Carer

Need quality information backed up with support to think things through

Follow up : Ten Tors discrimination!

#### **Paper 2**

What's possible for the future

Having helpers that really understand and show respect for cultural and personal choices.

Having safe places to live and things to do 'having a life'.

Chances to meet other people.

#### **Paper 3**

Not having to repeat ourselves over and over.

To be told what we are entitled to, not to ask all the time.

To be treated as an individual.

To be happy and settled in their future.

#### **Paper 4**

Respect relationship

Aspirations

Quality information advice, navigation.

Creative thinking

Practical help and support

Saying it once

Central importance of family

Starts early (age 15)

Knowing what is 'out there'

Recognition as 'experts' about our family

Treated as individuals

Help to think choices through

## **Paper 5**

Highlights

DP Employing 'known' workers for enabling-flexible, workers from Beckley / school

Lost from 14 / 15 what happens?

Need broader opportunities

Say it once, not repeating story

Choice with support services

Transition process. Information 15 / 16 yrs old.

Link workers

Information about service

## **Paper 6**

Young person stays at home NEET

Attends college

Works with supported employment agency

Job carving : example Young person wants to be a police officer ask why? Could be wants to help people / likes uniform...find what appeals. Outcome: Through job coaching young person now has paid employment as a security guard in a college.

Creativity

Communication

Structure / Planning

(Not well!)

## **Final Paper (end of day findings / work party group)**

Whole systems coherent transition process for Young People and Adults

Decide what happens next

Panel

Database

Central point of information; 'one stop shop'.

Family support 16-18 years, supporting relationship with Parents (cohesion support)

Information dissemination

Specific information direct to parents

Communication

Stories of successful transitions

Length of transition 15+

Coherent organisational structures

Consistent key workers

Hear what is being said

Experimenting with what's possible

Let people know what happens as a result

Myth busting. Information re Personalisation

Children in mainstream services have limited choice of courses

What will the outcome of college courses be? Need to know how ADL will be taught.

Planning for independent living; not just as a young person.

Find a way so that we don't have to fight

Establish respectful relationships

## **Appendix 2.**

### **Appreciative Inquiry Evaluations summary and conclusions from 13 respondents.**

Likert scale 1= Poor 5= V.Good

#### **Organisation of day**

All scored 4 or above with exception of one person.

#### **Venue**

11 scored ok to v.good and 2 scored poor.

#### **Arrangements and catering**

All scored 4/5 good to v.good with one exception of score 3 (ok)

#### **Relevance of topics**

Prevalence of 4s. One score of 1 (poor)

#### **Presentations**

Prevalence of 4s. One score of 1 (poor)

#### **Time Keeping**

Mostly 4/5. Two 3s and 1 score of 2

#### **Venue access**

All 3s and 4s, plus two 5s

#### **Summary of 91 scores (to closest percentage)**

1=3 equates 3% poor

2=2 equates 1% not ok

3=21 equates to 23% thought ok

4=44 equates to 49% thought good

5=21 equates to 24% thought v.good

## **Summary of comments / common themes.**

### **What was the highlight of the day?**

- Young Person's contribution and speaking up for selves.
- Hearing Young Person's/ Parents view of difficulty in accessing services.
- Interacting with Young People /Parents / working along side.
- Getting to know more people / networking / seeing all professionals in same place and same time.
- Listening to real experiences

### **What was the most enjoyable part?**

- Looking at Young Person's work
- Watching Young Person / Parents take part
- Hearing stories
- Hearing positive views of those supported
- Meeting Young Person / Parents
- Discussing and producing future plans
- Obtaining true views
- Listening and understanding
- Interacting and talking with people with different knowledge.
- All of it
- Discussion about what a good service would look like
- Hoping that professionals were listening to me

### **What would you have liked more of?**

- Information to parents about the transition team, how views have already been listened to, what's happening now and what changes have been made.
- More parents and children attending to reduce feeling of being outnumbered by professionals. More families present.
- More moving around to different groups.
- Look more at the personalisation agenda
- Information on how Self Directed Support is used in other Authorities
- Further discussion with families regarding future priorities, greater emphasis on looking forward and greater engagement from Children's services in presenting the topic.

## **What might we do differently in future?**

- More info on the invitation about event purpose and invite managers to explain to parents about old process, current changes and future plans.
- Parents would benefit by being better prepared before the event on the objectives of the day.
- Invite more people and get more SWs to invest time in their families.
- Nothing
- Smaller venue better suited to having conversations
- Information for Young People and families to take away ie directory.
- Not have a facilitator but focus more in depth on Personal Budgets.
- Greater clarity of purpose of final session.
- Talk more about definite changes and what is out there for the future.
- Do not hire any Consultants.
- Be more practical.

## **What are you taking away from this event?**

- Ideas about involving young people in expressing their views in a creative way using colour and pictures.
- The fact that we indeed attempt to listen to our families.
- Hopefully to get what I want for my son.
- Positive and learning from views of Young People and families in what is needed for a pathway to adulthood.
- To be open and honest about what is available.
- The Young People and Carers requests for a good reliable service.
- Thoughts feelings and comments of Young People, Parents and Carers.
- Families' experiences.
- Confirmation that our existing development plans should appropriately address the range of issues raised by Young People and families.
- Nothing at the moment
- Names and e mail addresses.

### **Will this approach be useful to others?**

- Yes but parents felt nervous and under pressure by language used ie interview and time limits set, this put them off participating.
- 4 said 'yes', one said 'maybe' and one 'No' and one 'no comment'.
- Transition project is useful to others but A.I event went in a different direction.
- May have been too much as they may not have experience of this type of approach.
- Useful in terms of generating discussion and exploration of a new area, worth building on.

### **Were you dissatisfied with any aspect?**

- Room too big
- Poor acoustics,
- Poor access with lifts in wrong place.
- Content.

### **Other comments**

- I was surprised by the content, I thought it was going to be a hard sell for Personal Budgets. However, the day turned out differently and for some it was a triumph.
- Some parents were unclear about the purpose of the day, should we be considering why this was the case?
- Need to review the final session in the project group meeting.
- Didn't really come out knowing any more information about my son's future, I hope professionals were listening and taking notice.
- We do need events like this but not in this format. Everyone involved in the future of our young people need to work together to make the best life for them.

### **Appendix 3.**

#### **People who contributed.**

##### **Young People with Support Needs**

Charlotte Bailey

Nicola Chislett

Josh Whitfield

Young Person

##### **Parent / Carers**

Mrs Bailey

Mrs Brydon

Mr Brydon

Mrs Chislett

Mrs Ciampolini

Ms Darke

Mr Fitzpatrick

Mrs Lewer

Pauline Barker

Mrs McLean

Mrs Morfey

Mrs Whitfield

Parent

##### **Adult Social Care Staff**

Pam Marsden

Jo Yelland

Paul Francombe

Angela MacBlain

Sam Sposito

Hannah Shaw

Carol Pooley

Lucy Turner

Debbie Butcher

##### **Children with Disabilities Team staff**

Jo Siney

Emma Pullen

Lisa Middleton

Jim Hall

Kevin Kenna

Deb Westcott

Sarath Vennam (student Dr)

Maria Welsh (student Dr)

##### **Other Professionals**

Carol Green

Jane Taylor

