

Proposed Project:

What is the name of the proposed project?

Transition Support Project

Please give a brief description of the proposed project:

Many young people with learning disabilities and their parents find the transition to adulthood very stressful. Amaze would like to try out a new way of offering more support to them which we believe could improve the lives of the young people as they become adults and reduce the stress for their parents. This pilot project would be aimed at families with young people with moderate learning disabilities who attend the Cedar Centre and Downs Park schools.

We would like to recruit, train and support a small team of volunteers (between 5-10 people). Amaze has long experience of recruiting volunteers for our DLA and IPS projects and currently has over 30 active volunteers (a mix of parents, retired professionals and people looking to move into related paid work in time). We would draw on this experience to recruit suitably skilled people for this pilot and give them training which would include knowledge of adult services. The volunteers would provide information, advice and support to families. They would help families with person centred planning - thinking about all aspects of the young person's life: their health needs, their social lives, what work they would like to do, where they might want to live in the future. Each volunteer would support no more than 3 families at a time.

We would offer this support to families of young people with learning disabilities who attend Downs Park and the Cedar Centre schools. These young people and their families are not getting support from Brighton and Hove's Transition Team.

By planning for the future well, the aim would be that young people would leave school and go on to lead a good life and would not end up in crisis and needing support from adult social care. This project would involve close liaison with the schools and both head teachers are supportive of this proposal.

Our volunteers will be able to provide parents of young people in transition with an opportunity to start thinking about a person centred approach to

planning for the future by thinking about:

- Further and Higher Education (linking with Connexions)
- Money Matters
- Health
- Employment (linking with Jobcentre Plus and Brighton and Hove's Supported Employment team)
- Housing & supported living
- Social lives

What are the name and contact details of Organisation that would deliver the project?

**Amaze, Rachel Travers Chief Executive Officer and Sue Winter
Transition Development Worker 01273 234020, Amaze.**

Does your organisation currently receive funding from Brighton & Hove city council? **YES**

If yes, please briefly describe what funding you receive already:

Amaze has a rolling grant agreement to provide information, advice and support to parent carers from Children's Integrated Disability Service.

If No, is your organisation accredited with the council? YES/NO ?

Priorities:

Which of the four priorities would your project meet? How will the project meet these priorities?

- 1. This volunteer transition support project is innovative and excellent value for money as it will provide support to families using a team of volunteers. It offers the chance to try out a new way of working that offers parents more support as they work with school, Connexions and others on transition planning for their child.**
- 2. We believe that encouraging families to plan for transition using a person centred approach ensures more equality for the young person. Our volunteer team will support families of young people with moderate learning disabilities and it is likely these young people will want to access as many mainstream services as possible into adulthood.**
- 3. Early person centred planning maximises the chances for**

independence as the young person and their family are able to think about opportunities and options as early as possible and make full use of mainstream community resources. Supporting parents through transition encourages sustainable family support for people with learning disabilities.

4. Similarly person centred planning and providing clear information should reduce the need for increased support and prevent crisis for young people with learning disabilities occurring later.

Criteria

Please explain how your project would meet all of the following criteria.

2. What are the benefits and outcomes?

(What would your project achieve for people with learning disabilities and how will you show evidence of the benefits?)

- **Parent carers will be more informed about the options available to their young person with learning disabilities as they become an adult and will be able to prepare themselves and their child for the changes ahead**
- **Parent carers will feel less alone during this challenging period and will feel supported both by their volunteer and by the relevant networks they can be linked into (e.g. Insiders Guide to bringing up Teenagers with Special Needs training course that Amaze offers, Amaze's Parents of Teens with special needs Get Together sessions Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme) training.**
- **The overall aim of the project is to increase resilience of parent carers and their children so they are able to cope better with the challenges associated with the transition to adulthood. Young people with learning disabilities will leave school and college and move on to have a good, full and meaningful life**

3. What is the added value of the project?

(The something extra this project would do that is not being done already)

We aim to recruit between 5-10 volunteers who can deliver this new service of support and information to a section of families with young people in transition who currently do not get this. These volunteers will need an initial investment of training and ongoing support and expenses paid for but will ultimately provide significant value through their

additional support to families.

Our experience of working with volunteers in this way already tells us there will be much value added beyond the direct objectives of this project e.g. volunteering opportunities provide a real tangible way to build skills and confidence and ultimately is a route back into work for many adults. In the long term we would like to see volunteers largely drawn from parents who have experienced PCP so this would be more of a peer support process, but given the short timescale we will initially recruit more widely.

4. How would you make sure the project can be set up and money spent by March?

We are planning to give Sue Winter some extra hours in July and August to develop this project so that we can begin recruiting and training volunteers in September. We expect to be able to recruit internally for the volunteer coordinator so the project can start swiftly. We would be committing as an organisation to see this project through and we have some resilience to cover periods of recruitment, sickness etc because we have a multi-skilled team and a number of part time staff who may be available to pick up additional work if required.

We have established approaches for successfully recruiting volunteers which we would use, but also look at extending to reach people with an interest in adult learning disability e.g. use the LDPB website etc. It is also likely that some of our existing volunteers will be interested in switching to the transition work for a fresh challenge and to extend their experience. We aim to begin using volunteers as Transition Supporters from October onwards.

Our budget includes 8 months of staff salaries (not 12 – so we should spend this grant if we can begin in August)

5. What is the on-going benefit?

**(The benefits, effects or learning that continues after March 2012)
Strengthening the support families receive during the transition years and preventing them from going into crisis in the future. We see the LDDF funding as a real opportunity to try out a pilot project to help us gather the evidence of what is needed and what works. We genuinely want to pilot this as way of supporting parents better. If it works we will**

pursue other funding to keep it going. There is some front loading in the work i.e. recruiting the volunteers and developing the right training. We may be able to sustain it in future with slightly less resource, although proper support, supervision and top up training for volunteers are always essential.

Learning from this pilot project will really help us in our bids to other funders. We will use the findings and evidence of the outcomes delivered in this pilot for funding bids we make during the course of the year. In any case we will commit to continuing the service for the parents involved this year until they are through transition. We feel it would be unethical to give them this enhanced help and then pull out after six months. We anticipate having income from fundraising which will enable us to meet this minimum commitment.

In summary, it is our intention to continue this project after the end of the LDDF funding in March 2012, initially by bridge funding with some of our unrestricted funding whilst we seek a longer term funding partner.

Funding:

**How much LDDF money does your proposal need in 2011-2012?
(Maximum £20,000 per project)
£17,663**

**What would the funding be spent on?
14 hours/wk of Volunteer Co-ordinator salary (to recruit, train, support team of 5-10)
2 hours/wk of Administrator salary to support project
Volunteer recruitment and training
Volunteer expenses
Contribution to overheads
Admin/Management fee**

Is there anything else you want us to know?

We are keen to use this investment as a true pilot and so will need to be flexible as to how we train volunteers, allocate their time, prioritise families etc.

This investment aims to complement the existing work being provided by the Transitions Team and Connexions – ensuring a greater number of families feel supported at this challenging time. It supports embedding the personalised transition planning focus which is being highlighted as key in the series of Transition Workshops currently underway for BHCC professionals.

This proposal has been endorsed and has the full backing of Jenny Brickell, Chair of the Transition Forum. Amaze has consulted with Cameron Brown, (Manager Transition Team - Community Learning Disability Team) and Philip Ward (Connexions Manager), Sue Furdas (Head teacher, Cedar Centre) and Kim Bolton (Executive Head, Downs Park School) who have all responded positively to the proposal.