

# **Strategic Transition to Adulthood Group (STAG) South East Newsletter No. 5 – September 2010**

**Welcome to the fifth STAG Newsletter.** The aim of this series of newsletters is to keep you up to date with developments in transition from school to adult life for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). We hope it will be useful whether you work with young people as they plan their futures or if you just want to keep up to date with what is happening to make transition better for these young people.

Since the publication of the last Newsletter, a new Government has come into power and, as a result, we are in a time of change to policies and practice. We will do our best to reflect these changes, as they happen, in our Newsletters.

## **Transition in the South East Region**

### **The Transition Support Programme**

The Transition Support Programme is now well into its third and final year. Local areas have been allocated to a development stage based on the outcomes of the Self Assessment Questionnaires completed at the end of Year 2. The National Transition Support Team carried out an audit of these questionnaires and reported a significant increase in local areas stating they are meeting the statutory and guidance requirements covered by the SAQ. In the South East, 100% of local authorities reported that they are meeting the majority of these statutory requirements and twelve (63.2%) that they are meeting the majority of guidance requirements. All but one local area said that person centred planning is part of the transition planning process and in most areas professionals working on transition have been trained in person centred approaches, or will be soon.

The audit suggested that, where there are gaps in the South East, these may be in work between schools and colleges. 57% of local areas said that schools and FE providers work together to provide clear progression routes into college as part of transition planning. Under half said that transition planning is in place for disabled young people leaving college to access other opportunities and reach their goals.

Each local area is now implementing its Transition Development Plan taking account of the fact that a key focus of Year 3 is to ensure sustainability of improvements in practice beyond the end of the Programme.

Local areas were also invited to bid for additional money from an Innovations and Outcomes Fund. This fund was specifically designed to encourage work which creates or embeds excellence in services. In the South East, eighteen

local authorities bid for funding and all have been allocated a sum of money to develop their work. The planned work relates to all five areas of the Transition Support Programme:

- **Participation** of disabled young people and their families
- Effectiveness of **personalised approaches**
- **Joint assessment** processes within children’s trusts and adult services
- Realistic **post 16 opportunities** for living life
- Strategic **joint partnership** working

### Transition Support Programme workshops

As a part of the Programme, the SEN Regional Hub continues to offer workshops designed to help improve practice in transition.

In the current year, workshops have covered the Lead Professional/Key Worker for Young People in Transition and the Virtual Transition Team. Evaluations for both days were positive. Both days were described in the evaluations as thought provoking. Other comments on the Lead Worker workshop included:

- “gave great food for thought and helped crystallise some embryonic ideas about facilitators/key workers”
- “Really good day – made me think! I am really pleased to have the focus on what we can do within our means/resources”

The workshop on the Virtual Transition Team was described as “valuable,” “enjoyable and informative,” “challenging” and “really great and productive.”

The following workshops, all of which have an objective related to sustainability, are planned. All, except the conference on 18th March 2011, will take place at Avonmouth House in London.

Workshop	Date
Multi agency strategic transition work	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2010
14 - 25 commissioning	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2010
Single plan and joining up assessments	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2011
Person centred planning	10 <sup>th</sup> February 2011
Transition conference: to share good practice	18th March 2011

There are two places per local authority for each of the workshops, so, if the topic is relevant to your area of work and you would like to attend, please contact your transition lead (see below). The workshops are helping to collate a developing picture of the support local authorities need in these areas and of how they can contribute to working together. Please contact [Jackie.wright@slough.gov.uk](mailto:Jackie.wright@slough.gov.uk) for more information.

If you would like more information about the wider work of the SEN Regional Hub, please see [www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-hub](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-hub).

## Valuing People Now Workshops

Valuing People Now has been offering a series of workshops about different aspects of transition. These have covered:

- Person centred planning principles
- Planning for good health
- Planning for jobs and careers
- Friends and relationships
- Transition, Personalisation and Support Planning.

## Local Area Transition Leads

Local Area	Local Area Transition Lead
Bracknell Forest	Simon.McKenzie@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk
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East Sussex	jean.haigh@eastsussex.gov.uk
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Isle of Wight	Keith.Thompson@IOW.GOV.UK
Kent	colin.feltham@kent.gov.uk For training events, please contact: laureen.rodwell@kent.gov.uk
Medway	christine.taylor@medway.gov.uk
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West Sussex	Mike.s.smith@westsussex.gov.uk
Windsor and Maidenhead	Debbie.verity@rbwm.gov.uk
Wokingham District	Dyana.rush@wokingham.gov.uk

## Action for Inclusion

Action for Inclusion is an initiative established in the south east in 2006, which aims to develop inclusive approaches within the Further Education Sector. It includes most FE providers, 6<sup>th</sup> forms and independent specialist providers in the region together with some training providers and was funded by the LSC.

Its highly successful initial phase is coming to an end, leaving a legacy of over 60 projects developed in Further Education and 14 specialised Facilitators continuing to support staff teams and Local Authority representatives, not to mention learners and their supporters. The original strategy was written by Jenny Marr - she could not have predicted the extent to which she has impacted and influenced the lives of practitioners involved in Action for Inclusion and the lives of learners across the South East.

The culmination of all the work will be celebrated at the forthcoming Action for Inclusion National Conference on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010. This conference, which has been funded by LSIS, will share a best practice model for improving outcomes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

It is targeted at Local Authority and YPLA staff who would benefit from gaining knowledge through Action for Inclusion's well established model of capacity building through collaborative working developed by providers in the South East. We will share best practice in collaborative, strategic approaches to planning and support; cost-effective solutions for local authorities in meeting their duties; processes and tools for mapping provision and identifying needs; curriculum review tools. Presenters will share innovative curriculum developments, and opportunities to improve practice of equality, diversity and inclusion, impacting on Ofsted grades. It will provide a choice of working sessions, covering:

- capacity building methods with learners with profound and complex needs;
- those on the autistic spectrum;
- foundation learning developments;
- progression to employment;
- effective collaborative working with independent specialist colleges.

Use of innovative mobile assistive technology will be demonstrated in a mobile unit on the conference site.

It is anticipated that the Conference will be attended by national delegates from outside the South East area; we hope to see you there.

Booking for the Conference is via the LSIS website:  
<http://www.lsis.org.uk/Services/Events/Pages/Learn-about-inclusion-in-action-081010.aspx>

For any other information, please contact Lesley Floyd –  
[Lesley.floyd@abingdon-witney.ac.uk](mailto:Lesley.floyd@abingdon-witney.ac.uk).

## **Project Search in Kent**

In November 2009 the Kent partnership was successful in an application to the Office for Disabilities to become a Project Search pilot site.

Project Search is a Valuing Employment Now project which brings together, education in the form of Thanet College, employment support – Kent Supported Employment and a business partner East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust - to offer internships to young people with moderate to severe learning disabilities.

In September 2010 interns will arrive at Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Hospital to complete the year long course which aims to deliver competitive marketable skills with which to get employment. It is envisaged that- like other Project Search sites -some of the students will find employment within the Trust.

The intern's day is split up into classroom time at the beginning and end of the day and the intern placement in between. Three 10 week placements in different areas of the hospital will be available, these range from clinical areas such as the Wards to administrative areas, to practical day to day roles relating to hygiene and catering.

Over the last month 12 interns have been accepted on to the course, a designated classroom has been sourced for the Project Search partners in the Hospital and interns and more than 15 possible placements for interns have been identified.

Project Search is building a real momentum for all involved and we are now eager to have the interns begin the course.

For more information please contact Daniel Marsden on [Daniel.marsden@ekht.nhs.uk](mailto:Daniel.marsden@ekht.nhs.uk) or on mobile 07786 171008.

## **National developments**

### **Planning and Funding Further Education for Learners with LDD**

In our last Newsletter, we reported on the fact that the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act had passed the responsibility for planning and funding further education and training for all 16-19 year olds, and young people up to the age of 25 who have a Section 139A learning difficulty assessment, to local authorities. In July, in order to reduce burdens on local authorities, Secretary of State Michael Gove revised this arrangement and passed responsibility for making financial payments to General FE, 6<sup>th</sup> Form colleges and other training providers to the Young People's Learning Agency.

Local authorities retain their responsibility for strategic planning, and there is particular reference to young people with LDD. In his letter to the Local Government Association, he clarified that:

“Local authorities have a crucial role in securing provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, where we expect them to look strategically at provision pre- and post-16 to improve transition for young people. We want to continue to work with the LGA<sup>1</sup> ADCS<sup>2</sup> and the YPLA<sup>3</sup> to look at ways in which budgets for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities might be brought together to support better this strategic commissioning.”

### **Learning Difficulty Assessments.**

Under the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act, a Section 139A Learning Difficulty Assessment will determine whether a local authority or the Skills Funding Agency is responsible for funding learners with LDD aged 19 - 25. In our last Newsletter we reported on the guidance published in November. This was replaced by the then DCSF in March 2010 by “Supporting young people with learning difficulties to participate and progress – incorporating guidance on Learning Difficulty Assessments.” This remains current at the time of going to press.

The guidance sets out to help local authorities to make consistent, effective and robust decisions that will lead to positive outcomes for young people with LDD, while not telling them what to do in each individual case. It takes a person centred approach, notes the place of the S139A in the context of transition planning and other assessments that young people may undergo, and highlights the importance of local authorities having a process to identify those learners who would benefit from continuing local authority support and hence require a Section 139A Assessment.

The guidance suggests that a set of common principles to underpin all assessments will help to ensure that the assessment process is a consistently delivered and high quality service which ensures continuity and appropriateness of support when it is needed. It expands on the following headings:

- There should be a clear process setting out when the power to assess is used
- All Learning Difficulty Assessments should result in a clear action plan focusing on outcomes
- All Learning Difficulty Assessments should be supported by an appropriately trained workforce

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<sup>1</sup> Local Government Association

<sup>2</sup> Association of Directors of Children’s Services

<sup>3</sup> Young People’s Learning Agency

- There should be a consistent approach to all Learning Difficulty Assessments
- Learning Difficulty Assessments should have a person centred approach focusing on progression
- Learning Difficulty Assessments must take account of the young person's views and wishes
- Young person's wider needs must be considered during the Learning Difficulty Assessment
- Multi agency working
- Local authorities should take into account value for money considerations when making Learning Difficulty Assessments
- There should be a clear complaints process

The guidance reminds local authorities that the judgement in the case of Alloway v. London Borough of Bromley includes the requirement that “the assessment must not simply be a set of recommendations in theory but must deal with what actual real provision can be made.”

It remains important to be familiar with the full guidance, which is available at <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-01111-2009.pdf>.

### **The Learning for Living and Work Framework**

The Guidance described above suggests that one format for recording the Learning Difficulty Assessment is the Learning for Living and Work Framework. This is currently used in some parts of the country, usually for learners with more complex needs who require additional support in further education.

The Framework is currently being revised and updated and will provide an overarching document that can be used as a transition plan from Year 9 so that the Learning Difficulty Assessment flows clearly from the process of transition planning.

The Framework sets out to provide a robust structure for local authorities to record Section 139A Learning Difficulty Assessments, for which they have a statutory responsibility. It is based on partnership working and collates information to enable informed decisions to be made about future placements. Some of its features will be:

- to incorporate a person centred plan and gather the information to enable providers to support its implementation
- to be clear about responsibilities for completing the different sections
- to be appropriate for the wide range of learners who may require a Learning Difficulty Assessment
- the inclusion of a Resource Allocation System designed to capture, in a consistent manner, the support needs of a learner to enable a cost to

be calculated for their support. This will be modelled during the current year as part of the trial.

React has circulated a copy of the revised Framework to local authorities and The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) is currently working with the Local Government Association to agree the best way of working with local authorities to trial the Framework.

If you are interested in finding out more about trialling the Framework, please contact [michael.dalton@ypla.gov.uk](mailto:michael.dalton@ypla.gov.uk).

## **Developing Government Policy**

While we still await the outcomes of the Ofsted review, Children's Minister Sarah Teather has promised a Green Paper in the autumn to look at a wide range of issues pertinent to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Announcing the Green Paper, the Minister, who made a range of points relating to ensuring that the most vulnerable children get the best quality of support and care, that children with SEND have the same opportunities as their peers, and making the system more family friendly, said:

"The Green Paper will also look at how to manage the transition beyond school so that young people over 16 can get the support they need."

## **Resources**

The National Transition Support Team's website for the Transition Support Programme includes a range of news, information and resources, including case studies developed as a part of the Programme:

[www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk](http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk).

The SEN Regional Hub's website contains information about all its strands of activity including an overview of the Transition Support Programme: [www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-hub](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-hub).

## **Sharing views and practice:**

If you want to discuss anything about the work of STAG, to share good practice or raise an issue that you would like to address through the newsletter, or if you have any feedback on the newsletter, please contact a member of the Group on the email addresses in the chart below.

Deborah Bagnall	Chichester College	<a href="mailto:Deborah.bagnall@chichester.ac.uk">Deborah.bagnall@chichester.ac.uk</a>
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Sally Brooks	Surrey County Council,	<a href="mailto:Sally.brooks@surreycc.gov.uk">Sally.brooks@surreycc.gov.uk</a>

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