

Transition?

How to find your way through

Newsletter Spring 2008

'I would recommend this adventure to anyone!'
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'It's best to have a full story and not just half of one.'
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I'm Kate Jackson, our Transitions Development Manager. Welcome to the first edition of our Transition Newsletter.



We hope to be bringing you lots of exciting information throughout the year which will both inspire and support you to aim higher for the young people you support.

When I was younger my parents used to say to me "the world is your oyster". I never truly understood the meaning of this message until much later, when I began supporting young people with learning difficulties through their transition and pathway to adulthood; often they were left with little or no choice regarding their future prospects. I am therefore encouraged to see that so many young people are now living the lives they want and truly deserve. In this edition we hear from a small number of people who are starting to find their place in the world like Edward with his college course and Chris on his adventure holiday.

The support we receive from our parents is pivotal and unique. That's why this year we're beginning by hosting four Transition seminars for parents, which are about working with and listening to the ideas of the people who matter. It's so important that we continue to strive for success with both the people we support and the people who know them best.

So for now, please read and enjoy the positive messages from Dimensions. I'm sure you'll agree, they're inspirational.

Free Transition seminars for parents

This spring we are hosting 4 regional seminars for parents with children who have learning difficulties aged 14-19.

Derby – Thursday 7th February

Norfolk – Thursday 17th April

Southampton – Thurs 8th May

Sandwell – June (Date + venue to be confirmed)

For more information, see page 4.

Edward's story

Edward is now going to college every week to learn new computer skills which he hopes will help him to get a job eventually.

He has a job coach to help him look for the right job. The job coach is helping him to prepare for interviews and approach prospective employers.





Interview Lindsay and Jane from Middlesbrough tell us what they have been up to...

Hello, I'm Lindsey in the blue top and I'm Jane in the pink top. We are twins and have just

moved into our new bungalow in Middlesbrough with our friend Luke. We have just started to be supported by Dimensions and have just finished lots of interviews to find our own staff team. We have recruited ten people including relief staff to support us and also found Luke, who is going to move in with us.

We like doing lots of different things. We are going to Upsall Hall two days a week. This is somewhere you go to learn new skills ready for when you start work. When we were at college in Hexham we worked at Tesco and Oxfam.

We also go the gym: Dimensions staff helped us go and register and get our gym induction. We go at least twice a week now. See you soon!



Dimensions support Moving On Up

Moving On Up is a project created by ARC (Association for Real Change) and was

originally funded by the Diana Memorial fund and Vodaphone. It is a website for young people from ethnic minority communities to find out about transition, although any young person at transition stage (or their supporters and family) may find it helpful. Their website is full of useful information about getting a job, housing, money and benefits, and lots of other important issues. The information is available in Arabic, Gujarati, Punjabi, Chinese and Urdu. There is a helpline open on Mondays and Wednesdays 10am-12pm if you have any questions.

01246 541675

www.movingonup.info

Chris' story

Chris began working for a garden maintenance company in June 2007. Initially, he worked for 2 days a week and this has now increased to 4. He is also on the Board of the company and his role has recently been reviewed meaning that he now supervises some of his colleagues.

Chris takes to the sea

Last year Chris Underwood, 24, who is supported by us in Reading, achieved his dream of going on a tall ship adventure holiday. He sailed from the Port of Glasgow around the east coast of Britain and across the channel to St. Malo in France before returning to England at Southampton.



The adventure lasted for 11 days and Chris can't wait to go again. In fact, he is saving for another trip. He says "I would recommend this adventure to anyone". Our pictures show Chris climbing the rigging and Tenacious in full sail during the voyage – a wonderful sight.

Chris' adventure was only possible because of last minute generous financial help from the Rotary Club of Reading who funded the place for a "buddy" for Chris.



Lord Nelson and Tenacious belong to the Jubilee Sailing Trust, a registered charity which is unique and offers the thrill of a lifetime, regardless of your physical ability. Able-bodied people can also enjoy the thrill of ocean going sailing as "buddies". Dame Elen MacArthur, the famous round the world lone sailor said "the J.S.T enables people to experience life at sea and the importance of team spirit. It brings together people for an extraordinary experience that will stay with them forever".



Dean's advice

Dean recently moved into his own place. This is taken from his blog on our website.



Living on my own has open my eyes a lot. Many people say it is easy but if they were living in my shoes for a day their opinion would change.

I have learned new skills while at the same time learning to be independent, 99% of the time it is a right laugh - do what you want when you want, after all, it's your home, your rules, true eh?

I have learned over the last few months to take two sides of a story and not just one. Let's just say with contractors, who come out to repair a fault and say it's the pipe work, when it's actually the towel rail the wrong way round. The contractors say something different to what the landlord has told you. It's best to have a full story and not just half of one.

Keep all the documents for reference - this will help the landlord help you to get the fault fixed quickly and also give them a contact phone number. If you have a mobile its best to give them that, you can deal with the fault and you can get a key holder if needed.

Try and delegate (tell some what needs doing) so you can concentrate on college or whatever you are doing. This is a good idea because it helps you think more clearly on college.

Only people who live on their own know how hard it is - many people think "wow, nice home easy life! Oh, I will leave that part to people to find out on their own." When you live by yourself you think a whole lot more about everyday choices you make. I know this from my own experiences. You don't notice for a few days. I understand running a home is a big task and people tell you things i.e. budget well and all that. It would be hard for any young adult to start with. But, as you get used to living on your own it becomes manageable and you feel a sense of achievement in everything you do.

At first there is a lot to take in such as rent payments, mobiles and things. Listen - it does get easy, you just need time to settle in - get to know your flat and you are well away. You will be so full of self confidence 7 months down the line. You have a really big sense of achievement and you get a big pat on the back - that would make anybody's year, that would. It has done me the world of good. I am very proud of myself.

Just goes to show a what people who have moderate learning disability can do eh? Adults, young people and children who have disability are no different from other people. They still want the same things - nice home, a cool job.

We all learn new things all of the time (I certainly do) and you can use what you know to help other people.

www.dimensions-uk.org/deansblog

Haley's story

In 2005 I changed my service provider to Dimensions.

I was involved in hand picking my staff which was great, some have since left and others have stayed. I participate in many different activities and the staff will have a go with me! Break dancing was a blast, with skiing I had more fun watching my support try then actually skiing myself!

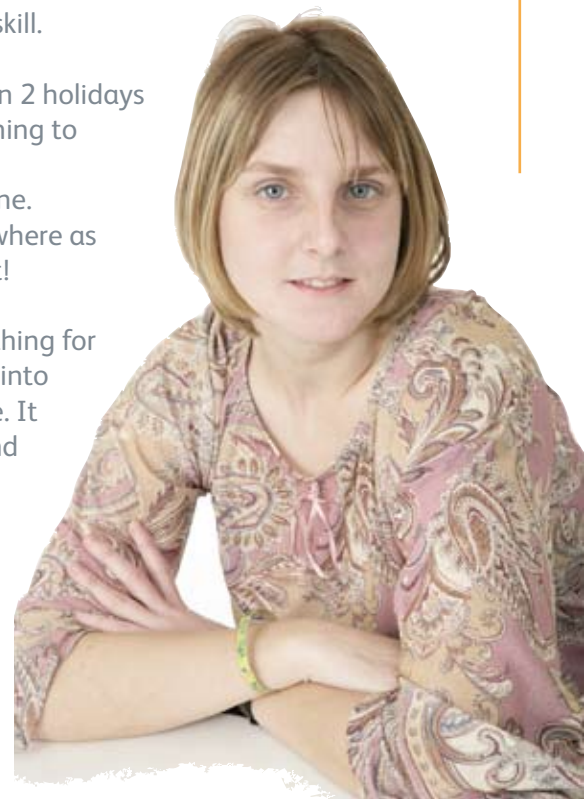
I have been looking for work and with support I filled in applications. I have had 3 interviews which has allowed me to gain experience. In one of these interviews I made it to the next stage and had to do a trial at a local Kids Soft Play, but was unsuccessful in gaining employment.

I have used the skills I gained from attending my interviews to being on the interviewing panel for the Financial Director for Dimensions.

I currently work at the Friday Night Project on a Friday evening and attend a local college. I was convinced to try a computer course at the beginning of this year by my Key worker which I was not sure about, but I love it and I can email now - another new skill.

I have been on 2 holidays and I'm planning to go abroad for the next one. I'm not sure where as long as its hot!

The next big thing for me is moving into my new home. It gets better and better.



Is your son or daughter in transition?

So often, when we think about Transition we tend to focus on the negatives: how hard it is to find the right support at the right time; getting agencies to work together; eliciting real choice for our young people. At our Transition parent seminars we hope to share some of the more positive experiences of the people we already support and their families regarding transition, including the use of person centred approaches and self-directed support.

The days will be chaired by a member of our board, Kevin Walters. As a parent himself, he understands the difficulties faced when planning for the future.

The day will also be a good opportunity to network with other parents and share information about experiences. We're really excited about these events and hope they will be the first of many more to come.

We have a limited number of 30 guests per event for parents only, so please do book early to avoid disappointment. If you would like any further information or would like to book a place, feel free to email us at events@dimensions-uk.org.

Transition Resources

>These two documents are free to download at www.dimensions-uk.org/transitions:

Transition Good Practice Guide

This guide is for everyone who is preparing to support their son or daughter with a learning difficulty through transition.

Transition Report and Accessible version

An overview of recent Transition research for parents and practitioners

>Transition Information Network (TIN) is a source of information and good practice for disabled young people, families and professionals.

8 Wakely Street, London, EC1V 7QE

Tel: 020 7843 6006, email: tin@ncb.org.uk

www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk

Transition Information Network 

>Other useful resources

A transition guide for all services: key information for professionals about the transition process for disabled young people.

To order a hard copy from the DCSF's publications department, phone 0845 60 222 60 or email dcsf@prolog.uk.com

>Moving On Up - see page 2 for details.
www.movingonup.info



Dimensions announce their 2nd Annual 'Lost in Transition?' Conference.

We are planning to host a conference in November 2008 based on the research findings from our 'A Home of My Own' research.



This research is a long term (2-3year) project which began in January 2008. We are recruiting 20 young people from Dimensions, between the ages of 19-30, who have moved into their own home and have had a positive experience doing so. Our aim is to find out how person centred planning, individualised budgets and direct payments have made a positive difference to these young people's lives in finding a home of their own.

Kate Jackson explains why we have chosen to make this research, *"During a scoping study, one of the things we learned was that housing is one of the biggest barriers to improving the life chances of people with a disability, particularly for young people and their families."*

Deputy Chief Exec, Steve Inch at last year's conference.

Dimensions would like to see more young people having more choice and control over they where they choose to live and whom they live with. It is hoped that the written outputs of this research will aid to do just that."



Do you want to know more about our transition service?

Visit www.dimensions-uk.org/transitions

If you have any questions please contact Kate, our Transition Development Manager on 07770646826 or email kate.jackson@dimensions-uk.org

You can also find out more about Dimensions and what we do at www.dimensions-uk.org