

Transition?

How to find your way through

Newsletter: Winter 2008

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The last few months have brought big changes on a national and global level. They will affect us all in our future, and it made me think about how we all manage and deal with change, especially the people we support. Change can be a good thing - it can be healthy and exciting. It can also be worrying and frightening if changes and their effects are not communicated in a way that makes sense. The parent seminars we held earlier this year gave us an insight into the extensive lack of information out there about transition. There is still a long journey ahead of us.

One thing is for sure - change is inevitable, nothing stays the same forever, and nor should it. Young people and their families will understand this more than anyone with the big, life-changing decisions they face. Planning for long term changes (as well as for the day-to-day ones) is important to ensure smoother transitions. However it's also important to build a level of resilience for the times when you cannot plan for the unexpected. Life is a journey full of ups and downs and it's how we deal with them that determines the outcome, not the event itself.

That's why we're pleased to announce the launch of our new guide for families and professionals - 'A Home of My Own' on the 27th Nov at this year's Learning Disability Today London. The inspiring stories of ten young people and their families recollect memories of leaving home for the first time and the planning that is involved to make it work. To read more, see page 3. Enjoy this second edition of our newsletter, we hope you like the changes we have made.



Kate Jackson, Transition Development Manager

What's in this newsletter?

- Latest news
- Transition resources
- Feature - A Home of My Own research
- Dean's Blog
- Meet our Transition leads

Ashley and Aaron share their story

Trying to fit two and a half years into fifteen minutes is no easy task, but this is what Ashley and Aaron, two of the young people we support in East Anglia, set about doing this spring. The result is "A Canterbury Tale" - a film about their lives, explaining their experience of transition into adulthood - both the good and the not so good. Ashley and Aaron presented their film at Learning Disability Today Manchester, to an audience of 70 learning disability professionals. The people who attended the seminar were really impressed and many thanked the team. Congratulations Ashley and Aaron!



Here is Ashley, pictured on holiday in Gent

College success in Newcastle

Sabina enjoys her prom

Sabina has had a busy year. As well as moving into her new bungalow, she also finished school in July and has achieved a number of awards. She enjoyed a great night out at her prom - arriving in a limosene, in her new, gold dress suit.



Carly at college

Here is Carly from Newcastle holding up her Focus on Work certificate. She completed her course from Newcastle College and was proudly presented with her certificate in July.

Kimberley chooses her future

Kimberley, who is supported by us in Bracknell, had recently been having communication problems and was finding it very difficult to express herself in the way that she wanted.

She began to become anxious every time she went to college, so this summer we have worked closely with Kimberley to help her choose her courses and support her to have some control in planning her future. Kimberley has just finished her third week at Ravenswood College, doing the courses that she has chosen, on a timetable that she made. She has also made her own communication profile and has used facilitated communication sessions to find ways to express her worries and explain how she would like to be supported. Kimberley says that eventually she might like to do a mainstream creative writing course and would like to work in a library.



Sx is one of the people we support in St Albans, he currently lives with 5 other people who all have autism. He recently celebrated his 24th birthday, using his new I-pod to make a soundtrack to the party and provide the backing music for his dancing - one of Sx's main passions in life. As ever, he proved to be the life and soul of the party and everyone had a great evening. At the moment Sx is working with his family, staff and health professionals to help give him the confidence to get out and about in the community more, so you might spot him some day soon walking up and down the streets of St Albans listening to his favourite tunes.



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

The government's strategy - 'Aiming High for Disabled Children: better support for families' was published in 2007. Stating that we needed to improve and co-ordinate services for disabled young people in transition to adult life, the government announced that £19m would be spent from 2008 - 2011 to develop a Transition Support Programme (TSP). The Transition Information Network and partners have been awarded the contract to act as the national transition support team for the TSP. To find more about the TSP, please visit: www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk or email tsp@ncb.org.uk to register for updates.

Feature - A Home of my Own

We are pleased to announce the upcoming launch of our new transitions research project, 'A Home of My Own'.

We interviewed young people from within Dimensions and outside the organisation, between the ages of 19-30, who had moved into their own home and had a positive experience doing so. The research that followed looks at how person centred planning, individual budgets and direct payments have made a positive difference to these young people's lives, in finding a home of their own.

The findings have been written up into a workbook for parents and professionals, containing highlights such as:

- How make a person centred plan
- Benefits available to young people
- A funding timeline
- Guidance on finding the right home

The research contains case studies of ten young people who have successfully moved into their own home, so you can hear first hand about their experiences. Twenty one year old Hannah from Norwich is one of these case studies, here is what Hannah's mum had to say about her time supporting her daughter through transition;

"I've been amazed at Hannah's growing confidence since she left home, particularly in expressing herself and saying how she's feeling. Most importantly, I'm no longer Hannah's carer, I'm her mum again."

The workbook will be presented at Learning Disability Today London 08 on 27th November. To buy your copy go to: www.dimensions-uk.org/homeofmyown

Lost in Transition?

A Home of My Own



What the parents think...

In the last edition we announced our free Transition seminars for parents. The events were a success with many of the parents appreciating the chance to meet and hear each other's stories, as well as have their questions answered by representatives from their local authority.

The common theme for the seminars was the need for children and adult teams to work together more, and the importance of sharing information, particularly about assessments and benefits, and tools such as person centred planning.

Want to find out more about what the parents said? We are sharing some of the information and the parents told us on our website at: www.dimensions-uk.org/transitionseminars



Kevin tells Derby parents about his transition

As we all know, transition can be a tough time, and we think it's important to share good news once in a while. Here is a letter from the parents of one of the people we support in our East Midlands region...

"When our son, David, was going to leave college, we naively assumed that, in sorting out his transition to his next living situation, the focus would continue to be on David and his needs, as it had been throughout his life up to that point. Over 18 months of dealing with social services, we discovered that that was not the case; what really mattered was having something affordable, in-county and ideally, supported-living. David spent the first 14 weeks after college sitting around at home, kicking his heels. In that time, no-one visited or contacted him, and he went out once, with his mother to the supermarket. If this was Transition, it was Transition to limbo. We finally managed to get an advocate for David, who introduced him to Dimensions. Having Dimensions outreach workers work with David has been an entirely different experience. At last, we're dealing with people whose focus is on David and an organisation which understands that Transition is all about the person and not about what slot you've got that you can cram him into. Where it will end is unknown, but we do now have a son who is noticeably happier and more content with life, and has regained his confidence and self-belief, which in turn makes us happier as parents."

Dean's advice

Dean is one of the young people we support and he writes a blog for our website - in this installment he tells us how he dealt with fraud...



I recently had a large amount of money stolen. One evening I went into my local Nationwide branch like I do daily to withdraw cash for shopping. I asked for a mini statement to check how much was in there. I noticed that a large sum of money was gone and I knew that something was wrong, so I asked if the cashier could find out how much had gone missing. The lady at the desk told me the amount was much larger than first thought - over £500.

I was upset because I needed the money to pay bills and to basically live on. I just thought - right it's here, you can't change anything and just got to deal with it. Question was, how was I going to deal with this and who could actually help me to overcome this? A few days later I found out the money had been taken from a German bank in Milan Italy. I thought this is kind of insane and crazy to the max.

The bank gave me a £500 overdraft limit. I did not understand what an overdraft limit was and how to use it in the right kind of way - like learning on the job and it's not an exercise, it's real, anything can happen at any moment. The bank and my care staff taught me to bank backwards, quite odd but easily done if you think about it. You can go under the overdraft limit but not over it. I had to keep an eye on what I was spending daily. I got used to being in debt which is not nice but what can you do about it?

My landlord wrote asking me for payment and I explained what had happened and they were sympathetic with that week's rent. I was angry and upset - how could I give them what they wanted if I had no money to give them? It's like any business, their main aim is to make money. I had to tell the police about the theft - they gave me a crime reference for the bank to claim the money back and they took some details from me and that was that job done.

I've learned through this bad experience to never to use outside cash machines - The bank explained that fraudsters sometimes put devices in the card slot of the cash machines so it was always best to use inside cash points rather than outside ones. I got all my money back within a few weeks.

This type of crime is very rare but can happen to anyone. This is why I am telling my story so you can have an account of what it's like to be affected by this.

www.dimensions-uk.org/deansblog



My Future Choices

Would you like to receive a free copy of this magazine for young people with a learning difficulty?

Register with the Transitions Information Network (TIN) on www.transitioninfonet.org or email tin@ncb.org.uk with your name, email and postal address.

Meet the leads

We have an experienced 'Transition lead' in most of the regions we work. This edition we meet...



Julie Bruce - East Anglia

I wanted to work with young people in transition in order to support them into their futures. It's been great to see the young people we support growing in confidence and doing things like speaking at a national

conference, taking the bus independently to and from college and even going back packing across Europe.

email: julie.bruce@dimensions-uk.org



Kylie Oakden - Bracknell

The highlight for my transition work so far has been working with a young gentleman who was moving out of his family home into his own place. It was great to be involved with his learning curve as he gained the knowledge he

needed to be independent.

email: kylie.oakden@dimensions-uk.org



Justine Watkins - Wokingham

This is a really exciting time for young people, who have more opportunities to fulfil their potential and shape their future and lifestyle than ever before.

Yes, I have experienced obstacles, but I perceive these as opportunities for

myself and others to learn and improve upon.

email: justine.watkins@dimensions-uk.org

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