

Transition

For professionals working with young disabled people transition is usually used to mean the movement of people from children's services to adult services at age 18.

For young disabled people transition (change) has a much broader meaning and often starts at the beginning of their lives continuing through young adulthood and beyond. It is a process of change, or series of changes which is often fraught with uncertainty, complexity and frustrating time delays. Unlike the transition or changes in life made by many non disabled young people.

Some of the transitions identified by young disabled people include:

- The move from nursery to primary school
- The move from primary to secondary school
- The change from segregated (separate) education to mainstream
- The change of friendship networks as a result of change in schools/college
- The move from Children services to Adult Services
- The move from Higher Education to Further Education
- Entering the World of work
- Driving/Owning a Car
- Relationships and becoming sexual
- Living Independently (or at home with support – not supplied by family)
- Socialising and Leisure time
- Moving in with a partner/getting married
- Becoming a parent

Many of the aspirations of young disabled people are exactly the same as their non disabled peers and centre around work, college and living independently. Young disabled people were asked what they want for the future, and almost all of them talked about ambitions which could have been taken from any group of 15-25 year olds.

Barriers to Transitions: Some young disabled people also recognised that their hopes for the future were based on their right to access appropriate services and support. These could range from health care to advice and information on benefits etc.

Although disabled and non disabled young people share many of the transitional phases of life and also the same aspirations, Young disabled people face additional societal barriers due to the way in which they are often seen by both professionals and the general public.

These barriers can make “ordinary” transitional phases either difficult or impossible for some disabled people.

Some examples of what young disabled people said had stopped or hindered them from moving on in their life were:

- 1) Not being directly communicated with when dealing with professionals involved. Professionals talking to parents, guardians or support workers instead
- 2) Frustrating time delays and confusing (and often conflicting) information about what services are available and how to access them
- 3) Not being treated with respect
- 4) Negative assumptions of professionals and family members and low expectations adopted towards young disabled people
- 5) Young disabled people’s own low expectations of what can be achieved
- 6) Not having information or opportunities to learn about all aspects of independent living (including service provision), offered in a way that is meaningful
- 7) Concerns about finances, for example, benefits in relation to securing work and Disabled Students Allowance, etc
- 8) Not having access/support needs met at home or other places we need to access, for example, at college, work, out socialising
- 9) Not having assistive equipment available, especially at college or university
- 10) Employers’ preconceptions/misconceptions about employing disabled people
- 11) Inaccessible transport
- 12) ‘Over-the-top’ risk assessments – young disabled people feeling that they are prevented from taking risks which would support their development as young adults.

When disabled people were asked what they would like to say to professionals in relation to transitions, they said:

- “Listen to us”
- “What we say is what we mean”
- “Don’t manipulate what I say or how we feel”
- “It’s not all about filling in paperwork and achieving targets”
- I’m a person, not just a statistic

- I just shouldn't have to keep repeating myself
- I want updated information to be able to make an informed choice a format that is accessible to me
- My age isn't my shoe size
- Think before you act or speak
- Get your facts right
- Stop trying to control my life
- I need space to myself
- I need support, but not to the point of feeling claustrophobic.

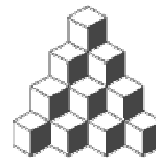
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