

<b>26 March 2012</b>		<b>ITEM 6</b>
<b>Health &amp; Well-being Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Thurrock Transitions Services Update</b>		
<b>Report of:</b> Les Billingham Head of Adult Services		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> To receive the Transitions Services report	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Les Billingham Head of Adult Services		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Jo Olsson- Director People Services		
<b>This report is public</b>		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> This is the presentation of the Transitions Service report providing a brief overview of the past, present, and planned services for Disabled Young people between the ages of 14 – 25.		

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the time of transition, young people must meet the challenge of making choices amidst a period of profound change, having to cope with decisions about their future, to include education/training, employment, friendships and leaving home. An additional challenge is the requirement to negotiate a 'policy maze' of different sets of legislation, assessment procedures, funding arrangements, personnel, styles of working and benefit entitlements. Parent/carers play a key role in this process having responsibility for providing support on a daily basis whilst also assisting with choice and managing the changes that transition brings.

It is the role of transition planning, and professionals involved in running and managing services, to be supportive in reducing the known stress and anxiety existing at the time of transition. The aim is to make the journey into adulthood a smooth and enjoyable one for young people and also their parent/carers. The need is to provide exciting opportunities that allow young people to develop and realise their full potential. To do this we need to maximise the local offer, ensuring that more resources are used locally providing good outcomes for people involved in the process.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1.1 **For Overview and Scrutiny to receive the Transitions Service report and a brief update of current position and headlines of work since April 2011**

**2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 The Transition service at Thurrock recognises that for some young people there may be multiple transitions but the most common experiences are the transition from school to post school education, training or employment and the transition from training and education to employment. It is also important to recognise the effect that transition has upon friendships and social life. Some of our young people will require more complex care packages and will have limited choices owing to their disability. Through good planning and contract negotiation we can ensure they receive the best care.
- 2.2 In Thurrock we start the introduction to transition planning in Year 9- between ages of 14-15 at School Reviews.

**The Thurrock Transition Team**

- 2.3 The transition team consists of 1 deputy manager 1 ½ social workers and 2 support planners that are fully funded by adult social care. The team works closely with managers and practitioners in the Disabled Children's Team.
- 2.4 The current caseload in the team is 92. This excludes those that we attend school reviews for as these are offered to all young people with a SENCO at year nine review.

**Thurrock's Progress since 2009**

**2009-2010**

- 2.5 Following the completion of the Self Assessment 1 Questionnaire, we were awarded the grade of 'Good' in relation to the key areas required, and were in top 25% of councils. Because of this we were awarded a sum of money to develop our existing practice. The funding was issued in 2009/10 to:
- Develop an Easy Read version of the protocol
  - Arrange an EXPO at Orsett Hall, with guest speakers to relaunch the Transition Service in Thurrock.
  - Commission a Drama Workshop to work with Young People on issues relation to Transition
  - Commission an Advocacy Company to identify Peer Champions within Thurrock to sit on the Transition Strategy Group.
  - Purchase resources and materials to support Person Centred Planning in Schools.

## **2010-2011**

- 2.6 Following the completion of the Self Assessment 2 Questionnaire, we continued to be graded as 'Good'. (still in top 25%) Additional funding was awarded to develop services to Young People in Transition. The funding was used to:
- Develop Person Centred Planning in Treetops School and Mainstream Schools where disabled young people attend.
  - Commission Thurrock Independent Resource Centre and Thurrock Lifestyles Solutions (TLS) to develop opportunities for Disabled Young People in relation to Work Experience, Apprenticeships, Volunteering and Employment.
  - Commission Drama Workshops to work with young people and their parents in relation to the transition process.
  - Continue funding for the Advocacy Service so that Young People's views are represented on the Transition Strategy Group.
- 2.7 The final Self Assessment Questionnaire completed, awarded Thurrock with 'Good' for the third consecutive year. Case studies of the work undertaken were featured on the TSP website and in particular the Person Centred work undertaken in Schools via Beacon Hill staff has been acknowledged as good practice. The DfE has shown great interest in this project and it was featured on pg 83 of the Green Paper- Support and Aspiration- SEN and Disability.

## **The current transition service in 2011/12**

- 2.8 The Team continues to provide transition services to over 90 young people and Person Centred Planning continues to be at the heart of any assessments or provision. Whilst there is always more we can do below are some of our successes:
- Sunnyside House, an independent provider working closely with us on the innovative residential model of 24 hour support to young people to enable them to move into independence within 2 years is now award winning and many local authorities are approaching us and them to introduce the model in their areas.
  - A new referral flow chart has been developed with Children's services to make the process clearer to professionals and service users.
  - There are significant savings on placements post 18, on transfer to Adult Social Care (see attached table)
  - Person centred planning is well established at Beacon Hill School. Treetops are adopting this method of Annual Reviewing for their most needy young people. Young People with disabilities within mainstream settings have piloted some Person Centred Reviews. They are continuing to increase the numbers of young people having reviews in this way.
  - Various projects have and are being developed via TLS to promote and develop opportunities for disabled young people in relation to work

experience, volunteering and employment. 8 Young people have secured paid employment in the borough. Whilst this is good, the numbers should be increased and TLS work very closely with both Beacon Hill and Treetops School in finding suitable work experience placements in the borough, particularly as there are no College courses in borough to offer this without basic entry level skills.

- Treetops school have now opened their Post 19 provision. This offers independence skills and work experience places to young people funded by Adult Social Care. There are currently 5 young people benefitting from this service.
- Children's and Adult Social Care are jointly funding the Transition Support Group. This is run by parents for parents in the borough and they offer 'Surgeries' on a fortnightly basis with a strong representation of professionals involved in transition who offer advice and information to parents. They will be having an official launch in March 2012.
- 4 disabled young people continue to attend and participate in the Transition Strategy group. They are supported by the Inclusion Officer from the voluntary sector group Out & About.
- A local drama group has been funded by Adult Social Care to provide disabled young people with a creative outlet to express themselves and grow in confidence. The group has been running for 3 months with good outcomes already being achieved. This group is now helping us take the Disability Hate Crime initiative into schools within Thurrock for 2012/13.
- The team work closely with Thurrock Coalition, a User lead organisation to promote partnership working with service users and carers. This organisation has recently been involved in the Sensory Strategy, Autism Strategy and Transition Strategy by holding a number of workshops across the borough to put people's views at the heart of our services.
- The team also provides extensive advice and guidance to young people and their carers who may not meet the eligibility criteria for adult social care but need signposting to other relevant services and support. We are currently looking at ways to capture the data around this.
- With our housing colleagues 2 new initiatives are underway to provide supported living to 12 learning disabled adults in Thurrock. This enables us to use residential placements less and Council resources better.

### **Continuous Improvements**

2.9 The National Transition Support group which carried out the audit of self assessments is no longer operational. However, to have reached an excellent standard of transition work an authority would have needed to demonstrate that their Local area has excellent/ innovative practice in at least 5 of the focus areas. Overall there were 14 focus areas against which the judgement was considered.

2.10 To achieve excellent we would have had to improve against the following criteria:

- Strong leadership and commitment to continued improvement
- Active strategic involvement across key agencies

- Young people and family members are actively involved in developing and reviewing transition practice
- Have demonstrable evidence that developments have potential to have a long term impact on outcomes for disabled young people

2.11 Service improvements since the last assessment against the above criteria would suggest that a judgement of excellent would have been achieved if the audits had remained. The improvements identified below build on these developments. Using the emerging approach to sector-led improvement regionally, Thurrock may also be able to externally evaluate its work against comparator councils in 2012/13.

### **Improving the service for 2012/2013**

2.12 Although much progress has been made and the service continues to develop and grow, we are aware that the experience for our young people in transition is not always a positive one. The development of the Thurrock Transition Support Group and the Thurrock Coalition has enabled us to really focus on the young person experience and have families and young people working alongside us to make things better.

2.13 From a user led perspective the common themes for improvement are:

1. Getting a service in the first place can be difficult if your child doesn't have a children's social worker. The process for referral needs to be clearer
2. The Transition Support Group wants to strengthen relationships between the different agencies as often support feels fragmented
3. Parents/carers/young people are not getting good post 18 education in the borough and this leads families to seek college places outside. This causes anxieties as transport to these colleges is always an issue
4. Prospects for our children getting paid work is very low, this does not help in raising aspirations.
5. Parents feel that the relationship with Treetops School would be improved by the school developing better communication with Parents.
6. The Transitions Team once involved is a very good service, But getting there can be difficult and sometimes too much jargon can be confusing.

2.14 Thurrock is also changing services for disabled adults within the Borough by the proposal to outsource all its in house provision to TLS, a Community Interest Company, developed and created from a vision that has spanned 5 years, it is governed by learning disabled adults. It is therefore an exciting time to rethink how we can improve the transition experience for people, and below are the various options for consideration. The writing of a new Transition Strategy is also underway due for completion in June 2012.

### 3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

3.1 Various options were presented to the People's services directorate management team on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012 and it was agreed that the following options would be explored further:

- **Young People at 17 transfer fully to the Transition Team**

Although this still requires a change of team, the critical year of change is from age 17-18. This is when the plans are coming together and when new schools, placements, local opportunities are being looked at. Although we currently work closely with the children's teams the funding streams are from 2 distinct budgets. The award winning Sunnyside House model of working with young people to prepare for long term independence could be then available from age 17 onwards, an initiative we are already exploring with the provider and CQC. This model provides predominantly 24 hour care that includes the 'MY Life' training modules. The home's philosophy is built around our vision that young disabled adults should be able to reach their full potential through a period away from home that is more like a university, college environment. We have worked very closely with our colleagues in housing to now have available in 2012/13 homes for 10-12 learning disabled adults in their own tenancies.

3.2 The following option will be explored in 2013/14

- **Changing the model of working to Local area Co-ordinators**

With the support of the Thurrock coalition we could put funds in place to develop the working of Local Area Co-ordinators. Essentially the staff team will remain the same, with the individual workers role changing to cover a specific area. The advantage of this is that there will be more community based work, fact finding and engagement to support the young person. With an additional 30k being given to our user led organisation, community facilitator roles could be introduced to work alongside our practitioners. This option can be further scoped out.

### 4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

4.1 full proposals of any future options will be taken through the transitions strategy group where young people are represented and the parents transitions support group where parents and carers are consulted. The latter group has already had sight of this report and agreed with the proposals for future development. Further consultations will take place during the development of the transitions strategy in 2012/13. Focus groups are taking place with young people and carers in February and March 2012 by our User Led Organisation.

## 5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

5.1 The work of the Transitions Team currently support the following Corporate Priorities:

- To **improve** the education and skills of local people
- To **encourage** and **promote** job creation and economic prosperity
- To **provide** and **commission** high quality and accessible services that meet, wherever possible, individual needs

Continued service improvement will ensure that achievements against each of these priorities is enhanced and strengthen citizen involvement in the process

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Funké Nana**  
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**[fnana@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:fnana@thurrock.gov.uk)**

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The option to explore changing the model of working to Local area Co-ordinators, if implemented during 2012/13 will be met within existing budgets and there are no additional cost to the Council

### 6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lee Bartlett**  
 Telephone and email: **01375652167**  
**[lbartlett@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:lbartlett@thurrock.gov.uk)**

There are no implications within the report

### 6.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**  
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The report is an update and makes reference to exploring options in the future when doing that the service will complete at the appropriate time on equality impact assessment. At this stage there is no definite decision regarding changing the service. The Thurrock Coalition, our User led Organisation, are currently consulting with young people about transition services.

### 6.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

N/A

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The Transition service has had many successes since 2010, but continues to grow and improve as a service. We are fully aware that there is still much work to be done in this area but believe we are starting from very strong foundations. We would ask Overview & Scrutiny to endorse the report and associated options.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:**

N/A

### **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

N/A

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