

Transitions Policy from Childrens Services to Adults Services

Blackburn with Darwen Adults and Children's Social Care

Adult U turned 18 in early 2004, the age when formal transition to Adult Services would have occurred. Legislation, policy, guidance and operational practice at this time would have been significantly different to current practice. Over the last two decades practice has been informed by new and amended legislation, for example, legislation regarding SEND and the introduction of the Care Act 2014 alongside greater awareness of the issues that young people and their carers experience. That is not to say that transition between services, and guidance supporting transition did not exist at this time, there still would be an expectation that a transition to adult social care would be planned in advance of a child turning 18.

Despite proactive legislative changes the SAR report details that transition to adulthood remains a current issue with autistic young people expressing a period of heightened uncertainty regarding changes to access, support and continuity of care. The Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) details that there is an absence of information on records in relation to Adult U's transition.

Adult and Children Services in Blackburn with Darwen has reaffirmed its commitment to improving the experiences and outcomes of young people preparing for adulthood and transitioning to adult services, this includes the experiences of autistic young people transitioning to adulthood.

The Adults and Health Business Plan 22/23 acknowledged the continued challenges and experiences of young people and their carers regarding the transitions process, whereby opportunity for greater collaboration between children, adults, education and partner agencies was identified. It was agreed that the policy and procedure relating to young people transitioning to adulthood would be reconsidered and would be a shared document outlining roles and responsibilities across services areas. This objective was simultaneously supported by Children's Services in the priorities of the SEND Improvement Board and Preparation for Adulthood Board.

Workshops were initiated in Autumn 2023, which included colleagues across adult services, Children services, Education and SEND Teams and thereafter including partner agencies considering the different mechanisms and pathways involved in the transition process.

The policy for practitioners underwent a rewrite considering the statutory roles and responsibilities of the various departments that support young people through the transitions process. This policy was coproduced with practitioners across Children and Adult Services, whereby coproduction and consultation took place with key stakeholders, young people, their families and carers. Case studies and the experiences of those that had recently transitioned to adult services was considered throughout.

The policy sets out how practitioners should work together, to identify as soon as possible, those young people their families, and carers, who may need support as they prepare to transition to adulthood.

The policy has been produced for primarily for practitioners working with young people and the people who support them, to prepare them for their transition to adulthood. Noting that Transition

is greater than the physical and emotional changes that a young person goes through, but also changes in their legal status and statutory responsibilities as they become an adult.

The aims of the policy are:

- Ensure the views and experience of young people and their carers are central to their transition.
- Guide and support practitioners who are preparing young people and the people who support them, through their journey into adulthood.
- Identify early those young people who may need further preparation and support to transition to adulthood.
- Outline professional responsibilities, early identification, referral pathways and mechanisms to support young people before, during and after transition, for example engaging mental health pathways.
- Ensure that young people experience a smooth, positive and meaningful experience of preparation for adulthood and transition into adult services. Providing a baseline to measure quality and consistency.
- Ensure that information and advice regarding the process is accessible.

Children and young adults considered by the policy include children and young adults who:

- Are likely to have eligible care and support needs under the Care Act 2014.
- Are receiving services Under Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 because of a disability.
- Are receiving services under Sections 20 and 31 of the Children's Act 1989 and are likely to require accommodation and support post 18.
- Open cases where contextualised safeguarding is known and exploitation including young people known to the Engage team.
- Are known to the Youth Justice system and likely to require ongoing support to maintain their safety.
- Are known to mental health services and are likely to require mental health support as an adult.
- Young adults who have not been in contact with children's services but present to the local authority often with a high level of need for care and support.

The policy is currently in final draft awaiting legal review; however, this has not prevented changes to operational practice identified in the work to date described within the policy and below.

Transition arrangements Operational Practice

Within the transition policy key milestones are described alongside the operational practices expected to support individuals through for the transitions process. This includes:

Identification of the child or young person who may need support with transition to Adult Services and refers to the Transitions Group for discussion

Blackburn with Darwen's Transition Group is a monthly operational meeting designed to identify young people who may be eligible for preparation and transition into adulthood. The young people

discussed may require care and support, safeguarding and a coordinated transition from Children's to Adult's services.

The Transitions Group is chaired by Service Leads in Adults and Children's. Membership of the group includes practitioners within Adult and Children's Services; the Statutory Assessment Team, Commissioning team, Blackburn college; Health colleagues; Direct Payments team, Complex Case team and other professionals when appropriate.

The Transition Group discusses young people potentially from the age of 14 (with SEND) and at various ages up to 18 years old. At the meeting it is decided at what age the young person is referred into Adults dependent on the complexity of need. It is the responsibility of Children's Social Care and internal services to identify appropriate young people who need to be referred to the Operational Transitions Group for discussion.

Whilst young people will usually be brought to the attention of the operational meeting by a social care professional, this will also include referrals from the Youth Justice Service, Young Peoples Services and Engage, where young people are open to these services.

Formal Referral into Adult Social Care

The young person should be referred to Adult Services no later than their 17th birthday to enable 12 months of transition planning (although it is recognised that some young people will only come to the attention of Children's Social Care or internal services during their 17th year).

It is also recognised that some young people due to the complexities of their needs will require earlier transition planning. As stated, the timing of referral can be discussed in the transitions group.

The duty social worker screens this referral to see which Adult Social Work Team should facilitate the transition assessment. The duty worker will assign the assessment to the Team Manager in the Learning Disability Team who assigns this work to the relevant team, which could be the Learning Disability Team, Mental Health Team or one of the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams. The referrer from children's social care will be advised via e-mail which social work team will be undertaking the assessment.

Allocation to an Adult Social Worker

Once the young person is allocated, the named Adult social worker will make contact with the children's worker to meet with the young person, their family and carers within 28 days and ask to be invited to any planned future meetings regarding their care and support.

There is an expectation that any meetings regarding the young person are co-attended by both the adults and children services allocated worker to ensure appropriate representation from respective departments. It is therefore essential that transparent and open communication always exists between the workers to ensure that all are involved in the preparation and seamless transition process.

A Care Act Assessment will be initiated.

Case Escalation

Where escalation is required due to the risk that the preparation and transition does not occur in a timely and seamless manner, allocated workers are requested to escalate issues and barriers to their line manager and Service Lead for consideration, whereby a Complex Transition Care Planning meeting can take place.

At all times both Children and Adults services have access to legal advice via their respective Legal departments.

Complex Transition Care Planning Meetings

When there are additional complexities or unresolved care and support services within the transition process from Children's to Adults (including accommodation). Then all practitioners can utilise a Complex Transition Care Planning meeting.

Where at the age of 17 ³/₄ years a young person's plan for transition is not fully known, particularly in relation to accommodation a Care Planning Meeting (CPM) should be held and chaired by the respective Children's Social Care, Service Lead.

Children and young people who are subject to an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP)

We know that not all young people are known to Children's Social Care but may be eligible to Adult Social Care when they turn 18. Often these are young people who are attending School or College and are supported via an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Children and young people who are subject to an EHCP only and not open to Social Care, Youth Justice or Engage or not in receipt of a service are not considered in this process and are discussed as part of their Year 9 review.

These young people do not follow a typical Transitions pathway from Children to Adult services but we acknowledge there is a need to provide young people and their families with information about Adult Social Care and when and how to access support at the right time.

When Preparation for Adulthood becomes a focus of the EHCP Annual Review from Year 9 onwards (age 14+) young people where it is identified there may be a 'significant' concern in them achieving any of the Four Preparation for Adulthood outcomes: Independent Living, Community inclusion, Employment or Good Health will be referred to the **EHCP Pathways and Transitions Group**.

This group meets each academic half term and includes representatives from Education, Health, Children Social Care, Adult Social Care, Early Help and Youth Services and seeks to offer relevant information, advice and signposting which could include information about a referral into Children's or Adult Social Care. Our SEND Advanced Practitioners for Children Social Care and Adult Social Care are core members of this group.

If it is identified within the group discussion that a referral to adult social care maybe beneficial to the young person, the AP for SEND in Adults will be the key point of contact with the young person, family and will refer the young person into the Transitions group to be considered.

Transitional Safeguarding Arrangements

Transitional Safeguarding is an approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children's and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives' (Holmes & Smale, 2018).

Transitional Safeguarding is not simply transition planning for people moving from Children's social care to Adult Social Care. It refers to activity that has often fallen outside of the traditional notions of both 'transitions' and 'safeguarding,' often interpreted through a lens of eligibility, rather than in the wider sense of human experiences and needs. Transitional Safeguarding extends far beyond statutory duties - highlights the holistic nature of effective safeguarding. This involves engaging commissioned services in a way that allows them to work creatively and flexibly. It is not a prescribed model, it is a principles-led approach according to local circumstances (Holmes and Dept of Health Social Care, 2021).

Operationally, within Blackburn with Darwen, when a child or young person is identified at being at risk of abuse and / or neglect during their 17th year, and prior to the young person turning 18 years of age, Children's Social Care would be required to raise a safeguarding concern into the Safeguarding Adults Team. This would allow for a Social Worker within the Safeguarding Adults Team to attend any strategy / professionals' meetings whilst Children's Social Care remain involved, so that a full, holistic overview can be provided prior to Children's Social Care ceasing their support, with risk assessments also being instigated during this time. It would also enable a period of time in which the Social Worker within the Safeguarding Adults Team can start to build a rapport with the young person, and others involved in their care. The safeguarding concerns received are predominantly from the Engage Team (contextual safeguarding), MARRAC process, or Channel.

Central to the work with young people and adults at risk is the application of Making Safeguarding Personal. This term is used to describe the way services work with individuals who may have experience of harm and focuses on the outcome they want to achieve. Making Safeguarding Personal works by identifying individual strengths and circles of support, providing a counterbalance to the complex risks.

Interim successes achieved through the collaboration and coproduction between Adult and Children's Social Care.

- Appointment of a dedicated SEND transitions Social Workers
- Clearer understanding and expectations of the roles and responsibilities of different departments.
- Closer working relationship between Children and Adults Services.
- Escalation between the departments has been evident in cases requiring consideration.
- Clearer understanding of young people who will require care and support services on turning 18 years old and eligibility criteria.
- Identification of improvements to the transition experience for children in different circumstances.
- Discussions will inform future commissioning activity.
- Shared knowledge and learning, particularly in respect of Mental Capacity.