

Education, Children and Young People Committee

**6th Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday 22
February 2023**

Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

This morning, the Committee will hear evidence regarding [the Disabled Children and Young People \(Transitions to Adulthood\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#).

A [SPICe briefing](#) on the Bill is available online.

Committee meeting

The Committee will be taking evidence from two panels at its meeting today.

Panel One

The Committee will take evidence from representatives from the Scottish Transitions Forum—

- Tracey Francis, Policy and Development Worker, Scottish Transitions Forum,
- Scott Richardson-Read, Policy and Development Worker, Scottish Transitions Forum and
- Rebecca Williams, Policy and Development Worker, Scottish Transitions Forum, ARC Scotland.

Panel Two

The Committee will then take evidence from—

- Clare Haughey MSP, Minister for Children and Young People,
- Christina McKelvie MSP, Minister for Equalities and Older People,
- Sara Hampson, Unit Head, Supporting Disabled Children and Young People and
- Vanessa Redmond, Team Leader, Supporting Disabled Children and Young People, Scottish Government.

Supporting information

A SPICe briefing, prepared for this session, is included in [Annexe A](#) of this paper.

ARC Scotland has provided a submission ahead of the meeting today. This is included at [Annexe B](#).

As part of its work, the Committee has held informal engagement sessions with Divergent Influencers who have been through the transition from child to adult services; and parents and carers whose children have been through the process.

The Committee has also visited a special secondary school, Buchanan High School in Coatbridge, meeting senior school pupils who will soon be leaving school; and the some of the transitions team who are supporting them, including teachers, social workers and the Home Link Education Officer.

Notes of these informal sessions have been provided at [Annexe C](#).

The Finance and Public Administration Committee (FPAC) has been scrutinising the Financial Memorandum (FM) for the Bill, as it is responsible for scrutinising all FMs. As part of this, it issued a call for views. FPAC wrote to the Committee on 10 January, to set out some of the key issues highlighted in the responses that it received.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee has considered the delegated powers that are in the Bill. It published its report in January.

Lastly, Fife Council has provided a written submission ahead of this meeting. Colleges Scotland and the Donaldson Trust have also provided submissions, to share further information following their attendance at the committee meeting on 8 February. These are included at [Annexe D](#).

Education, Children and Young People Committee Clerking Team
17 February 2023

Annexe A

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An t-Ionad Fiosrachaidh

Education, Children and Young People Committee

22 February 2023

Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

The Committee has been designated the lead committee at Stage 1 consideration of the [Disabled Children and Young People \(Transitions to Adulthood\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#). This Bill seeks to improve opportunities for disabled children and young people as they grow up. SPICe's [Bill Briefing was published in December](#).

The Committee has been exploring the Bill and the issues it is seeking to address through a variety of formal and informal approaches. The Committee has taken formal evidence from representatives of education and health professionals and bodies, as well as from advocacy groups. Links to the available Official Reports are below.

- [1 February 2022](#), advocacy organisations and representatives of health professionals.
- [8 February 2022](#), representatives of the education sectors.

Notes from the Committee's informal sessions with young people, parents/carers and the visit to Buchanan High School have been included in the annexe to this paper.

This week the Committee is hearing from the Scottish Transitions Forum followed by the Minister for Children and Young People and the Minister for Equalities and Older People. These two ministers have joint responsibility to lead the work on transitions.

The Committee's work so far has brought out a number of themes around the difficulties disabled young people face as they transition into adult services. These difficulties are not new and have been well-understood for many years.

The Government is currently working on a National Transitions Strategy. The Government also funds the Scottish Transitions Forum and the Independent Living Fund in Scotland.

This session provides an opportunity to explore the policy approaches and barriers to improving transitions over a range of services as well as the approach and content of the Bill.

Transitions: a longstanding policy issue

The need to improve support for the transition from school and children's services to further and higher education, employment and the range of adult services is well-recognised in research and policy.

These issues were explored in a 2019 SPICe briefing, [Transitions of Young People With Service and Care Needs Between Child and Adult Services in Scotland](#). That briefing explored evidence that suggested that transitions can be a difficult process for young people and their families. Policy reviews and research studies offered various recommendations to improve the transition process for young people. Recurring themes include the following:

- co-ordination and collaboration between services
- person-centred focus, involving the young person and their parents in decision making
- starting the transitions planning process early
- young people and their parents having a single point of contact
- increased information about available options
- more support for families
- dedicated transitions staff
- appropriate training for staff.

Going further back, an evaluation of the Principles of Transitions (2nd edition) in 2015¹ also reflected these themes. It found that the interlocking policy and legislation presented a complex picture and that too much onus was placed on children's services to own the transitions process. It said—

“There is evidence of a wide range of approaches to transitions across local authorities. This, combined with a complex and changing policy landscape, represent challenges to securing effective transitions for young people with additional support needs. ...

“Many practical challenges to effective transitions remain, including how to develop more effective 'joined up' practice, pressure on public sector budgets,

¹ Personal correspondence with ARC Scotland.

effecting smooth transitions from child to adult services, the need to develop a single child's plan, the lack of available college places, the challenges of delivering services in rural areas, the need for a refreshed interpretation of 'positive destinations'”

All of these themes have surfaced during the Committee's work on this Bill.

Themes from the Committee's work on current practice

The Committee has heard that a key barrier to successful transitions is that there are not enough services to meet the needs of young people as they come out of education, which means that there can be limited options. Planning was also thought to start too late for staff to be able to build relationships with the young person and families.

Mike Corbett from the NASUWT described a cluttered landscape of policy initiatives around the support of young people with additional needs, suggesting this adds pressure on practitioners. He said—

“Talking purely from the point of view of schools and teachers, I can say that what tends to happen in practice is that, when there is no clear overarching framework for, or coherence to, the variety of policies that are in place, local authorities often put downward pressure on schools and teachers to make the decisions in order to make things work at the local level.” ([8 February 2023](#), col 3))

Mr Corbett said that the Morgan Review and the response to it could have been a vehicle for an overarching approach to supporting young people with ASN. He expressed disappointment about the apparent lack of progress in response to the Morgan Review.

Rebecca Scarlett, Senior Policy and Information Officer, LEAD Scotland said that there is a lack of specialist colleges in Scotland and that disabled young people are being failed at this point in their lives. She also said—

“A college might say that someone has a place on a course but that they cannot attend it unless they can travel independently or unless they have support and funding to go there. However, social services are in crisis and they are funding only emergency cases, so the bar for meeting the criteria is very high and those young people are not getting access to the support that they need. They are really left in limbo.” ([1 February 2023](#), col 4)

The Committee heard that a key element of supporting young people through these transitions was that each young person and family was recognised as an individual and sufficient times needs to be allowed for that young person to build relationships with those helping them to move to the next stage of their lives.

Anne-Marie Sturrock from Colleges Scotland told the Committee—

“Each person is different from the next, so getting individualised support to help with the transition is key, and having a contact person for the family is really important.” ([8 February 2023](#), col 2)

The Committee heard from Universities Scotland that this can cause particular difficulties with transitions to universities, where the place may be confirmed the summer before the course starts, making the timeframe short and also coinciding with a period when schools are closed.

Louise Storie from the Donaldson Trust noted that parents can also struggle through a transition.

Andy Miller from the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities highlighted that the changes in services can also mean that certain elements of support will change or even lead to additional costs – the suite of information that parents and young people need to successfully negotiate a transition to adult services can be wide and it is not always well signposted. ([1 February 2023](#), col 5)

The witnesses on 2 February discussed the variability in outcomes and support for young people across different areas.

They noted that as well as the variability of services the young people can access, other factors such as strategic buy in, and the skills and approaches of individual practitioners can make a difference.

Lee-Anne McAulay from Scottish Autism said—

“There is also no overarching strategic plan. In many cases, we know who those young people are from a young age but it is only when they get to 17 or 18 years old that people think, “Oh, goodness me—what are we going to be able to find for them?” That really limits their choices.” ([1 February 2023](#), cols 3-4)

The geographical variation was also highlighted in evidence heard on 8 February 2023. Louise Storie from the Donaldson Trust stated—

“Even in one local authority area, policy and practice can vary greatly across departments, which means that the transition from one department to another can be hugely difficult. In some cases, we support people who have no social work or support involvement, so when they are transitioning, they do so with no scaffolding around what the next destination is. ... Working with one team in one authority, you might think that there is going to be a seamless move from one area to the other, but that is not the experience at all. A child may still be in education but also be receiving a self-directed support budget for support outwith school hours, which falls under adult legislation.

“You are crossing the barrier between the two, so how do you support that person adequately and make sure that there is partnership working between departments and inter-agency working? That is hugely difficult, particularly in cases where a child is in the process of transitioning from one department to another and has not been allocated [*a worker*] and is therefore somewhere in

the ether. It is hugely difficult when someone has been discharged from children's services but has not been picked up by adult services at that point." ([8 February 2023](#), col 16)

Dr Kandarp Joshi from the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland said that the key barriers to successful outcomes are resources, culture, and better links between child and adult services. ([1 February 2023](#), cols 31-32) He also said that there is currently more awareness of transitions than previously, and some good examples in relation to particular medical conditions, but that a wider culture change takes time.

In evidence from health professionals, the Committee heard that the responsibility for supporting transitions too often falls on children's services, with not enough input and/or ownership from adult services.

The Committee also heard that people can experience a cliff-edge of support and that adult services in education, health and social work have different thresholds for support.

Louise Storie from the Donaldson Trust said—

"We need also to identify needs at the appropriate time to enable a more aligned and person-centred transition. That is about collaborative working among agencies and partners in order to recognise needs." ([8 February 2023](#), col 8)

In addition, there can be barriers to accessing the assessments required to leverage support, for example in accessing the Disability Support Allowance in higher education. Andy Miller said—

"One of the biggest differences that is so problematic is the change to a social care system that is based on eligibility criteria, because that requires an assessment by social work. As Jenny Miller mentioned, that is often just not available, so we have heard from young people who did not leave school when they wanted to and did another year in school just because they could not leave, because there was no support for them to leave and carry on with any kind of life that they would want to lead. It has a big impact. I think that the lack of staffing, support and services will be a recurring theme." ([1 February 2023](#), col 5)

Anne-Marie Sturrock from Colleges Scotland and Louise Storie from the Donaldson Trust both highlighted the importance of taking account of the wants and wishes of the young person when supporting them into, for example, a college course. Within this, there should be support for the young person to understand what these options entail and allow them the flexibility to change if the choices end up not being as expected or suitable. ([8 February 2023](#), cols 19-20)

The Committee has undertaken two informal sessions with, respectively, disabled young people and parents of disabled young people. These sessions have reflected the barriers and recommendations identified in the bullet lists above.

Some of the themes from the young people included—

- There is good practice, eg: [The Thistle Foundation's The Big Plan](#)
- Plans can be too focused on a positive destination rather than being directed by the young person's hopes and desires
- The young people were not always listened to
- College experiences could be challenging
- Poor experiences through transitions have had long term effects on mental wellbeing
- SAAS Disabled Students' Allowance funding was helpful

Some of the themes from the Committee's session with parents/carers included:

- The continuing need for parents to be the experts in the range of services their children might require
- The continuing need for parents to advocate on behalf of their children, while supporting the young person to become more independent
- Problems in relation to communication with a range of services, including colleges
- A lack of understanding of the needs of the individual, and resources put in place to support the young person
- The difference in the level of understanding of needs and support available while at school (or in children's services) compared to e.g. college.
- Some good practice, e.g. support from disability support team at university or a specific transitions support officer
- Little or no support for transitions for children not educated in a state school.

The Committee also visited Buchanan High School on 6 February. The Committee heard about the good practice that occurs in that school, which builds relationships with a number of different agencies to support opportunities for their pupils. The school also start planning early, supports phased transitions and involves parents.

The school also assists parents with applications for ILF (Independent Living Fund) monies and advises on other social security options. The pupils the Committee spoke to were positive about their experiences in relation to transitions planning.

Current policies and approaches

There are a number of pieces of legislation and policies which relate to the transition of a disabled child or young person as they move from children to adult services.

Evidence from various reviews would suggest that application of these duties is patchy. Respondents to the Committee's call for views, as well as witnesses

providing oral evidence, identified an implementation gap between policy and practice. The nature of transitions is that to be done well it requires a person-centred approach and for professionals to work across organisational boundaries.

Witnesses have suggested some key ways in which the gap between policy intent and implementation could be closed. These included: better accountability and redress, a dedicated transition service, addressing the lack of provision available, and greater continuity of the service through child and adult services.

Previous papers have outlined various policies that would or could be relevant to a disabled young person moving to adult services. These included the Scottish Transitions Forum, the Independent Living Fund, Careers Advice, GIRFEC, Colleges and Universities, ASL and Social Work.

The scope of the services that a transition might touch upon is very wide and therefore the number of relevant policies exceeds the list in the previous paragraph. This week, the focus of this section of the paper is on Scottish Transitions Forum, the Independent Living Fund, A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: delivery plan, and Keys to Life.

The section previously provided in relation to ASL is included as an Annexe to this paper as members may wish to refer to the parts setting out the duties in relation to transitions or the Morgan Review.

SPICE sought details from the Scottish Government on its funding of the STF over the past ten years. SPICE also asked officials to provide details of any other funding streams, the Government wished to make the Committee aware of.

In terms of the STF, The Scottish Government has provided over £1.3m grant funding to the Association For Real Change (ARC) Scotland's Scottish Transitions Forum over the last 10 years (from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2023). £0.5m of the £1.3m funding provided by the Scottish Government has been used to develop and test a web-based application called 'Compass' and to trial 'Principles into Practice' in 10 local authority areas to identify, design and test changes that transform how young people with additional support needs are supported in their transition to young adult life.

In addition, officials highlighted that in the financial year 2022/23, the Scottish Government is:

- Investing up to £4.27m in 22/23 in the Independent Living Fund Scotland's Transition Fund to support young disabled people to make a smoother transition from childhood into adulthood by promoting independence, community participation, social inclusion and confidence.
- Providing £316k funding to the Corseford College pilot to offer further education (FE) for young people with complex additional support needs. The findings from the Corseford pilot will help the Scottish Government, and partners, to explore a sustainable approach to FE provision for this group of learners.

- Committing over £59 million in employability services to support delivery of the No One Left Behind approach, including local delivery of the Young Person's Guarantee.
- Investing £23.5m in Fair Start Scotland delivery, providing intensive and personalised pre-employment and in-work support for unemployed disabled people, and those with health conditions or other barriers to progressing into work.

Members will be aware that supporting transitions also forms part of the work and budgets of, for example, health, education, and social work services. The list above will therefore not be exhaustive.

Scottish Transitions Forum

ARC Scotland facilitates the Scottish Transitions Forum (STF), which is a network with 1,055 members from all sectors and local authority areas. Its aim is to improve the experiences of young people (14 -25) with additional support needs who are making the transition to adult life.

In 2017, ARC Scotland published *Principles of Good Transitions 3*. Which was written in partnership with STF members and Scottish Government officials.

The Scottish Transitions Forum has developed [seven Principles of Good Transitions](#). These are:

- Principle 1: Planning and decision making should be carried out in a person-centred way.
- Principle 2: Support should be co-ordinated across all services.
- Principle 3: Planning should start early and continue at least to age 25.
- Principle 4: Young people should get the support they need.
- Principle 5: Young people and their families must have access to the information they need.
- Principle 6: Families need support.
- Principle 7: A continued focus on transitions across Scotland.

These seven principles can be used by a wide range of public services, the third sector, and the private sector.

This work has informed local planning and included in national policy initiatives including 'Fairer Scotland for Disabled People', Social care - self-directed support framework of standards, autism and learning disability policies, and the Scottish Government's [Supporting disabled children, young people and their families' guidance](#).

The STF has produced 4 supplements for *Principles* to provide additional information concerning: young people in conflict with the law, those with life shortening conditions,

profound and multiple disabilities and autism - <https://scottishtransitions.org.uk/7-principles-of-good-transitions/>

Following on from this, the STF developed a draft framework, Principles into Practice, to deliver improved transition planning and support. As previously stated, the Scottish Government is funding a Principles into Practice trial across ten local authorities in Scotland over a two-year period and is due to be completed in March 2023.

The STF's submission to the initial call for views stated—

“Principles into Practice offers local partners, for the first time, practical guidance, and evaluation measures to improve the planning and delivery of support for young people (aged 14-25 years) who require additional support as they make the transition to young adult life. It will benefit young people with learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, complex health conditions, mental health difficulties, young carers and those who are care experienced, including young people with experience of secure care or young offender institutions. It applies to the widest possible population of young people who require additional support, including those with high and complex support needs, and those who may not meet the eligibility criteria for adult social care support. It also benefits the parents and carers of these young people.”

That submission also highlighted the development of a digital application called Compass. It said—

“This enables young people, parents and carers and professionals to access information specific to their individual circumstances, increase their awareness of understanding their statutory rights and how to exercise them, and to share their opinions and experiences with their local authority. Compass is currently available to young people and parents and carers in Falkirk, extending to other trial areas in January 2023.”

Witnesses the Committee have heard from agree that the principles are useful and relevant and widely endorsed. The impact and progress on the ground was less clear, although the Committee has heard about particularly good work in areas where Principles into Practice trials are taking place.

The STF's initial submission said that in April this year Principles into Practice and Compass will be “made freely available to all young people with additional need, their parents and carers, and all Local Authorities in Scotland”. It continued—

“We believe this will address the many practical challenges experienced at a local level associated with implementing policy, including improving the provision of transition plans for all who need them.”

Independent Living Fund

[The Independent Living Fund Scotland](#) was established in July 2015, following the UK Government's closure of the UK ILF. The ILF aims to safeguard the rights of disabled people in Scotland to live independent lives.

ILF Scotland is a public body which administers the fund on behalf of the Scottish Government.

The ILF includes a Transition Fund which provides grants to help young disabled people, between the ages of 16 and 25, with the transition after leaving school or children's services to be: more independent; more active and engaged in their community; and to build and maintain relationships with other people.

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: delivery plan

The Scottish Government [described A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People](#) as its “delivery plan for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”

It covered the period 2016-2021 and aimed to “make equality of opportunity, access to services and independent living a reality for all disabled people in Scotland.”

One of the actions in A Fairer Scotland for Disabled people was:

“We will work with schools, local authorities, health and social care partnerships, further and higher education institutions and employers to improve the lives of young disabled people. This includes points of transition into all levels of education – primary, secondary further and higher – education and employment. We will be mindful of young people who have faced structural inequalities and complex barriers that result in lack of employment. We will ensure that supports are in place so that they can live a life of equal participation, with the support they need. We will embed the Principles of Good Transitions, which have been endorsed by 30 multi-sector organisations in Scotland and prioritise person-centred, coordinated support.”

The plan also highlighted work to support more disabled young people to access Modern Apprenticeships. [Later evaluations](#) highlighted the Young Person's Guarantee, improved Careers Advice, and the Developing the Young Workforce strategy as ways to support better employment opportunities for young disabled people.

A [progress report published in March 2021](#) looked at the employment rates up to 2019 and found that—

“In 2019, the employment rate of disabled 16-24 year olds was 42.0%, 6.2 percentage points higher than 2018 (35.8%) and higher than the baseline rate of 35.6%. However, the employment rate of non-disabled 16-24 year olds still remains much higher (60.8%), although this was unchanged between 2018 and 2019.”

The most recent Scottish Government analysis of the gap between the employment rate for disabled and non-disabled people aged 16 to 64 in Scotland is to 2021. The gap was 31.2 percentage points.

The aims of A Fairer Scotland for Disabled people was included in the Scottish Government's [Fair Work action plan: becoming a leading Fair Work nation by 2025](#) which was published in December 2022.

Keys to life

The [Keys to Life is Scotland's learning disability strategy](#). It was launched in 2013 and the most recent Implementation Framework and Priorities covered the period 2019-2021. The Ministerial foreword was jointly written by Ms Haughey, in her role at that time as the Minister for Mental Health and Ms McKelvie. That foreword said—

“It is vital that we provide support from an early age. Young people have told us about the challenges they can sometimes face in education, in forming relationships, in finding jobs and in their journey to leading a more independent life.”

One of the commitments in the Implementation Framework and Priorities was to

“commission further research and analysis to ... gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that improve educational outcomes, and destinations, of all children and young people with learning disabilities [and]

“better understand the impact of employment schemes on opportunities for people with learning disabilities.”

This document also recognised the complexity in supporting people with learning disabilities. It said that the aim is to take a “whole system, whole population and whole person approach”. This meant:

- Whole system: an approach that stretches across local and national Government, the third and private sectors.
- Whole population: looking at the whole life journey from childhood to older age and addresses key elements of that journey from health and social care support to education, housing and employment – and beyond.
- Whole person: recognising the capabilities and talents of people with learning disabilities as well as the challenges they face. Also understanding how important relationships and communication are for the wellbeing of people with learning disabilities.

One of the specific actions was—

“Building on the Seven Principles of Good Transitions, and broader recommendations received from sector experts, disabled young people and their families and carers, work across government to improve transitions into education, learning and work for young people with learning disabilities.”

Scottish Government memorandum to the Committee

The Scottish Government's [submission to the Committee on this Bill was in the form of a memorandum](#).

Overall, the memo stated—

“The Scottish Government is committed to, and fully support efforts towards, improving the lived experiences of disabled children and young people, to ensure that we are delivering for them throughout their lives, including during the challenging time of transitions. The Scottish Government therefore supports the intentions of the Bill in seeking to improve transitions for disabled children and young people.

“The Scottish Government will consider the detail of the provisions and may seek amendment to address any issues that are identified with the Bill as introduced if it progresses to that stage. We particularly note the views of some stakeholders that this legislation may not, as drafted, achieve its intended aims.”

The Government’s understanding of the complexity of the issue chimes with the evidence the Committee has received. It said—

“Transitions is a complex area, which requires a coordinated and holistic response to improve the culture, systems and practice. All partners and stakeholders need to work as one, collectively and creatively to address this crucial matter, placing the young person right at the centre of the process.”

The memo listed a number of policies which are intended to support better transitions for disabled young people. Key to this is the current work to develop a national transitions strategy on a non-statutory basis.

The memo indicated that the Government was developing a refreshed approach to planning under GIRFEC. [GIRFEC practice guidance published in September](#) included updated guidance on plans.

Building on GIRFEC, the Scottish Government is developing a ‘Getting It Right for Everyone’ (GIRFE) approach. This aims to be “a joined-up, coherent and consistent multi-agency approach to support and services from young adulthood to end of life care”. A number of pilots of this approach are taking place including one looking at “young people in transition from GIRFEC to GIRFE”.

The memo highlighted the proposed National Care Service and the potential that children’s services may be included in the NCS. It also mentioned the implementation of the Morgan Review.

The planned incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law was also mentioned, as well as future plans to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Government stated “incorporation of the CRPD will place greater impetus on public bodies to remove barriers and support disabled people to fully participate in society”.

The memo highlighted four areas of potential enquiry when considering the Bill. These were:

- The potential for “duplication and overlap of key aspects of existing legislation”
- Whether the duties the Bill would impose on public bodies are appropriate, and how they would interact with existing functions of those bodies.
- The eligibility criteria for the proposed statutory right to a transitions plan and whether this would leave out some young people with comparable needs to those who would be entitled to a transitions plan under the current proposals.
- Resource implications

A Financial Resolution

Rule 9.12 of Standing Orders sets out the process around a Financial Resolution in relation to a public bill (ie a Government Bill, a Committee Bill, or a Member’s Bill).

Relevant to this Bill, a Financial Resolution is required if the Bill contains provisions which would increase significantly devolved expenditure. And “no proceedings may be taken on the Bill at any Stage after Stage 1 unless the Parliament has by resolution agreed to the increase in expenditure”.

Standing Orders also state that—

“Only a member of the Scottish Government or a junior Scottish Minister may give notice of a motion for a Financial Resolution. The motion may be moved only by a member of the Scottish Government or junior Scottish Minister, whether or not that person has given notice of it or indicated support for it. Such a motion may not be amended.” (9.12.7)

SPICe understands that the Presiding Officer has determined that a Financial Resolution is required for this Bill.

In short, it is only a member of the Scottish Government that can lodge a motion on a Financial Resolution and therefore whether the Bill can proceed beyond Stage 1 is within the gift of the Government.

Proposals of the Bill

The Bill seeks to improve the lives and outcomes for disabled children and young people. Its proposals have three strands:

- A statutory national strategy
- A minister to be specified as being responsible for the transitions of children and young people
- A duty on local authorities to plan for disabled children and young people’s transitions and a statutory process for this.

The overall aims of the Bill are broadly welcomed by respondents to the Committee's call for views and those the Committee has heard from in person.

The Committee has explored whether the Bill is required to support better transitions and outcomes for disabled children and young people. A key reason to support the legislative approach was the element of accountability and redress the bill offered, albeit some witnesses thought that this could be made clearer in the Bill. Section 13 provides for Ministers to make regulations about dispute resolutions in relation to the proposed transition plans.

The Bill would create additional duties on a range of bodies to comply with a National Strategy and in relation to the Transition Plans. Lee-Anne McAulay from Scottish Autism said that currently statutory duties were essential in how she effectively she is able to advocate for support for young people. However how the additional duties would interact with existing duties and plans was seen by some as clunky. LEAD Scotland argued that a simplified landscape along with a policy focus on improving practice, capacity and resources could help.

Mike Corbett from the NAWUWT questioned whether statutory plans would in of themselves provide better outcome; he noted that CSPs are statutory but inconsistently applied. ([8 February 2023](#), col 21) The NASUWT submission also highlighted the problems of implementation of ASL legislation and duties. It said—

“[The] Bill must be viewed through this lens and the Union would suggest it is explicitly set out:

- how the framework will dovetail with ASN legislation and policy;
- the mechanisms which will be in place to support equity of support and provision across Scotland; and
- a clear outline of the investment and training being provided to support implementation.”

Dr Kandarp Joshi from the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland also suggested that the Bill had been conceived prior to proposals for a National Care Service and may not link fully to a future health and social care service.

Lee-Anne McAulay from Scottish Autism said that the proposed Bill could be useful in supporting young people she works with who may not come under existing duties. The Bill proposes a planning mechanism that spans the period from when an individual is in school to, potentially, the age of 25. This is beyond the scope of the transitions duties under the 2004 Act.

Anne-Marie Sturrock from Colleges Scotland said—

“For the transition into college, the bill will firm up and set up a framework and process to ensure that nobody slips through the net. The transition out of college is a bigger challenge. A young person could start university or college at 17, but the bill includes people up to the age of 26. The transition would be either to employment, to university or back to a service. That is an important

process for the young person who is reaching a stage of their life when they might want to move out of their mother's and father's house or carer's house and set up their own little abode. The transition out is also critical." ([8 February 2023](#), col 7)

Available support and services

In the Committee's call for views, one of the critiques of the Bill has been that planning in itself will not create the opportunities and support required for disabled young people to flourish. A National Strategy could be a policy vehicle that improves those opportunities and support, but there would be likely be an additional resource requirement as well.

This was reflected in the evidence session last week where sufficient resources and a variety of options for disabled children and young people were highlighted. It was also noted that as healthcare has improved, more children with complex needs are now living longer and will therefore require transitions support. Dr Mairi Stark from the Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health said that there are increasing numbers of children with physical and mental health needs.

Ned Sharratt, Senior Researcher (Education, Culture), SPICe Research

16 February 2023

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Annexe 1: Additional Support for Learning

When local authority is responsible for a disabled person's school education, there are duties under the [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) Scotland Act 2004](#) in relation to supporting that child's education and then transitions into adult services.

However, the gap between the policy intention of the 2004 Act and the practice and support available has been a longstanding policy issue. [Angela Morgan's 2020 report into the implementation of ASL policy](#). This said of the evidence it gathered—

“[We found] examples of excellent practice, dedicated professionals, loving families and thriving children and young people. However, there were too many stories of struggle and shortfalls; frustration, anxiety and stress for children and young people and their families. Frontline practitioners, and those directly supporting them, told similar stories.”

The key aspects of the Morgan Review were in relation to developing values, leadership and culture. Throughout the review is concerned with communication, good relationships and kindness in public service. In giving evidence Ms Morgan told the Session 5 Education and Skills Committee in November 2020 that the system can be “overly dependent” on “dedicated, skilled and inspiring professionals” which can mean that the service as a whole is “fragmented and inconsistent.” ([OR 18 Nov 2020](#) Col 2)

The Bill proposes a statutory planning process for transitions. Currently the only statutory plan in school education is the Co-ordinated Support Plan under the 2004 Act, although there are a range of non-statutory planning mechanisms used by local authorities intended to support the needs of children in schools.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to put in place a CSP if the statutory conditions are met. These are that a child has longstanding ASN arising from one or more complex factors or multiple factors which require significant additional support to be provided by more than one service. The CSP is seen as particularly important as it can open up additional routes of redress through the ASN tribunal.

After concerns that CSPs are under-used in local authorities, a short life working group was established and this [reported in November 2021](#). This found “variations in awareness and understanding of the legislation, support and planning process” including in the purpose and statutory requirements on local authorities. The SLWG's findings will be familiar to the Committee in its work on this Bill so far; it made recommendations around:

- culture and relational approaches
- the availability and accessibility of information and guidance for children, young people, parents, carers and professionals
- ensuring sufficient resource is needed to provide time for genuine collaboration and multi-disciplinary planning and to support the delivery of agreed outcomes for children and young people

When the individual is finishing school, there is a duty to provide information regarding pupils with ASN to such agencies it “sees fit (if any)” (e.g. colleges); local authorities also are required to seek information from any agencies it “sees fit (if any)” to discover what support will be in place for the pupil after they leave school. These duties cover all pupils who have an ASN, but is limited by the words “sees fit (if any)”; ie the local authority may not see fit to exchange information with any agency about an individual child. More details on these duties are set out in the [Additional Support for Learning \(Changes in School Education\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2005](#), again the duties in the regulations are caveated and apply to “only in relation to such children and young persons as the authority consider appropriate”.

[Statutory guidance](#) on the operation of the 2004 act recognised that applying these duties to every pupil with ASN would be burdensome. However, it states—

“It will be for those working with the child to take into account the views of the parents and child, and the particular circumstances, to decide whether the duties described below apply; young people have the same rights as parents under the Act. Education authorities will wish to consider for each child or young person with additional support needs whether the transitional duties should apply. It is anticipated that the transitional duties will certainly apply to all those children and young people with additional support needs where one, or more, of the following circumstances apply. They:

- have a co-ordinated support plan
- are in a specialist placement such as an enhanced provision, a special unit or a special school
- have additional support needs arising from a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010
- are otherwise at risk of not making a successful transition such as looked after children and young carers.”

Annexe B

ARC Scotland: Scottish Transitions Forum

Principles into Practice: Summary Report for the ECYP Committee

February 2023

This is a brief summary of an impact report to be submitted to the Scottish Government before conclusion of the project in March 2023.

About Principles into Practice

Principles into Practice is the first national framework that offers practical guidance and evaluation measures to improve the planning and delivery of support for young people aged 14-25 who need additional support as they make the transition to young adult life.

It is based on the seven 'Principles of Good Transitions' and will help embed these into planning and practice in local authority areas across Scotland.

Principles into Practice has been developed through extensive consultation with statutory sector strategic leads, Scottish Government representatives, Social Work Scotland, Association of Directors of Education Scotland, Scottish Transitions Forum members, parents and carers, and young people.

The framework is currently being trialled within 10 local authority areas in Scotland.

Key achievements

- Working with professionals, young people and parents and carers to create a vision and consensus for change
- Developing with them a framework that can be used by all sectors and can adapt to local situations and change
- Improved engagement with young people, parents and carers and identifying the outcomes most important to them
- Improved communication and partnership working between sectors
- Building a community of practice through holding Learning Exchange events
- Developing and testing a digital web application 'Compass', with and for young people, parents and carers. Compass provides accessible and personalised information about their rights, entitlements, and topics that matter most to them
- Continuing to develop the data collection and sharing function within Compass to gather feedback from young people, parents and carers to inform and evaluate local improvements
- Beginning development of a version of Compass for professionals
- New local approaches developed to solve problems

- Improved confidence amongst professionals that change is achievable
- All 10 trial areas remain engaged and committed to the work. While the speed of change varies, all have made progress.

Key challenges

- The slow pace of systemic change across multiple sectors - there is no "quick fix"
- Maintaining momentum and motivation when change feels slow to deliver
- Capacity to carry out the work within existing resources. E.g. when person resource is scarce, operational delivery takes precedent
- Covid was a major additional challenge for the trial areas, both in capacity to carry out the work required and ability to engage with young people and families.

Key learning

- Professionals are willing to work together to improve transitions, but need guidance to do this
- 'Sign off' at a senior level is essential to implementation and accountability
- Local leads must be appointed to deliver this work
- Local steering groups, or equivalent, are an effective way to share information, build collective understanding, agree priorities and develop joint plans of action
- An identified person is needed to support both young people and families throughout the transitions process (e.g., Transitions Coordinator or similar).
- The importance of preparation and the time this can take before moving to implementation.

Next steps

The Principles into Practice trials will conclude in March 2023. The completed framework and associated resources, including Compass, will then be made available across Scotland.

Key learning from the trials will be considered in the development of Scotland's first National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy for disabled young people.

Further information

Principles of Good Transitions 3 sets out 7 principles that bring together everything the law requires to support transitions and what research tells us about the approaches that work best. It has informed local planning and included in national policy initiatives including 'Fairer Scotland for Disabled People', Self-directed Support framework of standards, autism and learning disability policies and the Scottish Government's 'Supporting disabled children, young people and their families' guidance.

<https://scottishtransitions.org.uk/7-principles-of-good-transitions/>

Experiences of Young People with Additional Needs Leaving School details the findings of an online survey of 198 young people conducted in December 2020 by our young leaders group, the Divergent Influencers.

<https://scottishtransitions.org.uk/blank/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Divergent-Influencers-report-2021-final-Reduced-size-1.pdf>

Compass - change made easy is a webinar we hosted which included an in-depth demonstration of both the young person and parent carer version of Compass. A recording can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQ0As533gCI>

Our response to the call for views in relation to the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill can be found here:

https://yourviews.parliament.scot/ecyp/disabled-transitions-detailed-call-for-views/consultation/view_respondent?uuld=206968132

Annexe C

Education, Children and Young People Committee

Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill

Note of Session with young people (Divergent Influencers) hosted and supported by ARC Scotland

Part one

What worked well for you when leaving school?

Young Person 1:

I was helped by a charity called [Thistle](#), which brought their '[big plan](#)' project into schools and helped young people to plan for their future – to establish what they want to do and what they want to achieve, and to set out a plan to achieve that. The focus was on what you wanted to achieve, not what labels or conditions you have.

Young Person 2:

The best part of my journey leaving school was meeting other Divergent Influencers (DIs) and working with Thistle on the Big Plan project, which ensure that people with ASD or any other ASN have a voice and a sense of direction. To have a good transition, you have to know where you are going, but it is important that you aren't being taken in a direction where you don't know where you are going or that doesn't fit your future ambitions. When developing our big plan, we are talking to someone who is truly supportive rather than someone who wants us to fit their vision. Good transition is when you are being treated as a human being, and that you feel that your views and ambitions matter.

Young Person 3:

I didn't have a transition between secondary school and college. The school abandoned me. We contacted the college who helped with the transition, they helped me to adjust to the college, to literally feel my way around the buildings but I had to fight for everything.

Young Person 4:

I agree, finding classes in college is always a pain especially when temporary changes happen.

Young Person 5:

It was difficult for me to plan for the future because I had no idea of what life would look like long term, to envision the future and what job I wanted. So more immediate, express needs were what mattered most to me. I was interested in going to art school, but my parents weren't that interested in art, or knew what living in Glasgow would be like. My teacher took me to an independent cinema, to libraries etc to see how what it was like and give me an

idea of how I could live in a different city. This was valuable. They took the time to show me ways of life.

Young Person 6:

At my high school, I felt that I didn't have support in general from teachers but there was one teacher who helped me get to where I wanted to go. My mum knew someone at the university that I wanted to go to, who helped to look at other ways to join university, through summer school, which is something that I hadn't known about. Different contacts, not just through schools was really helpful.

Young Person 4:

What works well? Having a place on a college course before case was really helpful as it meant that there was a degree of transition, from the school. It was good enough but not good.

What could have been better about leaving school?

Young Person 2:

Some of the staff were fully aware and knew how to support young people with different needs, but not all. Autism is seen as a challenge and of course it is but treat us as human beings and do not infantilise or condescend us. We don't want to be treated differently from our peers. When you are 16 in Scotland, you have adult rights, but we can often be treated as children. We aren't oblivious to things; we see us being treated differently. It varies in different aspects.

How autism is represented, as a difficulty, rather than as a unique way of going through life, is common to lots of different ASN and is something that can be improved.

Young Person 1:

School wasn't planned the way I wanted it to be planned, I felt that there was no compassion and that you were out of the loop to a lot of what happened in school. Leaving school was great, as there was no enthusiasm when I was there.

Young Person 4:

It would be good if there hadn't been as many barriers when transitioning. There was no support from college for transitions, for instance with a lack of transport measures in place – there had been talk about pre-arranged taxis but that never happened. My needs were not understood. During the five or six years you are at school you build relationships and people understand your needs, but the college did not try to understand those needs beforehand. The lack of support led to mental health issues, and they have stuck with me ever since, maybe not always as bad as they were, but they are still there.

Young Person 3:

I tend to need a lot of support. I had a very good transition from primary to secondary, but in the last year of school, to transition to college, there was no communication with me, or with my parents. I had to advocate for myself with the college [which I didn't know how to do], to set out what I needed when I was there. The college were great in helping me but there was this gap in communication and support. I shouldn't have to advocate solely on my own, I am a young adult with opinions and ambitions and capabilities, but I still need support. I am still a vulnerable adult, so the support needs to be there.

Young Person 4:

I get that, College staff didn't speak to either my parents or school teachers and staff who worked closely with me prior to the end of my final year in secondary school.

Well, they didn't communicate with them as much as they should have, which would have helped massively when fleshing out a transitional plan.

Young Person 5:

In thinking about my own transitions, as well as other peoples (after university I worked in mental health transitions projects), no one has ever asked me, and I have never seen anyone else asked, what do I like to do? What do I want from life, what kind of person want to be? Practitioners are not given the time or the resources to find out these things – they have to focus on absolute needs. They are only focused on positive destinations in the most cynical way because they are under so much pressure to ensure that people are seen to have a “positive destination” regardless of whether it is right for them.

People should be less fussed on what a positive destination looks like for the government, or the tick box, but what it looks like for the individual.

Young Person 4:

If people don't ask you what you'd like to do, then how will you know what you want to do. The theme of positive destinations should include your long-term goals.

Young Person 6:

I left high school in 2012. I was the only wheelchair user. I don't think that they knew how to listen to me, how to understand what I needed and wanted.

I felt that they were pushing me towards college and were negative about my desire to go to university. They said that 'I would get tired; I wouldn't be able to handle it'. They didn't give me information about universities, about open days. I didn't get the support that I needed. I did go to open days, but only because my parents got that information.

I still feel like I am going through social work transitions, but they need to look at the bigger picture. They also didn't listen to my aspirations.

They wanted everyone to fit into a box, and talk about the college course intro to learning, as opposed to going to university. We need a vehicle to help people hear our aspirations, what we want to do and achieve.

I graduated in the four years I attended university, proving them wrong.

Young Person 5:

Instead of 'how do you cope with the long days, do you sleep well?' and their assumptions on what they believe 'wheelchair users can or can't do'.

Support worker 1:

One participant and their sibling are at university, but the participant's school never thought they would make it to university. Their parents had to advocate for them and get private tuition as the school didn't provide it.

Credit to their parents for doing this, not everyone's parents would be able to.

Young Person 2:

It is important that individuals are at the centre of the process.

Young Person 3:

Disabled people sadly get ignored in this transition and either the individual or parents have to advocate for them.

Young Person 4:

The admin course that I did in my 3rd year at college sticks with me as the prime moment when my needs were not being considered. The college only put me on it because they thought that my autistic brain could handle repetitive tasks when in reality that is actually quite draining. Essentially stripping away the strength of my mental health.

Part two

What kind of plans did you have when leaving school, if any?

Young Person 3:

My plan was always to go to university to study politics but the school wasn't very good at explaining the realities of how that would work so my plan changed to going to college. Your goals can change when you are better informed as part of the transition process. Schools should negotiate alternatives [to university] but my school was focused on closing the attainment gap and those students achieving the high grades needed for university.

I felt that there was a gap between school and university and that it would be too big a gap for me to jump at that point.

College was right for me in the end as I am able to negotiate my way from home to college but it was interesting how I had planned my next 5 years and then very quickly the reality of going to university may not have been possible based on friends' and sisters' experiences.

It is stressful when plans don't always go right.

Young Person 2:

I planned to learn to drive, which I have done and to do a course in science or the arts – possibly film making or journalism – I am doing biochemistry. I would like to work in medical research or in film making. [Media Education](#) is an outstanding organisation. I worked on a play which was set 100 years in the future. This allowed me to be creative and problem solve, this was really useful. Unfortunately this project ended as the staff member left and was not replaced.

Thistle Big Plan – allows you to get creative and explore those skills to help

Since leaving school I have found some things challenging. I wasn't sure if it was normal to be treated as a child even when you were 16 and 17, or if it something that I experienced because I have additional needs.

Young Person 4:

In terms of the plan - little to nothing, it was like walking over a river without a bridge, just random steppingstones. No one talked about where I wanted to go or what I wanted to do next.

Difficult and insensitive course application processes for people with ASD.

I had a comprehensive Disabled Student Support form filled in, but lecturers clearly didn't look at it which meant that there were not things in place for me, as indicated in that form, eg not having scribes for classes or assessments. I felt excluded from classroom situations. It was a really poor system.

The college wanted me to write a piece on why they were great and inclusive to be used on their website and other places. I did this, but my experience was the polar opposite to what I wrote. My experience of college was completely disjointed and lacking in support.

Not to mention when selling tickets for event organisation project in college, I was tasked to stand about with a megaphone and try to sell remaining tickets. Didn't even have a proper stall set up and it made feel really stupid. Like why would a lecturer ask someone with autism and anxiety to stand in the busiest part of the building at lunchtime of all periods, on my own with nobody else from my team to support me? If they had read my disabled student support prior, they'd have known this was the equivalent of nightmare fuel for me.

Young Person 1:

When I left school, I wanted to travel more, and that is something that I do now. The only good thing that I got from college was meeting my partner.

Entry to learning skills course, it was crap. Then I did a mainstream course but I didn't feel like the support was there. I don't want to go back to college ever again.

Young Person 6:

When I was at school, my parents supported me with all the personal care that I needed. After school I then went through the process to hire people to assist me with the support that I needed when I was leaving school. It was a really difficult process. Social work said that they had never dealt with someone like me. Because my needs were complex but because I also knew what I wanted to do and had ambitions that I shared.

I had to, and still have to, advocate for myself a lot.

Going to university was a great help as SAAS was a great support because they provided some of the money for the care I needed during the day. Social work only had to support some of my care.

I am still transitioning as I have complex social work and health needs, e.g. when I moved into my own house, and organising the 24 hour social care that I needed.

It was difficult. People tried to work together but communication was not always the best and we always had to advocate for what I needed. It has been a long journey.

Young Person 3:

I agree, that absolutely highlighted that there is a transition in everything from school and medical things. Disabled people get transitioned from child to adult services and i guess for me I was disadvantaged because i turned 16 during the height of COVID and that's when people begin your transition. I was in a sense "forgotten" about.

Young Person 5:

I am training to be a teacher and I have worked in colleges and schools. In terms of my plan when leaving school - person centred plan - the chat is dominated by education but there are so many other needs. Transition is an ongoing process; we never stop coming of age.

I didn't particularly have a plan as life isn't framed that way. I worked 12 hour shifts every day in the summer between school and university so I could have enough money to go. I was always told university is free in Scotland but when I arrived at university I met properly wealthy people for the first time. I had no idea how to manage money or sustain a lifestyle in that context. No one ever spoke to me about it. It would have been good to have support to learn how to manage money etc.

I really want to highlight that of course the transitions Bill includes people with mental health diagnoses as per the equality act. A lot of today's chat is super relevant to planning for life with mental health challenges.

In mental health we already talk about living a holistic life e.g. 5 Ways to Wellbeing or SHANAARI, how is this embedded in transitions with a focus on ACTIVE LISTENING?

Young Person 2:

You shouldn't force support on people with ASN – you need to give people the choice of having the support or not.

What should this plan look and feel like?

Young Person 1:

I would have hoped that it would have been easier to access, a smoother process, regardless of whether you left a SEN school or a mainstream school.

Young Person 4:

Not to mention, public transport at rush hour was a constant sensory overload. I was given some support and independence with funding from SAAS for transport. Didn't have to feel like a kid who needed his mother to constantly pick me up from college like my nursery and primary school days.

Many didn't bother asking me what I wanted or what I needed, not just for college but for life outside of education. Things like access to social situations. I bring up social situations because others around the same age as me didn't need to rely on their parents to take them to social situations. So why should I just because of my disability?

Young Person 3:

Its challenging when everyone just assumes that you can come out and i think teaching young disabled students how to work on their independence might also help with the transition. I was promised throughout my school career that i would be taught how to handle stress and how plans cannot always go my way, this didn't happen and i think that sometimes that schools promise certain things but do not follow through on this.

Young Person 4:

What was needed to look after my mental health encompasses proper planning + implementation of a plan that would have avoided me getting referred to psychological

services when I hit breaking point due to that feeling of abandonment by the services that could have and should have been listening and working with me.

Its why I'm glad that my parents have a guardianship, they could help me out in areas where I couldn't help myself. Though it shouldn't feel like a fight to get even a snippet of support from services, but instead a coordinated effort with a united team behind you with everybody's listening and working together to help build your success.

That guardianship was the one thing that helped keep things from falling apart completely.

In college, more often than not, I had to bring my parents into discussions because you felt I wasn't being listened to and it makes me glad we had a guardianship for that reason.

Young Person 6:

Every plan should be person centred and based on the needs and aspirations of the individual – they need to look at who can support you. I felt more supported when I was being supported for my physical disabilities rather than the learning disabilities too.

Young Person 3:

My transition was during the Covid pandemic so there were additional challenges. I would have liked to have conversations about the wider world, about moving from child to adult services, it was a big jump from someone who had rarely left the house. I would have like to talk about what they wanted to do / achieve. I think that would help other young people going through the process now.

Young Person 2:

I agree with those comments. Without properly speaking and listening to the people, you can't hold them up / support them to live the life that they want to live, not the life you presume that they want / need. By not listening to them properly, it affects people. Hearing our voices and respecting our choices.

Listening to people and not making assumptions is really important.

Young Person 5:

Many staff in mainstream schools do not consider people with mental health diagnoses within the ASN / disabilities stream of planning.

Young Person 4:

My plan should have had me at the centre, where I am right now, where I want to go and what I need to get there. We need to know there is a bridge strong enough to hold the weight of us crossing the river, not just stepping stones.

Young Person 5:

Active listening, person centred and holisticness are all well known concepts. I'm not confident everyone has the skills to listen meaningfully. People who are very experienced and maybe aren't able to suspend their knowledge in order to fully hear today's challenges. Things move so quick these days! A lot of people put their own information in first. Transitions can be more complicated for people with ASN, there are common experiences for all young people – so listening to young people and their ambitions is really importance. Person centred planning training is amazing.

What one thing?

Young Person 3:

There is a lack of proper disability awareness when handling and supporting these transitions, there is a disconnect between what people should know and what they actually know. Some teachers are coming into classrooms without any training awareness so I have regularly had to teach teachers or to reinforce what they should know. My school was "disability aware" but I had to teach my teachers how to handle my disability. I have since learned from teachers that they had no training in this area.

Young Person 2:

We are reliant on teachers. and teachers can be fearful of making mistakes, but trying their best and even failing with good intentions is better than not caring. Obviously, it is better not to make mistakes.

People need to follow through with what they promise you.

Did you feel respected when you were formulating your plan?

Young Person 3:

I attended a disabled unit within a mainstream school and I was treated like I was a child and spoken to like I was a child. They acted as if they knew more about my disability than I did and I think that they were quite dismissive of what I was saying.

They would then treat me differently around my parents when I would raise an issue and be like "well we're not doing what she's saying" making my issues feel smaller and I ended up just not going to them for support.

Young Person 1:

Students were not allowed to come to parents' evening. At parents' evening, teachers suggested that I wasn't doing their work properly because I used the spell check and other aids that I needed. But I did get positive feedback from other teachers in other subjects, recognising the work that I was doing. Some teachers did respect me and one recognised that I achieved something that they thought would not be possible.

Young Person 6:

I am still regularly spoken over, to my parents, carers or whoever I am with. When doing my plan, I would say what I wanted. Social workers would say "it isn't what you want, it is what you need." My aspirations were not listened to. I was disrespected in meetings.

Young Person 2:

It is difficult because parents should know their children well and be able to advocate for them, however, when a child is getting older the parents may not know everything about the young person, so it is vital to listen to the young person.

Young Person 4:

There are lots of time when I have felt that I wasn't respected. And I felt that some of the college lecturers treated me as more disposable. I struggled with one unit towards the end of my course and the college suggested I should just drop out, rather than support me.

Me and mum wrestled for two years for access to support through social work. Mother also brought in advocacy agency to fight my corner as well. I should not have been like that when we brought in advocacy people in senior positions that listened.

I also had a good lecturer with an erratic teaching style so I asked if they could adjust their style to be more accommodating to my needs. I just want to even the playing field.

How important is advocacy?

Young Person 1:

Never make assumptions about someone's needs.

Young Person 3:

It is important to learn to self-advocate.

I had a teacher who understood the additional needs that I have, they were reasonable with accommodations that I needed which included extra time at points etc. That was really helpful. But more people – across the teaching staff and the student body – having awareness of the needs and accommodations that maybe are needed.

Young Person 6:

I have been told in the past that there wasn't anyone able to advocate for people because I had physical disabilities rather than a learning disability, but it is exhausting so more advocates for people with physical disabilities and that it is important that we can choose our own advocates, someone that we feel understands us and can give their additional voice to what we want, not what they think we want or need.

Young Person 4:

You have to have a co-ordinated effort from all those in the plan. And think about what is needed at each step on the journey.

I had the right to be listened to, as did my mum through my guardianship. Shouldn't take an agency saying the same as us to get appropriate course of action we'd been asking for and were entitled to.

Having a Bill is all well and good, it is the funding and infrastructure in place that's key

Young Person 3:

The one thing I would definitely stress if you're focusing on education, DISABILITY AWARENESS IS KEY.

Education, Children and Young People Committee

Written Submission from Member of Divergent Influencers

January 2023

About me

My name is ----. I dropped out of school when I was 14 because of complications to do with my autism and my mental health. I returned to education in a special "second chance" school in ---- when I was 17, which my parents paid for because I didn't qualify for support. I have severe anxiety that sometimes stops me doing things I want to do and I also have a diagnosis of dyscalculia, which means I find it difficult to process information and remember instructions.

1.What worked well for you [when you were leaving school]?

Really, nothing. In the year after I left my English teacher was brilliant and let me come back once a week to see if I could get Higher English. I passed all the units that didn't involve exams, but because I couldn't take the exam I didn't get the qualification.

Individual teachers were supportive but they couldn't explain the transition process because they didn't understand or know about it either. I know that because my mum told me that at the planning meeting the teacher was asking the educational psychologist and the council's transitions worker who we needed to speak to and who should be involved.

I wasn't at the planning meeting because at that time it would have been too overwhelming for me. My mum said she didn't talk to me about it as she didn't want me to worry and she didn't realise at the time it was the only meeting we were going to have. She thought it was the first of several meetings.

I left school without any qualifications, and without any support in place.

2.What could have been better?

Literally everything!

It would have been better:

- if I had known what the process would be and how to get help.
- if I had been included in the discussions (although it would have been difficult for me at that time).
- if the council's transitions team had been able to help me. They couldn't give me any support because I was still hoping to take Highers and go to university, so I couldn't say for sure when I was going to be leaving school.
- if someone had discussed with me and my family possibilities for things to do after I left school. There were things my mum didn't find out about until I was too old to apply so I missed out.
- if there had been less of a hard cut-off, i.e. "school is now finished and that's it". I'd missed 3 years of education because of not being able to attend school from 14 to 17. It would have been good to be able to do those years when my mental health was better. It might have helped me get some qualifications.
- if qualifications didn't always depend on taking an exam. I did everything needed for Higher English, Art and History, but because I couldn't take the exam I don't have qualifications to study at a level I find interesting.

- if college or university entry depended on my academic ability rather than my paper qualifications. In both my college courses staff have asked more than once why I'm doing such a basic course. Nat 4s don't get me where I want to be.

3.What plans did you have if any?

None that I was aware of. I had no real thoughts about what I could do or what the future might look like. I expected to study something interesting at university.

4.What should this plan [for leaving school] look and feel like?

It should provide a solid foundation, so that everything you need to make something happen has been thought about - for example, how to travel, how to make an application to college, how to cope with changes. You should be able to look at the plan and recognise yourself in it - it should feel like yours and not somebody else's.

The plan should identify as many of your next steps as possible and give you confidence that they are steps on the way to something you want to do - even if it feels a bit intimidating.

It should be something you can take with you and show to anyone and they will be able to understand what the aim is and what they need to do to help you.

5.What would an ideal plan look like for you?

It would start with a goal or goals. If I can think of one myself, fine - if I can't think of one myself, it would be good to get help from people who know me to identify things I could do to keep learning and stretching myself.

It should identify clear steps for how I might reach the goal. For example, if I want to study psychology at university, what exactly do I have to do to get there from where I am now? How can I get the right qualifications now I've left school? How do I apply? How is university paid for? How would I work out what's the best course for me?

I don't mind how a plan is presented, it doesn't have to be visual or anything, I just want it to be clear and easy to follow.

What's really important is that there are no gaps. It needs to cover all the everyday practical things as well as the "big" decisions - so organising lunches, getting around without getting lost, how to ask for help. These are all things that people assume I can do easily, but actually I can't - so if these aren't in the plan then I won't know how to do them.

Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill

Session with Parents / Carers, ARC Scotland

January 2023

Sue Webber (Convener) – what worked well for your young person? What could have worked better?

Parent 2 – what worked well – a college course for young people with ASD and son was signed up to that – they told him it was the best thing for him – he didn't feel listened to – there wasn't a proper plan in place – it was over to me – just the college course and over to me. I was invited to a meeting with the head of the course a few weeks before it started and most of the parents/carers in that room were upset, concerned, because they were all saying "what do we do?" "who do we get to speak to about what concerns they may have?" but there was nothing, nothing at all. It was clear there would be no working partnership, we were there to be told about the coursework only. Even though I had guardianship, when things ran into trouble with people not fully understanding my son's disability and needs, I had to insist there was a meeting called where his stepdad and I were able to support him as his voice wasn't being listened to – and that was a course for young people with ASD. My son was not listened to and his mental health suffered as a result. His voice was not being heard.

Did anyone ask what your son wanted? – No. He was asking me and I couldn't answer anything. I had a fantastic relationship with the school – but they said we deal with the college, not you – and I reminded them I had a guardianship order in place and all I got then was an outline of what the course was, not an explanation for my son. The big thing about it was that he was transported to school because of his autism and sensory issues – our understanding was that as our son's disability hadn't changed, he would continue to receive this essential support. I found out the week before my son was due to start that this was not the case. I contacted social work, the school, no one cared. My son didn't want me to take him as he wanted the independence he had been used to at school through having this support in place. However no one took his ongoing needs into consideration, there was no planning for this young person who could not travel on public transport, was supervised 24/7 due to his disability and sensory issues, and also his lack of social skills which made him extremely vulnerable - at that time he could not even go out in the community unaccompanied. The responsibility for transport came back to me as a parent and this removed a huge part of his everyday independence. This was huge for my son, his mental health suffered and he also said on many occasions he felt he was a burden, he repeated this to health professionals.

Parent 4 – there are many transitions – not just when they leave secondary school – children are all different and transitions happen at different times. My son joined the SCOTS [*School-College Opportunities to Succeed*] Course at Forth Valley College – particularly aimed at helping people transition into college – and he was able to try

lots of different courses. That worked well – but we found out about this ourselves. There's a wonderful person who does transitions in Falkirk – but she wasn't there then. My son left school at 16 – but because of that – I felt you slip through the system as people expect you to stay until S6. It fell apart when he got to college as he wasn't on a supported course – and some people on the course didn't understand neurodiversity – and he was assaulted by another student – and put into car park on his own to call me to collect him. It is indicative of the lack of support – and the building blocks required for transition. He then ended up leaving college - we couldn't put him back there. The employment training unit in Falkirk has been brilliant – I found him a job and he's been there a year.

Parent 1 – our situation was different. We moved back to the UK when my daughter was 11. We had no choice but to put our daughter into a private school as we didn't have a residential address in the UK. I had no knowledge of transitions plans – or transitioning – we had no contact with local council about my daughter having a disability. All the support came from the school – and from me – talking to the school to adapt things to her needs. I didn't find out about transitions plans until my daughter was at university. We had ongoing support from the paediatric audiology unit throughout school but in the final year(s) my daughter had her radio aid provision taken away because of a change in funding policy – and we had to have one lent to us by someone else – it's an essential piece of kit for any deaf student at school. The school supported her brilliantly and she got into university and that was the best thing that could have happened – and that was when the formal support happened – and she was picked up and supported for the whole time – from technology to mental health support. What's important is that often people see just a disability – but a lot of her needs have been around mental health needs. Young people's needs also change as you go through transitions – from school, to university to moving into employment. University went very well initially, but unfortunately, the last couple of years didn't go well – she continues to have mental health issues and has not worked since university. She is now 25 and all that support that would have been available before just doesn't exist. I spent my entire life going into schools and explaining what my daughter's deafness meant, what people needed to accommodate – and she did too. From the age of 7 or 8 years old, my daughter was advocating for her own needs and giving talks to classes on deafness. The informal support has been excellent – but if would have been useful to know there was formal support out there – but you spend your life being so busy putting out little fires – that you run out of time to look for the information and support that might be there to help you.

Can you talk about your role in the transitions process – the Bill believes there are systemic and cultural problems in the process – and where it works well it is often down to individuals or organisations. Were you treated with respect or were you left feeling condescended/an adjunct to all this?

Parent 4 – it's a postcode lottery and we've become the CEOs of our children. A semi-professional psychologist, local councillor, semi-professional teacher.... – you have to be so socially aware – reading the room the whole time. You spend a lot of time going into school and teaching other people – how to work with your young

person – *[the feeling was that people were]* making out it was your child that was the problem. Every time I spoke about it, though, I would always have someone come up to me afterwards and say “I know what that’s like. I’ve felt like that.” People often don’t know that they are not listening. You need to feel you are listened to – but you are not – sometimes you are coming up against a brick wall. I didn’t know what an educational psychologist was until I found one – and then we went to CAMHS and that wasn’t a good experience.

Parent 1 – one of the things I came up against again and again was pre-conceived ideas of what you were going to get with a child with hearing impairment – and every time I would have to explain that each child is different and the way that deafness affects them is very different. We were very lucky – we had people who listened to us – but yeah, fighting that every time is very tiring.

Parent 2 – from health, education, social care, higher education, doctors – it’s a continual battle. For my son, for example, when he was sitting 5th year exams, he was extremely stressed. He was asking “what do they expect of me?” because no one was telling us so we couldn’t explain to him. I had to end up going and getting information from the National Autistic Society and taking it into the school. I had a great relationship with the school – but thought they knew best, and they didn’t. I told them you need to give him a timetable as this is different from doing English language on a day to day basis in school – this was exam preparation. As an autistic person learning new things he needed to know clearly what he was required to study, how his week and month would look, if staff weren’t available as planned to work with him he needed a visual plan of when they would deliver the lesson. And if we hadn’t done that – he wouldn’t have been able to sit the exam, never mind pass it. His mental health had taken a beating. This isn’t just about my son, it’s about other young people. We had the same with college, they put him on an admin course as they thought he’d like repetitive tasks – but he hated it. Lecturer suggested that he drop part of the course – a module around finance as he struggled with numbers - but only found out later that would mean he would fail the whole course if he did. We worked with him – his stepdad and PA asked the college what our son had to learn, they broke it down in a way he would understand and left him to get on and he practised with past paper after past paper – and he passed the module. However, if my son had listened to the professionals and we hadn’t stepped in to support him, he we would have wasted a year as dropping a compulsory unit meant failing the course.

Graeme Dey (Committee Member) – lack of evidence from organisations – or collective understanding of what young people might need. Any positive examples of where schools/orgs have learned from those experiences?

Parent 2 – my son wrote down his experiences at college as part of a project to write a magazine article showcasing why someone would like to study at the college, this was for his HNC in his 5th year in the college. At the time he was feeling discriminated against and not listened to. We asked to meet with the learning support department and our son handed over one piece of paper – and they said “this is great” – and he said “this is what it should be like” - and then he handed them another piece of paper – and he said “but this is the reality” - the learning support

department manager immediately apologised to our son for everything he was going through and their part in letting him down and they said “what can we do to make this better?” They listened to him – and we all worked together to come up with a plan that was reviewed on a regular basis, they put proper plans in place to communicate with our son and us, we all worked together and focused on his needs, that's what helped him get through the course. Without the support of his parents/carers, no one was listening to his voice.

Parent 6 – because my son is one of the older young people – when he first started school they were just starting small [*additional support*] units in primary schools – but the parents there put in a petition saying they didn't want their children mixing with children with additional support needs. The unit ended up being in a different place and the people there were very welcoming. We only had social work involved for pre-transition at 14 years old – but we didn't have anyone else until later – at college. We had someone in learning disability unit – who really helped – I thought I had some understanding from my own [*professional*] role – but then I had to walk in those shoes myself. I am never “just a parent” – sometimes it made it worse having that insight. I set up parents' group in my local Carer's Centre. You learn more from people going through things than from a room full of professionals. My son attends a day service outside of our local area – 2 days a week – we are fortunate in our local authority to have a dedicated transitions co-ordinator – and they are setting up a transitions team. As parents – we shouldn't be the ones to share all the information – someone somewhere should have the responsibility for that – e.g. speech therapist says this, physiotherapist says this – they don't speak to each other, so we have to do it. As a parent it is hard to go through. Occasionally they would ask my son's views – but they would ask us as his parent guardians – hardly anyone asked for my daughter's views as his sibling – it had an impact on her schooling and it affected her. He is still living with us and hopefully will be for a while – it's hard to have that fight.

Parents 3 – we are at a different stage – my son is in 5th year – has autism and a learning disability. I am a home educator for our younger son who has severe mental impairment and complex needs. I am on a more positive note tonight – and it is great to hear from others who have been through it and are still surviving. We have had a really good experience – the transitions co-ordinator at our Local Authority is amazing, but it is a post-code lottery. We have had our first transitions meeting for our son – and we were very nervous – we didn't know what we were going into – we had all these questions, but the majority of the questions got answered that day for us. They gave us an e-mail for any further questions. We asked about independent travel – he has never been out of the house without me or his dad – so he is going to work with a transport co-ordinator and other young people – to explore different routes. The first transition meeting was really positive and they did listen to our views and at the end of the meeting – they got our son in – and asked him his views – and they included him and that was really nice. I think the big part of the meeting for me was that it was very respectful. I had heard all these horror stories and I was dreading it – but it was very good. It was a small group of people who knew our son – and they knew his needs, but they also knew his strengths. They also talked about a possible work placement – with a small group of

people – at the hospital. We were at the right place, at the right time, with the right people. Every authority should have these people [*transitions co-ordinator*]. The only thing I would say is that there will only be two big formal meetings [*around my son's transition*] – maybe an extra meeting might be better – to try and get all the information in one go [*is challenging*]. Our younger son is home educated – he is 14 years old – we've just started a transition process for him (there is no formal process for children who are home-educated) – but we've been reassured that he won't go under the radar.

Parent 4 – Project SEARCH [*an internship programme, supporting young people with additional needs in gaining skills and experience to move into employment*] runs out of Forth Valley Royal Hospital – SERCO supports it – my son ended up on that – got an interview half way through and got another job – but was allowed to graduate. You need people who do good practice – if we did GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) we wouldn't need this Bill. We need to see the people who are working well – and grow what they are doing. The school has done an incredible job. Find the people who know what they are doing – and get them to do them more.

Parent 2 – Our son did his Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award at school and thought never again – After completing his HNC my son couldn't continue with his higher education journey due to barriers and mounting challenges in college. It had affected his mental health terribly. During Covid he saw an advert and, with the right support from us, was able to meet with the DofE leader and enter the Gold Duke of Edinburgh programme. His support worker came with him on the expeditions – and he successfully passed his Gold DoE. It built his confidence back up – organisations like that are vital.

Stephen Kerr (Committee Member) – **you've mentioned the Transitions Co-ordinator at your Local Authority and that everyone needs someone like her – can you expand on what it is she does to make you say that?**

Parent 4 – with my parent hat on, I didn't know she existed. With my school hat on, I discovered her and now all of our kids have transitions plans. Her enthusiasm, dedication – if she has to work until 10pm, she will, she will track down the right person – it's her passion. But she was on a yearly contract – so it's hard to attract someone to a role [*if it could be temporary*] where you can't get a mortgage etc. - so it's a worry.

Parent 5 – [*the Transitions Co-ordinator is*] working across children's and adult services – the fact she can go across those two areas – and cross that boundary – that's absolutely crucial.

Parent 6 – there's only one Transitions Co-ordinator [*in Scotland in a role like this*] – the local authority I know of may have someone in the children with disabilities team who may help – but when they come into adult services – transitions records will be sent across – but whenever they come into the Learning Disability Team – funding restrictions mean that they want confirmation the person has a Learning Disability. They then go into the generic teams in adult services. Nurses may not work with a young person if they don't have a confirmed diagnosis; social work may not work

with them for another reason. The Transitions Co-ordinator has a background in Learning Disability nursing and is very approachable – and she takes on questions and finds out answers. She is attending *[transitions meetings]* from age 14 all the way through and following it through – then they go onto a different worker. Sharing information *[is an issue]* - children and families, GP records, social work records, someone from education – and even the systems don't speak to each other to share information. Or it can't be recorded or it gets lost in translation...it's hard as a parent and the young people themselves. They find people that work with them – and approaches that work well – but then the worker changes.

Parent 2 – why can't we have a Transitions Co-ordinator in all Local Authorities? Principles into Practice – the framework is there – do we need to rewrite this? We know what is working well, so why not share good practice? For me, if you have evidence there – then follow that up and look at how to make that work across Local Authorities across Scotland. Every young person is entitled to have that kind of support. It is about people and it is clearly about people working together – why not have that happen?

Ruth – Bill proposals re plan in the Bill – what are your thoughts on the timing of the plan and the suggestion it should last until young people are 26 years old?

Parent 1 – most of us have young people in their mid-20s – so the “when does it end?” is a big question – for me that transition from child to adult services has got to be captured and carried through for that entire time. Their needs from education, college, university, jobs, should be carried forward and shared – so that people are not starting from scratch each time. For us, transitioning from paediatric audiology services to adult audiology services has been a complete failure - despite the good intentions. The transition from paediatric audiology started from 16/17 years old. At the meeting, there was a big table of people there so that meant my daughter couldn't follow what was going on. A very clear transitions plan was created by paediatric audiology – but none of what was in the plan happened beyond the first year. There is a lack of knowledge of Deaf young people in adult services – The young people have grown up with audio tech and they know it like the back of their hands – but the young audiologist *[my daughter met with]* didn't know how to set up the tech – so my daughter had to tell them how to do it. The audiologist then had to refer back to paediatric audiology to ask how to programme my daughter's hearing aids. Information in the transition plan was passed on from paediatric audiology, it just wasn't followed.

Parent 2 – the proposals for change – thank you for listening to us as parent carers and wanting to hear our voices and our experiences. What concerns me greatly is I can't see where we are mentioned in the proposed changes, yet we are the people who are supporting our young people continually. My son continues to need support – we are trying to give him more and more skills. I won't be here forever and we have to make sure we help him to learn things about day to day life – so he can learn how to use a washing machine, for example. I am deeply disappointed that we are not mentioned anywhere in there. There are services across the board who are trying *[to support transitions]* – and the resources are not there.

Parent 5 – we tend to look at transitions at the moment and assume young people are going to go through it in a particular way and meet certain targets – it's a conveyor belt. *[In reality]* young people develop at different stages and what someone might be able to do at 16/17, may not be right for another young person until 22 yrs old. One of the things that is a challenge is recognising that because of my daughter's mental health issues – she wasn't able to complete school – and a lot of things because of that, meant she wasn't able to engage with certain services - but when she was ready *[to engage]*, she was too old for some of those services. She seemed to fall through the cracks, and there wasn't a way back. You feel a bit on your own – but beyond school, if you haven't got a social worker involved, then falling through the cracks in your early 20s is scary – as that's when you really start to realise as a parent you are on your own – you don't know where to go for help.

Parent 4 – my son's mental health – every day is a challenge – what has worked really well, the ILF *[Independent Living Fund]* Scotland Transition Fund allowed him to access Kung Fu – they listened to him – he's now an ILF ambassador – he has a voice - and the fund for me was vital. There are a lot of parent/carers out there *[accessing the fund]* themselves – but getting the fund into schools is vital – and that needs resources to do that. It is life-changing for so many people – it helped my son to evidence his Duke of Edinburgh award. Another initiative *[redacted to avoid identifying the young person]* has given young people the chance to be heard – listening to young people's voices is essential.

Parent 4 – ILF – I found it by accident – can be used for driving lessons/motability. Siblings/families need to be involved. I am not going to be here forever. I had to go to GP to say it was me who was cracking up, not my young person, before we got support.

Parent 1 – I think ILF finishes at 25.

Parents 3 – we've not applied to ILF yet as our son is just 16. Information is key – you shouldn't have to go to one place for this info, another place for that – it should all be pulled together under one umbrella. You want that knowledge asap as you want to try and plan for the future as much as you can – even if you know things will change along the way. The Transitions Co-ordinator was great for us – she was one person who gave us so much information. It's the not knowing that's scarier than knowing the worst scenario. ILF sounds absolutely fantastic – we're looking at the forms for our son. It should be extended beyond 25. There should be something beyond 25.

Follow-up information

We welcome the interest of the ECYP Committee in our views and experiences as parents and carers of young people with Additional Support Needs.

Following the evening session on Monday 30 January, we felt the constraints of time meant we did not explore some points as fully as we would have liked. We have therefore set these out briefly below, and would ask they be shared with the members of the Committee as part of our evidence from the session.

Thank you.

What good practice looks like

The biggest difficulty is not that we don't know what good practice looks like, but that it isn't happening. Good practice:

- **Should recognise and support ALL disabilities and additional support needs.** There are many young people with additional needs, but without a learning disability, who nevertheless need support to make a smooth transition to adulthood.
- **Should apply to ALL education settings.** There should be consistent information and support, whether the young person is in mainstream; special school; private school; or home educated.
- **Should be flexible.** Systems and processes are often rigid and don't fit real life. We need flexibility around funding, access to support, and availability of support so it fits the young person, not the other way round. One size does not fit all.
- **Should be consistent.** There should not be a "postcode lottery" where some young people receive a good service and others don't. If the needs are the same, the support should be the same.
- **Is about equal rights for our young people.** Legislation already exists that is not being applied properly or consistently. This does not adequately support equal rights.
- **Ensures young people and families have the information they need.** Checking awareness of benefits and finance (including self directed support); guardianship; other entitlements such as bus, rail and cinema passes; practical advice; listening: these cost nothing, but can make a huge difference to young people and families.
- **Listens to young people and families.** They will tell you what works and what doesn't, and what they need. Requests for help are too often not being heard.
- **Should support parents and carers.** Parents should be entitled to support and helped to access it so they can better support their young person, especially when they are expected to "pick up the pieces" or plug essential gaps in support.
- **Gets the simple things right.** Take a holistic approach: transitions involve more than just leaving school. It's about building a life that works.

Our views on the Transitions Bill

- **Feels like another "one size fits all" approach.** No mention of different education settings, flexible approaches, or provision for all additional support needs.
- **What happens if the Bill's provisions are not met?** Services already fall short of their legislative duties. Reporting annually to Parliament will not automatically help families ensure they actually receive the services they are entitled to.
- **Does not mention parents and carers.** We hold a huge amount of knowledge about our young people and their needs, and have to pick up the pieces if things go wrong. The Bill offers nothing to support the role of parents and carers, help us carry out our role, or address our stresses and concerns.
- **Transitions in health care do not feature in the Bill.** These will be crucial for many young people, not only those with complex needs.
- **Will not address the shortage of services/resources.** Vital services proven to work, such as advocacy, continue to be underfunded or cut. If we can't develop what is already working well and implement it more widely, more legislation is unlikely to achieve this.
- **Could absorb valuable time and resource.** Will the Bill become a useful excuse to pause or halt progress? Will the money spent on its implementation be tracked, and if so, how? We believe knowledge mapping, funding and resourcing should be worked out before legislation, because if not there is no point in passing a law.

We would like to see:

- **Good practice developed consistently across all areas that impact transitions.** This includes local authorities, colleges, universities, employability services, health care and all other settings that prepare young people for adult life. Follow the things that are already working well.
- **More equitable access to funding and services.** Universities and colleges can access funding, e.g. for learning aids, counselling and travel, but similar support is not there for young people studying at a lower level or entering employment. This level of support also usually ends very abruptly at the end of the course, even though the need may not have changed and a young person requires help to take their next steps.
- **Funding and resources directed to developing what is proven to work.** This is a more efficient use of resources in the short term, and more likely to reduce the chance of a crisis further down the line.
- **More information events aimed at parents and carers.** This could include workshops, transitions "fairs", and more opportunities to network with other parents to tackle isolation and increase awareness.
- **The flexibility to spread transitions out over time.** It doesn't serve young people or families well when everything has to happen at the same time. For example, being able to remain in some childrens' services to age 21 would be beneficial for some young people.

- **Better training for professionals.** Skills, knowledge and understanding needed.
- **Services that work together and an ongoing commitment to making things better.** From senior management to frontline services, we would like to see buy-in to new ways of communicating and working together.

Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill

Note of session at Buchanan High School.

Part one – background information regarding how the secondary school works with its young people to prepare them for life after school.

The local authority is looking at developing a transitions strategy, which is out to consultation with parents and pupils at the moment. However, a lot of work already takes place in school.

The approach to transitions in this school is to look at helping its young people on to sustainable positive destinations.

There is a big team involved in transitions – which includes the young person, their parent / carer, Principal teacher or Depute Head (depending on whether the young person is in S4 or S5/6), a transition social worker, Skills Development Scotland, North Lanarkshire Council Supported Enterprise Team, local college, locality support services and school nurses. The main team around the young person is consistent so they really get to know them over a period of time.

The schools start its transitions process / preparations in S4 – even though most children opt to stay to S6.

This is quite a long-term approach which begins with the young people being asked what do they want to do? And then the team works to support the ideas that they have for themselves. They always work with an option A and an option B. They also work to give each pupil leaving school a plan for 2 years...so that all young people have meaningful options, not just for immediately following school but for the two years following school.

It was stressed that, at all points, the young people are supported and are asked what they want / think.

During the discussion, the programme [Project Search](#) was highlighted. This is a course offered at many colleges which has placements as part of it, in this case hospital-based placements. There are certain requirements of the young people, for instance, they have to be an independent traveller, however, if they aren't, they can be supported to develop that skill.

Students select three areas across the hospital that they are interested in, for example admin / portering / canteen / blood bank, and have placements in each of the three, then they pick their best, and have a six month placement there. If they are successful and a job is available at the end of the course / placement, they can get a job.

It was noted, that although the transition work begins in S4, there is also pre-S4 prep work done, on a multi-agency basis and involving the young people and their parents.

There is also a lot of work done by the school to build up networks with other agencies and employers. The school looks at what is needed in the local community, to help identify opportunities that could lead to jobs. The school has worked with local partners including MacTaggart and Volvo. This also means that the school is looking at local resources that

can possibly be levered into the school. McTaggart's offers a CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) Construction course in school half a day each week for a session. The pupils involved undertake an SQA Health & Safety Award and their CSCS card which is essential for working on site. Construction is a growth industry with jobs available and the school has targeted this area because of these facts. A teacher is also being trained – undertaking the CSCS card to enable her to deliver this course from next session.)

The young people are introduced to vocational learning / training / experiences in S1 (through Enterprise activities and Developing the Young Work force classes which are timetabled) and this is developed and expanded during their time at school, to ensure that they can develop skills and qualities over time. S4 pupils have one week's work experience as do S5 pupils. S6 pupils have one day a week work experience with Glenboig Development Trust. While there, they can try 10 different work areas, including horticulture, to see what they like best.

There is a lot of collaboration between everyone involved, which has been built up over time by the team in the school, to deliver this approach which also means that the young people are building up momentum as they move through the school years.

The approach has been successful, as the school's outcomes prove – which are well above the national average.

The school is always working to expand on the experience it can provide for young people. Explaining that it has been difficult to organise placements in a retail environment to give young people interested in that area with relevant experience, the school is developing a shop which will sell surplus food donated from partners. This will allow the school to sell food cheaply to the community, but also provide young people with experience of stocking shelves, using tills and working with customers. This has been made possible by International Beverage as we won their Spirit of the Local Community Award of £10,000.

Asked about the work that they do to support transitions, the Home Link School Worker responded that, although the post is new, they work to encourage parental involvement from as early as possible, to build relationships and trust with parents. They explained that they invited parents to be in the school on the same day that the young people coming up to S1, on transition day.

They also link with other agencies and partners, to help parents and carers build up their social skills and boost their confidence / self-esteem so that they aren't as intimidated by the idea of engaging with the school / services. They are also looking at what is available in the community, to give parents opportunities to have different experiences to again build confidence.

They explained that they were looking to bring / involve parents in, particularly those that are quite isolated, to encourage their views / giving confidence to be involved.

Asked whether there is enough flex / experience in the system to be able to respond to the specific needs of each child, it was explained that the social worker is at every transition meeting. They know the situation and the particular challenges that a family can be facing, and they aren't just supporting the young people but can be offering support / assistance to their parents too. For instance, there can be a tension if a family in receipt of benefits would lose that, depending on what their child wants to do. The parent wants their child to make the best choice for them but in reality that might mean that the family could be in real difficulty, particularly in the current economic climate. In such cases, the team around the

child, including their teachers and social worker, has tried to work out alternative paths and options.

The school makes a lot of effort to bring people in, including the Tackling Poverty Team, to support their families, particularly in the current economic circumstances.

It was highlighted that the local authority has recently been recruiting family engagement workers, for each cluster, to help support families with these wider issues. Some have been recruited already and the recruitment is still ongoing.

It was noted that, for a lot of young people with Additional Support Needs, a concern for their families is whether to go for guardianship / power of attorney etc. The social workers recognise that transitions, including this question, is a difficult process for the parents, at times, even more than the younger people so a lot of the support is offered to the parents.

When asked how the school measures the impact of this investment in the young people and their families, which is both time and resource-intensive. The actual measuring – what data is collected etc - is more of a question for the local authority or Skills Development Scotland, however, from a school perspective, although intensive, it is built into the cycle / calendar of the school year, and part of the school's working practice. It was also noted that schools are always looking at costs. They can't rely on always getting SDS funding, so more reliable funding is important. It was highlighted that almost all of the young people had applied for support from the [ILF \[Independent Living Fund\]](#). The Deputy Headteacher also holds a 'clinic' on a Wednesday morning to assist parents with applications for ILF.

It was suggested that building in the time / cycle to support vocational training / experiences, to effectively give all young people transitional support, would be positive, to help young people figure out what they want to do next. Recognising the significant numbers in mainstream schools, it was suggested that it could be trialled in mainstream schools, with Christmas Leavers. North Lanarkshire Council already has a Christmas Leaver Programme which some pupils buy into but by connecting this to a comprehensive transition process, the school feel the results would be more productive for young people.

It was highlighted that for young people, post school, support comes from local authority. The purpose of this transitional support from social workers working within schools, is that it helps to bring young people into adult services [or their awareness] at an earlier stage so that there isn't a gap.

It was pointed out that the onus is still on the young people and the family to know about the services. It was also noted that the social worker team dedicated to this school / transitions role is very small and each social worker has a lot of young people to support. However, it was explained that when a need is identified, the social worker would delegate / link to other teams for the specific support, rather than delivering it themselves.

School staff also play a role in sharing a lot of information with parents, notifying them about benefit entitlements and holding events in the school / support families to make applications.

Part two – session with young people

What are you going to do when you leave school in June?

Every young person had a different goal. Some were going to college, one to do an ICT course and another to do a link course – with an interest in sports and teaching.

One young person wanted to do an apprenticeship in plumbing.

Other young people wanted to start working, one in hospitality, one in joinery and another in construction and they had been working to achieve their CSCS card.

Who has helped you to get ready to prepare for leaving school?

All of the young people highlighted that their teachers and school staff had helped them to get ready, and many mentioned their families.

They said that they were helped to plan and supported in what they wanted to do. One young person said that this meant ensuring that they were on the right classes in school. Another was helped by the school, and the company that they had a placement with, to get ready for their next steps.

How have they helped you?

Young Person 1: Teachers have helped to think of a course and find what would suit me.

Also in terms of getting ready to leave school.

Young Person 2: Teacher and my job coach helped me to do work experience. It has been good to learn new things that I can use, for example stocking shelves.

Young Person 3: Teachers play a part in preparing us with money handling in maths. Job coaches have also helped. Having different experience of working in gardens and in cafes, and then an experience to learn plumbing has helped me find what I want to do.

Young Person 4: It has been helpful to listen to teachers' advice but they also gave me support to achieve what I wanted.

Young Person 5: All the teachers in the school helped.

Young Person 6: All the teachers and job coaches have helped me to get the right work experience, for instance seeing different aspects of a construction site to see what it is like in a more realistic environment.

Young Person 1: My teacher has helped to build my confidence and develop my independence.

The draft law says you should have a plan before you are 16 years old and that the plan should last until you are 26 years old. Do you think that this is the right amount of time to have a plan? If not, should the plan last for a shorter/longer time?

Young Person 4: It should start earlier, around 14, to give more time before you do the transition. 26 feels too old so maybe 20.

Young Person 1: I think maybe 15 – 21. Start a bit earlier so that you have time in case you want to leave school earlier but end by 21 so you have time for a developed plan but you aren't being restrained later / older in life.

Young Person 6: I agree, 15 – 21. 26 feels too old. You can plan stuff out before then.

Young Person 3: I agree on 15 – 21. It would be good to start earlier as it would help with picking options in 3rd year, would be more involved in the final decision.

All the young people agreed that being able to dip into the support would be more useful than ongoing / overarching the whole time.

Are there things that you are worried about?

All of the young people said that they were looking forward to the future.

How do you feel? Are you supported and knowing what you want to achieve for their future?

Yes, but some people leave it too late to decide, as schools don't have the right opportunities to develop skills and understand what they want to achieve / do in life.

Some people who are at other schools aren't getting the chance to find out what they want to do.

At the end of the day, we want you to feel respected and in control of your own future. Do you?

All of the young people emphatically said "Yes, definitely."

At times when you are feeling uncertain, who do you go to when you feel that way?

All of the young people who responded said that they would go to a teacher.

Who would you go to outside, that you could rely on?

Young Person 3: I'm going on a Life skills course at college, which will give me experience and placements but if I don't like it, I can do something else.

Young Person 1: Could go to mum.

What should be in a transitions plan?

Young Person 3: More opportunities, more courses and jobs.

Young Person 1: A dedicated person who you can talk to / who could help you and advise you.

Young Person 6: Different work experience opportunities to help you know what you want to do. Other schools could offer these experiences to young people.

Annexe D

Fife Council

Response from Service Manager for SW Disabilities team

The questions / issues which the Committee will be considering for this session are as follows:

Current experiences

- What are the key issues that disabled young people face as they move out of school/children's services and access adult services?
 - Young People and their families in Fife have indicated to us that the key issue for them is uncertainty about what service provision will look and feel like once they make the transition to adult services.
- How are young people and (where appropriate) their families views taken account during the transitions process?
 - In Fife, families are invited to the multiagency transition meetings for the child/young person. These are ordinarily hosted by the child's school with invitations sent to the team around the child and Adult Social Work.
 - We have a very small number of children with a disability who are looked after. For these children, transition is discussed at their reviews and Adult Social Work are invited to attend.
- How well do services collaborate and co-ordinate to support individuals?
 - In Fife there is a partnership approach to supporting children and young people with the transition to adulthood. Oversight is provided by a multi-agency group with representatives from Children and Families Social Work, Adult Social Work, Education and Health. This aims to ensure that Adult Social Work are aware of the young people who are likely to transition to their service.
- How do you measure success in terms of a young person's transition to adult services?
 - Planning for both children and adults in Fife is person centred and outcome focused. Success for a person using services is likely to be how well they have been supported to achieve their desired outcomes.
 - For the partners involved in transition, success may be seen as an outcome focused child's plan being superseded by an outcome focused plan for a young adult.

The Bill

- What are your views on whether a national transitions strategy would support more consistent approaches and better outcomes for young people?
 - Section 1(2)(d) of the Bill would bring consistency by specifying actions or arrangements. Whether that automatically brings better outcomes is not necessarily a given; good outcomes tend to be a product of good plans which are appropriately resourced.
- How do the proposals in the Bill fit with the current legislative landscape?
 - There is no mention of the National Care Service in the explanatory notes for the Bill.
 - Fife is currently one of the GIRFE pathfinder areas, with a focus on transitions between children's and adult's services. The ambition is that, for people who use services, **services feel seamless and coordinated and people feel in control around the care they receive**. The GIRFE pathfinder work potentially offers an opportunity for the Bill to be informed by focused activity around service delivery.
- Should local authorities take the lead on planning transitions?
 - The responsibility should be shared. Local authorities are well placed, through the provision of education and Children and Families Social Work, to identify children who may need care and support as adults. However, there may be some children who are known to Health and not the local authority.
 - Service delivery to young people – as stated in s10(a) of the bill - is likely to be delivered by a Health and Social Care Partnership so it is imperative that they are party to the creation of plans that they will subsequently deliver.
- How should/can local authorities identify children and young people eligible for a transitions plan?
 - As mentioned previously, local authorities are not the only public service who work with children with a disability.
 - The answers to the questions on current experiences give practical examples of how we in Fife identify children and young people who are likely to transition from children's to adult services.

Colleges Scotland

Additional Information following attendance at Education, Children and Young People Committee meeting 8th February 2023

Thank you for inviting me to the committee.

We requested this information from the Scottish Funding Council

Below are the figures noted.

It is also necessary to point out the school link figures below (FT FE) demonstrates what has been recorded as a title of 'school link', this does not reflect school pupils undertaking college courses without the name 'School link' for example School Pupils undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships, Highers delivered in colleges, therefore it is rather difficult to provide you with data on people with disabilities who complete their school/college programme and progress to a college course. The data below demonstrates accurately the number of students with disabilities who entered college who were not on a school link programme

FTFE denotes Full-time Further Education (SCQF Levels 1 -6)

FTHE denotes Full-time Higher Education (SCQF Levels 7 – 10)

- Denotes no school link at this level

Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me

PI Outcomes for students in Scotland's colleges declaring a disability, by mode and level of study and school link status, 2020-21

| Mode and Level of Study | PI Outcome | Not school link | Not School Link % | School link | School Link % |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
| FTFE | Completed successfully | 6,533 | 59.6% | 209 | 55.4% |
| | Early Withdrawal | 785 | 7.2% | 16 | 4.2% |
| | Completed Partial Success | 1,387 | 12.6% | 61 | 16.2% |
| | Further Withdrawal | 2,262 | 20.6% | 91 | 24.1% |
| | All | 10,967 | | 377 | |
| FTHE | Completed successfully | 4,002 | 68.5% | * | * |
| | Early Withdrawal | 232 | 4.0% | * | * |
| | Completed Partial Success | 699 | 12.0% | * | * |
| | Further Withdrawal | 912 | 15.6% | * | * |

The Donaldson Trust

Additional information following attendance at Education, Children and Young People Committee meeting 8th February 2023

Below is more specific detail related to the example I gave last week. The context of this example was related to the barriers accessing further education. The point I was trying to express was that barriers can exist pre transition and this example highlights the challenges that exist when trying to achieve qualifications to access specific courses. In this case where the points are listed below, the pupil this applies to wishes to pursue a career in sport – which in essence could be very broad but without a PE qualification is now very narrow and limiting. The stress and impact on this situation not only for the pupil but their family is significant. This has made an already challenging time (prelims and exams) even more distressing.

- 1) The SQA marking criteria is rigid for the purposes of National 5 and Higher PE assessments.
- 2) Disabled children are 'guided' to take specific sporting choices for these assessments to fit in with the SQA marking criteria as 'reasonable adjustments' cannot be accommodated in every sport offered within the curriculum and exam menu.
- 3) Disabled children cannot follow the sport that they enjoy for the purposes of assessment within PE
- 5) These restrictions impact on the child's well-being, in particular self-esteem and belief that they can pursue a sport-based career in the future.
- 7) The impact on parents at the prospect of challenging a governing body such as the SQA is extremely daunting.

Feedback from the relevant parties suggest that having subject matter experts on the chosen sport who can categorise "reasonable adjustment" and implement into the appropriate assessment criteria would be meaningful.

In addition to above another example would be the coordination and support of children and young people post discharge from hospital who have experienced serious mental health event and present back at school without a coordinated multi-disciplinary meeting to implement the appropriate support plan and risk assessment.

The man I supported to access University did not wish to disclose that he was autistic as did not want to be treated differently.