

Additional Support Needs - Transition Planning Guidance for Education Settings

Introduction

Good transition planning helps children and young people to feel happy, safe, and secure during these times of change. Times of transition can be daunting for any child or young person and their parents/carers, but for children and young people with additional support needs, transition at times, can be more complex.

There are many different types of transitions for children and young people. There are significant key transitions such as beginning primary or secondary school or transitioning to life beyond school, as well as many micro-transitions within these educational settings. The purpose of this transition guidance is to support planning for and meeting additional support during the significant key transitions into and out of education provisions across Aberdeenshire.

Planning and Decision-Making Framework

Children, young people and their families should be at the centre of all planning and decision-making.

Practice must also be taken in accordance with the following legislation and policies:

1. The legislative presumption of mainstream education for children and young people with additional support needs in accordance with the [Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act](#).
2. The [Additional Support for Learning \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(as amended 2009\)](#), which requires Education Authorities to identify and assess children and young people with additional support needs, review the additional support needs identified and the adequacy of the support provided.
3. [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) national and local policy, which places an expectation on other agencies to work in partnership with education to ensure that children and young people's holistic needs are identified, assessed, planned for and met.
4. [The Equality Act 2010](#) which places a duty on schools and Education Authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation of learners with protected characteristics and to actively promote equality of opportunity. This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and providing auxiliary aids and services. There is a duty 'to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the substantial disadvantage' to a disabled person caused by a provision, criterion or practice applied by, or on behalf of, a school or by the absence of an auxiliary aid or service.
5. The [Children and Young People Act \(2014\)](#) which places a duty on local authorities and schools to ensure the wellbeing of children and young people is safeguarded, supported and promoted.
6. [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) which has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to.

Successful Transitions

Developing an Understanding of a Child or Young Person's Needs

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to meeting the additional support needs of children and young people in their local mainstream school. The presumption of mainstream education forms the basis of planning for all children and young people, including those with significant and complex learning needs. At the early stages of the planning process there should be a focus on **need rather than place**. That is, planning must start with the assumption that the child or young person will attend

their local mainstream school. There should always be a full and authentic exploration of what a child or young person's needs are.

Successful transitions for a pupil require the school to have a clear picture of the pupil's needs and how those needs can be met. This understanding can only be developed through effective communication with those who know the pupil best, i.e. their parent/carer and the setting they currently attend, e.g. the Early Learning and Childcare setting, the Primary School, etc. The input from these key individuals as well as professionals from any other agency that may be involved, provide the information to enable a setting to understand the factors which give rise to the pupil's additional support need, and consider the plans required to meet that need.

A child or young person's parent/carer, in most circumstances, have unique knowledge and experience to contribute to assessment and planning processes. Parents/carers should be supported to understand the process and be familiar with the supports available to them and their child. It is important that settings give parents/carers the confidence that their child's needs will be met and that their views are valued. The [Aberdeenshire Universal Offer to Children and Young People Parent Leaflet](#) should be shared with families to highlight Aberdeenshire Universal Supports.

Planning should begin as soon as possible, but at the **very latest Term 2** of the year before the pupil is due to transition to the new setting. The more complex a child's additional support needs, the more time is needed for planning and preparation. Each child or young person is individual and so the transition experience will be individual too. A transition planning meeting should take place with the Team Around the Child in attendance to support the new setting to develop their understanding of the pupil's needs.

Key adult/s within the new setting should be identified as soon as practicable and when they have been, they should attend the transition/Child's Plan meetings to further develop their knowledge and understanding of the pupil's needs.

Specialist Provision

For most pupils, a robust transition plan will be sufficient to ensure their transition to a new setting is smooth. For a small minority of pupils there may be a need for Specialist Provision support. This may be in the form of Outreach support from the Specialist Provision that enables the child or young person to attend their local school or a Placement within the Specialist Provision that the child or young person travels to.

Specialist Provision should only be considered when the Head Teacher (or the delegated Senior Leader), has a clear understanding of the child's needs and there has been a full and authentic exploration of how they could be met in their local context. Where it is considered that this level of support may be required, an [Enhanced Provision Request Form](#) or [Complex Needs Provision Request Form](#) should be completed and submitted to the Local ASN Forum for the January Forum meeting, as detailed within the [Enhanced Provision Support in Primary Schools Guidance](#) and [Complex Needs Provision for Pupils with Significant and Complex Needs Guidance](#) during the year they are due to transition to Primary/Secondary School.

Where a child/young person is transitioning from a different Cluster within Aberdeenshire or another local authority and following assessment of their needs it is felt that Specialist Provision is required, an Enhanced Provision/Complex Needs Provision Request Form must always be submitted. This assessment must take place regardless of the type of provision the child/young person is transitioning from.

It should always be remembered that making a request for a Specialist Provision placement **does not guarantee** this and so parallel planning for the child to transition to their mainstream school must continue. In the case of pupils transitioning to Primary school, we must also be mindful that this is a time of rapid developmental change for children and so continual review during transition planning is essential.

Communication Passport

A Communication Passport can be used as a tool to capture a child or young person's needs and how these needs can be met. A Communication Passport **is not required for every child or young person** who has an additional support need, however as the needs become more complex it can be beneficial for holding all key information in one place and ensuring consistency across all staff.

The list below is not exhaustive, but a Communication Passport would be expected for children with additional support needs where one, or more, of the circumstances below apply. They:

- *have complex needs that require careful planning*
- *require targeted support in one or more of these areas; language and communication, medical, intimate care, mobility, sensory, social, emotional and wellbeing*
- *are children with vulnerabilities which may put them at risk of not making a successful transition, e.g. have a disability within the meaning of the [Equality Act 2010](#), care experience children or young person, children/young people who have experienced adverse childhood experiences, etc.*

A Communication Passport should not only capture information on the child or young person's additional support needs but should include their strengths, skills and interests. This is important to help foster a positive relationship with pupils and can be incorporated into intervention planning.

The Passport may cover the following areas:

- language and communication
- medical
- intimate care
- mobility
- sensory
- social, emotional and wellbeing needs

It is recognised that not all these areas will be relevant to all children and young people, however it is important that as much information is captured on this Communication Passport as possible so that there is a true 'picture' of the child or young person and what they need to support them as they transition to the new setting.

This Communication Passport should be developed by the pupil's current setting in collaboration with the pupil, their parents/carers and other professionals as appropriate.

The [Communication Passport](#) can be found within [VIVA Arcadia](#).

Participation of Children and Young People

The **Lundy Model of Child Participation** provides a way of conceptualising a child's right to participation, as laid down in Article 12 of the UNCRC and should be used to ensure their views are incorporated into decision making and that information is appropriately shared with them if they are unable to attend planning meetings.

The four elements of the Lundy model detailed below, have a rational chronological order:

Space: Children must be given space, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view

Voice: Children must be facilitated to express their view

Audience: The view must be listened to

Influence: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate

Further information on the Lundy Model can be found on the [Queen's University of Belfast website](#)



Lundy's Model of Participation as included in Ireland's National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2023

Successful transitions occur when the child or young person is given the opportunity to have their voice heard. It is important to capture the child's views and to be creative on how these are captured where necessary. Gathering the child or young person's views should not be a one-off event.

Preparing the Child or Young Person for the Transition

Children and young people should be able to experience the new setting and develop relationships with those in that setting prior to the time of transition. It would be good practice to enable the following to happen:

- key adult/s from the new setting visit the current setting and meet the pupil within that setting
- the pupil has the opportunity to build a relationship with key adult/s from the new setting
- the pupil visits the new setting
- ensuring that the child/young person has the opportunity to ask questions and share any worries they may have
- use of photographs and social stories to support the pupil to get to know the setting, staff and any routines there may be
- identification of a buddy for the pupil and an opportunity for them to meet each other

One Good Adult

All adults who work with children and young people should strive to offer reliable, kind, hopeful and supportive relationships to the children and young people they work with. The One Good Adult Job Description was developed from what children and young people said characterises adults who support them well, and as such, is a helpful tool for schools to consider in their transition planning processes. Full details on the implementation of this can be found within the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) [One Good Adult Implementation Guidance](#).

Being Ready to Welcome the Pupil to the School

As the receiving school develops their understanding of a child or young person's needs, planning is required to ensure that their needs can be met. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on education authorities to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people. Consideration should be given to the possible need for:

- curricular adaptations
- teaching and learning approaches
- support strategies
- environmental adaptations
- communication requirements
- specialist equipment
- staff professional learning needs

A solution-focused approach is essential to overcoming any barriers to inclusion which are identified, with support from relevant Education Support Services and Multi-agency Partners as appropriate.

Building Adaptations to Improve Disabled Access

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for building adaptations, however there is an expectation that all alternatives are fully explored in collaboration with the School Quality Improvement Officer, e.g. consideration should be given to the school guidance on ["Reducing Children and Young People's Need to Leave the Premises"](#).

An [Improved Disabled Access \(IDA\) Budget](#) application form can be submitted where necessary and appropriate. This application must be made to the IDA Budget Panel no later than the end of January of the transition year, but where there may be the need for significant adaptations, this must be completed as soon as possible before this.

Intimate Personal Care Needs

Where there are personal care needs, advice can be sought from the Relief Moving and Handling Trainer by completing page 1 of the [Request for visit from Relief Moving and Handling Trainer Form](#) and submitting this to ASNInclusionEquityWellbeing@aberdeenshire.gov.uk. Any requests should be made by the end of Term 3 of the year that the child is due to transition.

Further information can be found within the [Intimate Personal Care Guidance for schools, parents, children and young people](#).

Transitioning Between Schools outwith Key Transition Stages

When a child or young person is moving to or from another school within or outwith Aberdeenshire outwith the key transition stages, it is important that information about the child/young person's support needs are shared with the new school. Wherever possible the transition processes outlined above should take place.

We recognise that for a variety of reasons that occasionally children and young people can transition between schools with very little, if any, notice. Where it is identified that the child has additional support needs, it is important that both the receiving and previous school make contact to ensure as much information is shared as possible. This includes Care Experienced children and young people who should be assumed to have additional support needs unless assessed otherwise. The receiving school should take account of supports implemented by the previous school when planning for the child or young person. Consideration should be given to whether it would be helpful to complete a Communication Passport.

Where it is not possible to gather any information from the previous school, this may be because the child or young person has arrived unexpectedly, e.g. arrives from another authority or country, then as much information as possible should be gathered from the parent/carer (and the pupil where

possible). The [Transition Information Gathering Tool](#) may be used for this purpose. It is a means of quickly gathering information and essential details, to inform a support plan. It also helps identify language support requirements and previous educational experiences that may influence the child or young person's integration into school life.

Placing requests

It is recognised that the timing of Placing Requests at key stages may have a detrimental impact on the transition planning timeline. Every effort should be made to continue transition planning with the zoned school in these circumstances.

Post School Transitions

The transition processes described above are equally relevant when a young person is transitioning to life beyond school. It can be an extremely daunting time for the young person and their family. The Scottish Government Guidance [Transitions - Supporting disabled children, young people and their families](#) focuses on the transition period when young people develop from adolescents to young adults. It recognises that during this period young people progressively assume greater autonomy in many different areas of their lives and are required to adjust to different experiences, expectations, processes, places and routines.

["The Principles of Good Transitions 3"](#) developed by the Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland <http://www.arcuk.org.uk/scotland> provides further support and information in relation to supporting young people with additional needs between the ages of 14 and 25 who are making the transition to young adult life. As part of this, ARC have developed [Compass – PN2P and Compass](#) which is an online tool that helps develop understanding of the transition to adult life, what matters to them and also helps them to share their views about the decisions that affect them. There are three versions, one for young people, one for parents and carers of young people with additional support needs and one for professionals and practitioners. Young people and their families should be sign-posted to this resource.

Case responsibility transfers from Children's to Adult Social Work Services when the young person reaches the age of 18 or where the young person is over age 16 and leaves statutory education. There may be other exceptions to this based on specific needs where earlier intervention from Adult Social Work Services is appropriate.

Care Experienced Children and Young People

When a child or young person is care experienced, transitions can bring additional challenges for them, particularly if this educational transition is due to a change in home circumstance and there may have been limited time to plan for this. Some care experienced children and young people will have had several transitions in their lives. Even if a child or young person has been care experienced since a young age, transitions/endings can be a trigger, where each of these can result in them re-experiencing a sense of loss. It is important that we manage these endings/new beginnings very carefully and ensure they are person centred.

The time taken for a care experienced pupil to settle into their new setting may take longer than the time for those that are not care experienced. Supports such as buddies may need to be in place for longer and we must be mindful that behaviours that may be seen during this time of change may be due to what is happening.

Wherever possible, transition planning should follow the same processes as described above, however in addition, the following information should be gathered:

- who has parental rights and responsibilities
- what does the child/young person want to be known as (e.g. they may want to be known as the name of the people they live with)
- what does the child/young person call the people they live with

- contact details of key professionals involved with the child/young person, including the Review Manager and allocated Social Worker
- date of last Looked After Child/Young Person Review Meeting and date of next Review Meeting
- copies of Looked After Child/Young Person Review Meeting minutes

It may be that a Looked After Child/Young Person Review Meeting is not due for some time following the transition to the educational setting. If this is the case, a Child/Young Person's Plan Meeting should take place within 6 weeks of the pupil starting at the setting to discuss how they are settling in and agree any further support that may be required. Consideration should also be given at this point as to whether the criteria for a Coordinated Support Plan (CSP) is met. If a CSP is already in place, it should be reviewed to ensure it is still appropriate within the new education setting. The new named person should discuss the arrangements for this meeting with the lead professional (which is usually the child/young person's social worker). If the pupil is no longer Looked After and subject to these reviews, it is advisable to hold a single or multi-agency Child/Young Person's Plan Meeting to review the transition to the new setting.

The [Care Transitions: Briefing Paper for Education Practitioners](#) developed by the [Association for Fostering, Kinship & Adoption Scotland \(AFKA\)](#) discusses what is known generally about transitions in care for children and young people as well as drawing on specific practice examples and suggestions from education practitioners in Aberdeenshire.

Further information can be found within "A guide for working with children who are Care Experienced" which is held on the [Policies, Guidance and Strategies](#) page of the [Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing](#) website.

Date Issued	October 2025
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