It’s MY Journey
It’s My Journey

Vision for Transition

Supported by;

Produced by;

Marilyn Campbell, Disability Co-ordinator, Children’s Services
Marea Foulis, Transition Co-ordinator, The Highland Council
Gillian Newman, Consultation Worker, Highland Children’s Forum
Simon Webster, Autism Development Officer, The Highland Council
Sam Collyer, Assistant Educational Psychologist, The Highland Council
Paul Garner, Careers Scotland
Anne Ross, Barnardo’s
Karen McMaster, Development Officer for Interrupted Learning
Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks to all the young people who generously shared their stories and gave up their time to take part in this project.

The best way to acknowledge the participation of these young people is to listen to their experiences and act on their advice.

Thanks to all parents, professionals and carers who took part or supported someone to take part in this project.

Thanks to the following groups for being willing to be filmed or have consultations take place during their sessions:

The Falcon Project  YOFI Club
SNAP Club  L’Arche
Badaguish Centre  The Orchard
St Clements School  Drummond School
Glachbegg Croft  The Floral Hall
The COOP Inverness  The Prospects Group
Cantray Bridge  XL Club
Alness Academy  Bridge End School
The Place

Details of the services and organisations mentioned in It’s MY Journey can be found in It’s MY Choice, available from CHIP+ www.childreninthehighlands.com

A DVD that goes with It’s MY Journey is available from Highland Children’s Forum. It contains more of the young peoples stories. Please contact Highland Children’s Forum if you would like a copy.
Contents

1  Summary

Introduction and methodology
5  Structure of the report
7  Why the report was created
7  Who we spoke to
8  How we spoke to them
9  What professionals think of It’s MY Journey

The young people’s advice
11  Advice on the journey from child to adult
19  Advice on meetings
27  Advice on information
35  Advice on having control of planning
43  Advice on getting the right support

The young people’s stories
51  YP with autism spectrum disorders (ASD)
57  YP who need more choices and more chances
65  YP with physical support needs
68  YP with learning support needs
72  YP with communication support needs
76  YP who have been looked after
79  YP from the gypsy traveller community
“People with disabilities need a full and interesting life the same as other young adults, as we all have a place in society and we should be treated equal.”

“The planning of what is involved to leave school is a hard one as we are asked what we want in life and what our goals are but as most of us have only known school and home life, how can we make these choices?”
Summary

How It’s MY Journey was created

The Highland Council employed a ‘Transitions Coordinator’ to find out what it is like for young people with additional support needs to grow up and leave school and then to write guidelines to improve the support young people get.

A number of agencies helped by asking young people they know to tell their stories of growing up. All the agencies asked the same questions, but because people have different communication and learning needs, different ways of answering the questions were offered.

How It’s MY Journey is structured

Its MY journey is in three sections; the first gives the background, the second section contains advice from the young people on what does help, what is not so helpful and what could help, the third tells the young people’s stories. This section celebrates the young people’s achievements, acknowledges their hopes and describes their experiences as they grow up and leave school.

A DVD that goes with It’s MY Journey is available from Highland Children’s Forum. Please contact them if you would like a copy.
What It’s MY Journey found

The value of listening to young people as the experts in transition and beyond is shown by the suggestions they made on improving the support offered during transition.

To get transition right we need to:

- Listen
- Give opportunities to young people to practice making choices
- Offer information in the correct format
- Give appropriate guidance
- Create opportunities to practice and experience skills learned
- Focus on strengths
- Ensure equity in accessing leisure, education and work.
- Have a transition process that is a standard and works for the individual

What It’s MY Journey concluded

The young people who took part in this consultation all have hopes and dreams for their future that are shared by everyone.

Dedicated skilled professionals, partner agencies, parents/carers and supporters of young people are all helping them to be all that they can be.

Lack of funding from central government is a major barrier to young people with complex needs achieving their goals. Without enough money, adequate resources and support structures cannot be created. This means young people move from school into unsuitable, inadequate opportunities where they are unable to fulfil their potential.

In order for young people to become valued and responsible citizens we have to get better at creating a transition process that leaves no young person unable to fulfil their hopes and dreams.
Summary of Advice

**What does help**

😊 People listening to you whatever your communication needs.

😊 Your choices being supported by a key person who sees you through until you are sorted.

😊 Being prepared by getting practical experience in life and work which gives you the confidence and skills to make real choices and a valuable contribution.

**What is not so helpful**

😞 When professionals don’t recognise the support they give now impacts on the rest of a young person’s life. For example leaving planning too late, not coming to meetings or not doing all they can to include the young person.

😞 When young people are allowed to make unrealistic choices because of lack of opportunities or funding.

😞 When there is not enough support to help young people make meaningful contributions to decision making, especially at meetings.

**What could help**

✔ Professionals giving priority to making young peoples choices possible through real life experience, relevant information and practical support like attending meetings and help with red tape.

✔ Provide a range of opportunities to develop skills in things like making choices, managing money and having good relationships by providing useful experiences in work and leisure. For example the leavers project at Drummond School.

✔ Removal of unnecessary barriers between and within services such as provision of specialist health equipment or the funding of support workers.
“I was lucky because although I am ... a non-speaker I have a brain that works and I wrote letters on my computer of how I felt and this explained to everyone what I was feeling and what my dreams were.”

“To live on my own some day which is what I dream of. I know I would always need support to do this and although in the end of the day I know it would always depend on the cost and the funding issues that go with this whether I would ever be able to achieve this.”
Introduction

How It’s MY Journey is structured
The main content of It’s MY journey is divided into two sections; the first section contains advice from the young people on what does help, what is not so helpful and what could help, the second tells the young people’s stories. This section celebrates the young people’s achievements, acknowledges their hopes and describes their experiences as they grow up and leave school.

Section one
The first section is divided into chapters; each chapter begins with advice about one aspect of growing up and leaving school which is organised into heading; what does help—the things that are going on already that help, what is not so helpful—the things young people felt are getting in the way of successful transitions and finally what could help—the ways young people want the process to change to make transition work better. The advice is followed by supporting quotes from the young people, the quotes are grouped according to support needs and the page borders are colour coded so that you can find parts that interest you.

Section One Chapters

Advice on the journey from child to adult 11
Advice on meetings 19
Advice on information 27
Advice on having control of planning 35
Advice on getting the right support 43

We hope this section will help those working with young people during transition to reflect on their practice and how they can make the support they offer better.

We hope policy makers will refer to this section when planning developments to the transition process.
Introduction

Section Two
The second section is divided into chapters; each chapter contains the stories from a particular group of young people. The borders of the pages are colour coded so that it is easy to find stories that are relevant.

Section Two Chapters
- YP with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) 51
- YP who need more choices and more chances 57
- YP with physical support needs 65
- YP with learning support needs 68
- YP with communication support needs 72
- YP who have been looked after 76
- YP from the gypsy traveller community 79

We hope this section will be used by young people and their supporters to show that they are not alone and that many young people have overcome difficulties similar to their own.

This section is also about celebrating the lives of a group of very interesting and resourceful individuals who have, and will continue to achieve remarkable things.
Introduction

Why It’s My Journey was created
The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 introduced a duty on Local Authorities to provide transition planning support for all young people with additional support needs. The Highland Council employed a Transitions Coordinator to find out about young people’s experience of transition, and to assist with the preparation of a new transitions protocol and accompanying guidelines. The Transitions Coordinator met with a number of people working with young people and also with the Highland Children’s Forum whose aim is to ensure that children and young people in need are listened to and represented. This multi-agency group developed a “Vision for Transition”.

In 2006/07, significant revisions were made to The Highland Council’s Transitions Planning Protocol. This document governs interactions between Education and Social Work, and within Social Work. In the same period, work began on a transitions protocol within NHS Highland. It became evident that no guidance was available for professionals on how to conduct transitions planning, and the experience of the agencies involved in a Vision for Transition suggested that the quality of support for transitions planning might be patchy across Highland. It was decided that a consultation with young people about their experience of planning for adulthood would be used as the basis of guidance for professionals on how to support transitions planning. As the consultation developed it became clear that the quality of the young people’s suggestions and the way they exposed barriers in service provision could stand alone as a separate report.

Who we spoke to.
The main condition for participation was that the young person should have been involved in some form of planning for adulthood during the past 3 years. Most young people were aged between 14 to 25.

The participants were young people with additional support needs. Six young people with autism spectrum disorder took part. Fifteen young people, with one or a combination of physical support needs, learning support needs, communication support needs and sensory impairment took part.
23 young people who need more choices and chances took part. This group includes young people who persistently truant, young people with mental health problems, young people with low attainment, young people with offending behaviour, young parents, young people with drug or alcohol problems, young people who have been or are not in education, employment or training. All groups were represented in the research. Young people who are looked after and accommodated participated, as did young people from the gypsy traveller community.

**How we spoke to them.**

Professionals in different agencies were asked whether they could consult with young people they support, or would have the opportunity to approach through their work. This approach ensured that consultation with young people with additional support needs was undertaken by professionals with experience of working with young people with those needs.

Participation was voluntary and informed consent gained. Where the learning support needs of an individual meant that informed consent was not possible consent was sought from parents, who sometimes had to answer for the young person if they were unable to answer for themselves.

In order that questions could be adapted to the needs of individual young people, topics for questions (rather than precise questions) were specified. This approach was used so that the style of questioning could be adapted by the individual consulters to suit the needs of each young person. Topics included: outcomes, understanding of transition planning, meetings, information provided and ‘ownership’ of the planning process.

In practice, questions could not be asked of all young people on all topics. Questions about ‘ownership’ mainly became questions about the extent to which the young person felt in control of their planning.

(A detailed methodology can be obtained from Highland Children’s Forum)
Introduction

What professionals think of It’s MY Journey

During the consultation process, the group agreed that it would be valuable to have critiques of the consultation from local professionals who have expertise in supporting transition planning. Professionals from a range of agencies were invited to contribute a critique.

This process highlighted the strengths and usefulness of It’s MY Journey but it also raised a number of issues.

- The consultation was largely based in and around towns, the experiences of young people with additional support needs in rural areas was not thoroughly investigated.

- Issues with health, personal care, relationships and sexuality were highlighted by the professionals as areas that It’s MY Journey didn’t explore in the depth they require.

- No one with a visual impairment consented to take part, although 12 young people were invited. Only one person with hearing impairment took part.

- As a snapshot in time this consultation is limited in how much it can show of a process that is several years long and necessarily evolves as it progresses. There is a need to use the consultation as a basis for a longer term study exploring the transition process, which would address the issues mentioned above and, by interviewing young people a number of times as they move through the transition process, allow us to see how and why the support, plans and aspirations of the young people we spoke to change with time.
“I think I should have got help to do something after school.”
Advice on the journey from child to adult

**What does help**

😊 When people listen to you
😊 Your decisions being accepted and acted on
😊 Having the confidence to argue your case
😊 Being heard whatever your communication needs

**What is not so helpful**

.getElements...
What Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder said About their Journey

“Schools should give very clear information to people about what decisions they will have to make for leaving school.

PSE classes should give detailed guidance about getting ready for adulthood, instead of giving vague general information.

Some people on the autistic spectrum need extra help with decision making. Just going to meetings may not help the person with decision making.”

“Talk directly to the young person—don’t rely on what other people understand. Provide training on how to make decisions. Help the person to understand what’s involved in living skills like budgeting”

“It would help to know more about what practical skills that you’ll need when you are an adult.

Don’t put people under pressure when they are making a decision.

Visiting a college while you’re still at school can be a great help with decision making.”

“Give people training in life skills. Make sure all people have help to plan for adulthood, including people who don’t attend school.”

“Even after leaving school, help may be needed with making decisions about what to do as an adult (for example, with decisions about going to college or university).”

“Careers advisors can help with decision making”
With group work “You got to know a little more about sex and about babies, [we took] these electronic babies [at home] it makes you not want to have kids.

I did work with Children’s Services Worker...it was just showing you how to use money [it helps] because you know how much things are and how expensive things are when you leave”

“Work experience was brilliant, that gave me help on what I wanted to do.”

School “never really prepared us for it they just gave us our options.

The useful bits are going out on placements and helping you do your CVs and stuff like that.

If there was a club about mechanics [in school], say a guy came from a local garage for younger kids.”

“Careers was useful because they suggested something I wouldn’t have chosen otherwise.”

“The people in fifth year all get fake job interviews. I think they should be doing that when you go into 4th year up to 6th year.”

School “is pretty good around the jobs, I just think they should do a little more practical help and have more job feel.”

“The college has got me the work experience and it helped me realise what I wanted to do.”
“I have just finished a computer course in North Highland which was a normal college course which I really enjoyed because it pushed me to think about what I had to do and I was with normal young adults and we all had our problems but we managed to finish the course as a group which was nice.”

“My three year transition was the most unhappy, frightening and upsetting time of my life. I have now left school for almost a year now and life in the end wasn’t so bad but there is still a lot of room for improvement.”

“At future needs meetings we were told that [our daughter] should get in to the [Day Care] Centre...but this is apparently dependent on funding being available... The manageress said they were not really geared up for someone like [our daughter] although they would like to be.”

“I made up my mind to leave school.... My support teacher ... set up a meeting with [Careers Advisor] as soon as I said I was leaving. She didn’t want me to leave but she set it up ....Those meetings were useful.”

“Last year when I left school it was not very fair. When I was in school I had a meeting in a hotel...I was offered a job, a volunteer job in the hospital.” [It didn’t happen] I was just left at home with mum ...just hanging about.”
“It was hard to leave school. Once I had made the decision I kept going back, I wanted to go back. It was a little bit pushed my decision to leave, but it was my decision.”

“I would like to get job experience with music.”

“All this year I have been out of school.

I work at Nansen Highland, I do stuff like first aid, well anything really. I get my own taxi. On Friday I go to St Clements school and help some people. I help at Strathpeffer Hotel as a volunteer.”

“I left with no plan for what to do.”
“I think I should have got help to do something after school.”

“I am at school part time and part time at college on a skills building course.

I do maths, its boring.... cooking and I’m out on placement doing brick laying. I do history.”

“My dream was to work with children. I went to a primary.”
“I thought I could go to college .... I am not sure if I can get the right signing support to do that. When I leave home I will manage to make new friends, I will help them to learn to sign for the deaf. I had work experience in a vet but it was a town vet...it was a bit boring. One work experience is not enough.”

“I was lucky because although I am .... a non-speaker I have a brain that works and I wrote letters on my computer of how I felt and this explained to everyone what I was feeling and what my dreams were.”

[our son] “did not understand the concept of leaving school. We asked for him to have work placements so he could begin to experience that there was life outside of school.”

“This was a great help to him. He was animated and enjoyed the physical work.”

“The placement was crucial to his understanding about leaving school.”

“I left school a year ago. I have been helping around the house....I would have liked college last year. I did have some chances to apply but I forgot. I need help to remember...to plan and organise things.”
What Young People Who have been Looked After said About their Journey

“I feel fine about moving on and becoming an adult. I feel good about the decisions I am making and things are working out the way I hoped.”

“I need to get full time employment and support”

“While at school I did not feel prepared for adulthood. I think I made wrong choices.
[Is there something you would have done differently?] "I would have reduced offending.”

“I didn’t feel very prepared for adulthood. I didn’t have a moving on plan.
If I had the chance I would go back to the start and redo it all.”

“I was in care for 13 years but not now I am 18. I was with a good family and I am still living with them until I get somewhere of my own. I’ve sent for incapacity so I can give them money for looking after me.
Hopefully I’ll get a flat of my own. I’d get help if I got a flat; I’d need help with bills. I can clean but I can’t cook. I can’t manage money at all.”

“I need help with finance, support and information [to complete my moving on plan]. It would have helped” [if these needs had been identified while still at school].”
What Young People from the Gypsy Traveller Community said About their Journey

Many Gypsy Traveller children move on much earlier than most other children. The age range chosen for this project (from 16+) was too old for this group of young people, most by that age are no longer in contact with or accessing educational opportunities. The age range was extended down to 12 years for this group of young people. Two young people took part one of school age the other of leaving school age.

There has been no plan but BF is feeling “pretty good” about growing up and is “quite happy” about the decisions taken so far.

BF has her best friends, her whole family and her teacher to talk to and socialises by “cleaning up, babysitting, shopping, swimming and going to the pictures”.

JW can get information from her family and friends, could ask the teacher, college or careers Scotland if she needed something. She “feels fine” about growing up; she has made her “own decisions – no plan – feel fine about it”.

JW looks after her health by eating a healthy diet and taking exercise – she walks a lot. If she needs advice on health matters she would arrange to see the local nurse. She could call on family and friends if she needed someone to talk to.
Advice
For Meetings

What does help

😊 When people listen to you
😊 Being able to invite people to your own meeting
😊 Being able to choose where to have the meeting
😊 Being prepared before the meeting
😊 Visual plans are easier to understand
😊 When people act to make the choices made by you happen

What is not so helpful

😊 Too many people in suits
😊 Making plans which depend on funding that may or may not happen
😊 Actions made in plans are not followed through, no one checks they are happening
😊 Meetings happening without you present
😊 Decisions being taken that you do not agree with
😊 People missing who are key to making things happen like the social worker from adult services

What could help

✔ Being prepared better for the meeting
✔ More person centred meetings
✔ Something written or drawn to take away and reflect on
✔ Someone to follow up the plan and make sure everything is happening
✔ Making a back up plan in case the first plan falls through
✔ Creative thinking focussing on your abilities to enable you to achieve your dreams
“It would be very helpful to have a detailed piece of paper about what’s being reviewed and what the meeting is about, before and after the meeting, to see if any conclusions have been reached.

It helps a lot to know the people who you’re going to be meeting before the meeting takes place.

Meetings should be in quiet rooms with adequate space.”

“At meetings, the young person should be able to put their ideas past other people and have those ideas considered seriously.”

“People should not just talk amongst themselves at meetings – there should be a lot of input from the young person.

“The meeting arrangements for this consultation were very good: the room was large, with few people, and the young person had received an introductory letter well before the meeting.”

“Meetings should actually happen when they’re meant to happen.

It’s not enough to get a bunch of people in suits together, who just talk to each other”

“Meetings have involved just one member of guidance staff, and this has been fine.

Meeting rooms should be good for peace and quiet, and should have a lot of daylight.”

“Meetings at the college have been well run: small, relaxed meetings at a round table with about 6 familiar people, with everyone turning up” (comment from person’s mother)
“I had a couple of meetings, back in school I wasn’t that bothered, just get me out of here. Since I left I used Careers Scotland a lot more.”

“It wasn’t really in him to tell me whether to stay on or not so he just said ‘if you leave make sure you have got options so you’re not just sitting at home doing nothing’, he was really helpful”

“I was at the Job centre today ... she was telling me how much better off I would be if I worked compared to staying at home, she was very helpful.”

“I think the school should have more meetings so people in 4th year can go and speak to people and there is always someone there to speak to.”

In school .... they do an action plan and if they have any courses they’ll see if you are interested and see if they suit you.”

“I’ve talked to the Careers Officer, I’ve talked to him twice and he’s given me jobs that he thinks would interest me so he has been really helpful”

“Careers got back in touch with me and I had a meeting with [Careers Scotland Key Worker] ... he got everything sorted for me because there was nothing really going for me at that time.”
“I think the way these meeting are put together should change for the better, giving us clear ideas about what’s out there not by talking but showing us as then and only then can we know if we are capable or comfortable with the choices we have chosen, as sometimes things don’t work out for one reason or another and we find ourselves left with nothing.”

“Not only should our choices be mapped out with our full knowledge and understanding, I feel there should be a back up plan worked out in case funding or places fall down at the last hurdle”

“At future needs meetings we have been told that [our daughter] should be going to the [Day care] Centre after she leaves school but this is apparently dependent on the funding being available.

The [Day Care] centre people and social worker had not attended future planning meetings until the last meeting in January. This has delayed a support package being drawn up. It should have started earlier if adult social work had attended. The last meeting was full of gloom about funding.”

“I met [my careers advisor] one lunch time a week. Those meetings were useful. We did sheets and that to find out what I wanted to do if I wanted college, to volunteer or whatever.”
“Careers meetings were at the youth worker’s office not in school. I think I invited my mum once. I can’t remember what the meetings were like. I think it was more talking than paper work. She was trying to work out something for me to do.”

“You can understand it more easily.”

[The pathway drawing at a Person Centred Planning]

“My meetings happen in school. I have had one big one and two small ones with the careers lady…. I didn’t see leaflets or books or anything. maybe better if I had had something to look at...I don’t know”.

[at future needs meeting] “It was not so great. The teacher did most of the talking.”

[at Person Centred Planning] “I got to do the speaking.”

“There was one meeting about me going to college, I wasn’t there but my mum and my sister.”
“Towards the end of my school life I had a planning meeting when I invited people I wanted and at this meeting what I hoped for was written down and I was given this huge piece of paper at the end but still nothing positive came out of it. It was as if everyone was going through the motions but now no one to do anything.”

“Someone who was deaf came to visit us and talk about his work, his future, his sport. I thought it was a good idea to have deaf people in because it makes it relevant to me.”

“At Record of Needs reviews transition seemed to be on the back burner, there was no help with what options might be available; parents had to find out for themselves.

We pushed for Person Centred Planning. Using photos a book was made up of who our son was and what he liked. The PCP was key to his transition as it showed up his likes and interests.”

“At school I had meetings but I don’t remember.”

“Someone came to my house, my mum was there. They talked about college. A log was taken of the meeting.”

“I saw the careers person in school but they were not able to sign and did not understand about how I would need full signing support at college.”
What Young People Who have been Looked After said About Meetings

“I didn’t have any meetings to help me plan my future.”

“We had meetings in school about my future. My teachers and foster mum went plus the Depute, we discussed it, all about my future. They wanted me to stay, I wanted to leave. My teachers had a lot of meetings and they said they had nothing else for me so I said ‘Can I leave then?’ and they said ‘Yes’ so I left right away.”

“I have one weekly meeting with L (Through Care/After Care Coordinator). These are social meetings and have been very helpful.”

“Regular meeting with Through Care/After Care Coordinator. These are informal discussions. They are good. There was sometimes written information.”
BF has her best friends, her whole family and her teacher to talk to.

Meetings “make it in a nice place”

“No formal meeting [which] is fine by me” JW has received support from teachers, college and careers; this has been “useful”.

There was one formal meeting with a teacher.
Advice on Information

What does help

😊 Not just getting paper information, but visiting a place and seeing what it is like
😊 The leaver’s programme (Drummond School) which records visits out, visitors in, achievements
😊 Having someone visit who has left school with similar support needs
😊 Information that is relevant to the individual
😊 The internet is a useful source of information

What is not so helpful

😊 Having no written record of meetings or plans
😊 Lack of available options
😊 Being left to fill out forms without the right support

What could help

✅ Information should be easier to find and understand
✅ Professionals who are supporting the young person should know more about the options and support available for that young person
✅ Information about benefits and how this will change
✅ More practice and advice about things like interviews
✅ Getting help to find specific information about specific support needs (e.g. signing)
“Information should be directly relevant to the person’s interests. The school should provide information about the process of leaving school. It’s important to provide information as you would provide it to other people, rather than singling people out as being different.”

“Information and advice should always be given to the person with respect.”

“General information about what careers are available doesn’t really help. Information should be relevant to the person’s interests.”

“Visiting colleges that you might attend is a very good way to get information.”

“PSE classes give some information about things like how to find a job, but should give much more detail about what to do at an interview, how to dress, what to take and so on.”

“It might be helpful to hear from someone who has been through leaving school, such as someone who has gone to college and can tell you what it’s like.”

“It’s important to find out information early on about what you can do next.”
What Young People Who need More Choices, More Chances said About Information

“Some help pointing me in the right direction to get a job … ‘these places need people with these skills, here are the forms’.

The library is pretty handy, it had a lot of computer stuff that was like lists and lists of jobs you can do and what courses you need to be taking at further education or university.”

“Having someone from the college coming in [to school] to say these were all the courses that you could do instead of the careers having to go out of their way.”

“The tutor explained everything to us and said ‘start next week’. She explained all that we would be doing, all the packaging, I’m really delighted.”

“I’m doing a college thing that lets me do college through school … you get a taste of college while you’re in school.”

“Its just really easy talking to teachers about it, they are brilliant at giving advice.”

“I’d just usually find out myself; the internet and phoning college myself and getting information.”

“Speaking to friends and they are saying they got all the information they wanted, but some friends are saying what I’m saying, they weren’t getting enough information, they thought they could have got more out of it.”

“They don’t give you enough information about what we would be doing or that we would have to get our own placement, just get us to fill out all the forms, there wasn’t enough support [in school] compared to careers now.”

“I’d just usually find out myself; the internet and phoning college myself and getting information.”
“I would have liked time to explore fully what was on offer in the wide world and find out what I was good at and what I could do that would stretch my mind and self worth and decide what I could do not only for my first year of leaving but what was going to happen to me in the future, like exploring jobs, colleges, clubs, day centres, independent living and any other options that are out there.”

“Every time we met we had sketch pad drawings and it was all written down.”

“Surely the professionals that give us these choices should know more about what is out there for all disabilities and maybe we should get people who just deal with people with disabilities rather than other school leavers whether disabled or not.”

[There was] “information about the things that were to do in Inverness, there wasn’t a huge amount for Inverness.

[Inverness Blitz] was the only one I was interested in as it was sport. So I tried it because I could leave if I didn’t like it.

Then the Project Scotland thing came up and I still wasn’t sure and took a couple of weeks to think about it and then I decided to go for it.”

“No information was provided about the change in benefits.”
“I got options for college courses and that.
Cantray Bridge was done by my social worker, she discussed it with my parents. We looked it up on the internet.”

“I visited the college. It is really big. I didn't like it at first.”

“Where do you get information?” “Watch the Discovery programme on TV.”

“Where did you find out about growing up?” “I just found out.”

“I was talking to my girlfriend about [independent living] she says that it is not time yet. I don’t know who else to ask.”

“We’ve got the leavers programme. It’s to get ready for when we leave school. We do visits.”

“I don’t have anything written down about my plan maybe my mum has. I do know about my college plan.”

“I liked college. I looked around. The canteen is really big... I liked visiting the college.”
“I need more information about college and about signing. I need to find out if there is accommodation with other deaf people. Is there anywhere I can go where I will be with other young people who have hearing impairment when I am at college or university? I don’t know where to get that information.”

“People asked me about college but I didn’t get a book or anything to look at. There might have been letters, I don’t remember.”

“There have been no written plans for [our daughter]; it has all been oral. These oral plans have lacked clarity. ...Things should be made more clear.”

“Also if there are any deaf clubs I can go to. I want to make friends with people my own age and my own level of ability. I need someone to be able to sign when I am out socially as people talk too fast and I miss out on the conversation.”

“With two other sets of parents we decided to ask for a bigger Direct Payments package to allow us to apply for Independent Living Fund. The amount being asked from the Council was the equivalent of our son attending the day care centre, but with the ILF on top, we were able to tailor a program for him, with some sort of ‘work’ in the morning and leisure in the afternoon.

We had to work out staff and the costs of the project, including respite too. The preparation involved about as much work as a business plan.”
What Young People Who have been Looked After said About Information

“I got information, they told about what would happen and asked if I was OK with it. I said ‘Yes I am happy with it.’ They wrote it down and I got a copy of it.”

“I didn’t receive any information.

A course leader from college gave the class a talk. This was very useful. It would have been helpful to have reps from other colleges doing classroom visits.”

“I didn’t leave school with any.” [information, certificates or anything to show achievements].

“I have had no information from school.

Students are just told to look at prospectuses etc. There is no other support.

It would have been a great help to have more discussions with Guidance/careers about career choices.”

“Could be in a better format. It could be in a presentation folder which could be added to when and as other achievements are reached and include a CV etc.”
What Young People from the Gypsy Traveller Community said About Information

JW received information from Careers Scotland, teacher and Save the Children. She said she is “quite happy” with the information given, [it] “helped me a lot”

[If you needed to find out about health?] “I’d ask my sister.”

BF was not at school long enough to get many certificates but did get a maths certificate. She would have liked a written report to take away from school.

JW has left school with some Access 3 certificates and has sat Standard Grade English and is awaiting the result.

No information has been given.

“Don’t want a written down plan”
Advice on Having Control of your Planning

What does help

😊 Being confident and self-motivated
😊 Being prepared for meetings so that good contributions can be made
😊 Being treated as a person not a support need
😊 Person centred planning
😊 Knowing that support will stick with you however long it takes you to find the right destination
😊 Getting the right sort of information after a meeting
😊 Trying things out (as in work experience)

What is not so helpful

😊 Not understanding the roles of others
😊 Leaving school without any kind of plan
😊 Lack of experience in making choices for self

What could help

✔ Learning how to make good choices
✔ Getting support to make choices
✔ Being listened to
✔ Having your ideas made possible
✔ Knowing about your rights
✔ Good communication
“When people treat you like a person, not as someone who ‘has a disadvantage’, this helps you to feel in control.

It would be helpful to have a form for planning for leaving school.

A checklist would give a detailed sketch of what to do and could be quite useful.”

“In order to feel in control of your planning, you first have to know what you will have to make decisions about.”

“Receiving a simple letter about what happened at each meeting, in simple language and with no jargon, would help [me] to feel in control.”

“I have mostly had to do my own planning, because there has been no help from the school with planning.”

Recently, there has been no formal planning for this young person, but going and finding out information has helped this person to feel in control of their planning.

“I am getting good support with my planning for adulthood and feel in control of my plans.”

“I am apprehensive about change and just want things to be right.”
What Young People Who Need More Choices, More Chances said About Having Control of Planning

“I’ve never asked for help, I just want to get all my qualifications before I decide what I’m doing.

In 4th year they should treat us more like adults.

More choice in classes and courses... I’d rather be doing practical stuff rather than writing.”

“I left school when I hit 16... I went round looking for a job at the chippie, manpower, but eventually I decided to go back to school and get an education so I could get a good job ... I came back the day I asked to come back.”

“With this college you help them help you, if you were to say what placement you wanted then they go, ‘right, well try that and you could get earning in a week or two’, or if it’s local then I could go and see if they’ll take me on.”

“I was sort of swithering about the sort of trade I wanted to do and [work experience] made me more confident on what I wanted to do.”

“More opportunities and more classes so you definitely know what you will do when you leave school instead of leaving school not knowing what to do.”

“If you are going to do something you’d rather do it yourself if you can do it yourself and if you can’t do it then you can ask for help if you need it.”

“I never asked for help from the school ... [having someone come and ask you what you need] could have been [useful].”
What Young People with Physical Support Needs said About Having Control of Planning

“I felt that although I had my mom on my side and understood what I wanted the only way forward was for me and me alone to fight this hard system and if one door was slammed in my face then I would go to another until they did listen.”

Plans were made but nothing happened. The funding package was initially turned down. It was 8 months before getting in to college. “It’s not very fair.”

“I wish everyone who makes the decisions for me and my peers and what we are allowed to do after school would spend a few days living as we have to do and then and only then will things change because no one who has a normal life can understand what we have to go through day in and day out.”

“I am lucky as I have been brought up to value what I can do and I am allowed to make my own decisions [although] they may not always be the right ones.”

“I decided everything myself. People gave me their opinions and said what they could do. No one stopped me.”

“Make your own mind up; listen to others and think about it but do what you want to do.”
“I do feel I have made my own decisions about what I want. I understand how to make a good decision. If I was stuck I would ask my mum or the teacher.”

“What Young People with Learning Support Needs said About Having Control of Planning"

“On the pathway was my dream: what I wanted to do in the future.”

“The college was my idea but the rest of the stuff I was pushed through.

I didn’t have very much say in it. I think it would have been better if it had been different at the time, but the outcome is OK.”

“It was my choice to do these things.”
“It was not my choice to leave school. I wanted to stay on.”

“I might not be able to choose where I want to go or what course I want to do. I think I may have to choose a place that can offer signing. If I go to university I won’t get signed all the time, I will only get one or two hours’ support. I can’t manage without full signing. I don’t know if I can get this. I need full signed support to get my qualifications.”

“The change in routine was difficult for [our son] at first and his seizures increased in frequency for a time. It took time for him and us to get used to the staff coming in; handing over care was hard for us parents especially when he had seizures. But we held team meetings with all staff and discussed how to handle his moods and understand his communication. The staff have been great and it has worked well.”

“[Our daughter] has not had any control of her planning”
“I had control of my planning.

I left school with some certificates. It would have helped to have a Pathways Coordinator when I was in school from Through/After Care Barnardo’s.”

“I made the decisions myself, I just said ‘I am going to do this, do that.’ and my foster mum said ‘Right, fine you go ahead and do it. It’s your life you go ahead and do it’.”

“I feel I have had full control of my planning.”

“I will leave school hopefully with Highers and a Pathways plan.”

“I felt control when home.”
BF keeps healthy by taking exercise, eating healthily and health lessons.

JW looks after her health by eating a healthy diet and taking exercise – she walks a lot. If she needs advice on health matters she would arrange to see the local nurse.
Advice on Getting the Right Support

What does help

😊 When people listen to you
😊 A Careers Scotland Key Worker who makes contact in school and continues support until you are settled in a positive destination
😊 When Schools, Youth Work and other organisations like the Princes Trust work together

What is not so helpful

🙁 Sudden loss of social opportunities such as special needs playschemes which have age limits
🙁 Lack of social opportunities for those who live in rural areas
🙁 People leaving things too late so that funding is not applied for until after the young person has left
🙁 Not enough support at planning, when young person leaves school or at any other time

What could help

✓ Support for parent/carers and young person in working out benefits
✓ Learning about managing money
✓ Support young person taking responsibility for own health and hygiene care
✓ Better management of the transition in health services to make it a more gradual process
✓ Medical equipment and treatment following through in to adulthood
✓ Social workers from adult services attending earlier planning meetings
✓ Funding applications being sent off in plenty of time
✓ Age appropriate respite care
✓ Opportunity to use the phone
✓ Support to write letters
“It’s important to speak directly to the person with autism, and not just to the person in charge, which is what usually happens.

Some people with autistic syndromes might find it helpful to write a series of ‘reports’ on what they do to get ready for leaving school (like in the book ‘Flowers for Algernon’).”

“I usually put thought into decision making, but am never really good at it. Meetings haven’t helped with decision making.”

Supported accommodation is provided for this young person, who can now move to accommodation with less support due to improvements in independent living skills. The house is good, and there is a rota for cleaning, cooking and washing up, and 1 to 1 support for shopping and cooking.

Budgeting and finding a place to stay are things that this young person will need help with. The young person’s mother has asked the school to help with budgeting and living skills, but nothing helpful has been done.

“The school is a disgrace. The physical environment is terrible and there is blatant drug abuse. The school has no interest in me.”

“What doesn’t help is when people put on pressure. A solution to this is to not make decisions when under pressure, and [I] can make good decisions when left alone to think about them.”
What Young People Who need More Choices, More Chances said About Their Support Needs

“I’m better at communicating with others, more confident working with others and working in a group.” [because of The Princes Trust Xlerate with XL club]

“XL club which means extra learning helps you, one of my skills I needed to improve on was talking to people, it got your confidence up, it’s really good.”

“The school should have someone that could phone places and help you out like they did for work experience. If we were supposed to get a job we would have to do that all ourselves.”

“There is not enough opportunity in S4 for young people to pursue their interests, which means that when people leave they don’t have the skills to do what they want to do.”

“He [Careers Scotland Key Worker] done everything with me and got everything set ......I’m really delighted as it is getting in all the computer skills...I didn’t have good computing and literacy.”

“The Youth Workers, they helped really a lot. I went to Fairburn quite a lot, their was a lot of courses there I did that helped you prepare for different situations.”

“I used to get time out with the Children’s Services Worker if you wanted to skive.”

“If it wasn’t for this school I’d still be walking round the streets skiving.”
“I’d like to live somewhere ....
In the future with my girlfriend.
Not yet but in the future.

I’d need help to get the right
money and the right house. I’d
need help managing the bills
and so on. I think I’d manage
the cooking.”

Social work adult services did not attend
transition meetings for this young person. So
no one applied for funding until after he had
left school.

“I need to be encouraged to
be as independent as
possible if I am ever going to
be able to live on my own
some day which is what I
dream of. I know I would
always need support to do
this and although in the end
of the day I know it would
always depend on the cost
and the funding issues that
go with this, whether I would
ever be able to achieve this.”

“Me, the teachers and my
mum and dad came up with
the idea that I should tell
everyone in my year about
what was wrong. I did this
and no one has bullied me, all
through secondary school
everyone was fine. Everyone
in the school not just in my
year has been good and
friendly and that.”

“Although the family will have such a large
role in providing care, respite does not seem
to be planned around individual needs but
rather around the service providers.”
“Take responsibility for yourself, take responsibility for your money...all that money spent like that. I get money for staying on at school. “

“I’d need help to get the right money and the right house. I’d need help managing bills and so on. I think I’d manage cooking.”

“If kids at school can’t concentrate or learn take them out a couple of days a week to do stuff. I think if the kid is not getting on well in first year they should find something that they enjoy and they can come out of school and do.”

“I want to get a job in the end, definitely a paid job. I would need help probably. I want to work in a hotel but I can’t figure out money to save myself so I couldn’t do the till. I could work in an office and I can do IT, but it’s too complicated with someone else’s computer, I could never do that. I want help finding the right job.”

“We’re learning if we want to join a gym and keep fit and mainly just have exercise.”
“Now that I have left school there are not so many groups I can access. I used to go to a youth club once a week but that stopped when I left school as they only take young adults up to 19 years of age.”

“What I need, OK, is to have a friend of mine... Two can laugh and two can get the latest gossip”

“There was a health meeting held where various professionals met to discuss the transfer of equipment. We had not realised that the medical equipment our daughter uses would have to go back to children’s services and be reapplied for from adult services. For example, her gate trainer which was made to measure and will be unlikely to fit anyone else, belongs to children’s services and so must remain at the School.”

[for independent living] “I’d have to learn how to use a washing machine, it is very difficult. I could manage cooking and shopping. I have enough money. I need to learn how not to overspend it. I have made the same mistake twice. I could probably manage my own health. I don’t go to the doctor much.”

“Appropriate respite is needed for parent carers.”
What Young People Who have been Looked After said About Their Support Needs

“I wasn’t sure if there was a learning support bit [in college] because I have special needs. So they checked with college and they did have support for learning. So they took me up and I got accepted and I started. But for two whole months I was bored stiff, they wouldn’t let me start North college, they wouldn’t let me in XL club [at school] but eventually they let me in [to college].”

“I didn’t receive any help from school to decide what I wanted to do.”

“I had little support from Careers.”

“Hopefully I’ll get a flat of my own. I’ve just phoned up and my Social Worker has phoned up. I’d get help if I got a flat; I’d need help with [managing] bills.”

“I just started work experience in the last week; I answer phone calls, type, take stuff to the post office and post letters. It is a full day. When I am in here I don’t do computers but phone calls and letters etc.”

“It would be a great help to get access to a phone.”
What Young People from the Gypsy Traveller Community said About Their Support Needs

My plan was “completely my own decision”.

Plans have been decided by the family but are “fine by me”

“could call on family and friends if [I] needed someone to talk to”
Outcomes:
AW is in 5th year at a rural secondary school. He has done work experience but hasn’t applied for any job yet. A support worker is employed through Direct Payments to support AW, whose hobbies include writing books, reading, Xbox and TV. AW lives at home with his mother, and has read books about autism and about becoming an adult. University computing courses appeal to AW, who would like to study game design and has been doing some research on where to study. Getting into university will depend on getting enough Highers in 6th year.

Understanding of planning:
Leaving school isn’t something that AW has been thinking about a lot, as he plans to stay on for a 6th year. Working in a computer game shop is something that might provide relevant experience. Living arrangements and the cost of living away will have to be considered. Budgeting might be a problem. AW can make decisions, but finds it hard to choose between competing priorities. Parents have been very supportive of AW’s plans, and the Support for Learning teacher has been helping with information about post school education. AW has been informed and involved: there are no ‘secret plans’.

Meetings:
There was a meeting in 3rd year about AW staying on at school. That meeting went well. Recently, there was a review of progress. AW had mixed feelings about this, wanting to hear about doing well, but not wanting to know about not doing well! The meeting in 3rd year was quite big, but not massive, and most people (support teachers and so on) were known to AW. It’s much harder to be in a meeting with people who you’ve never met. In those meetings, AW tries to be really silent and hits the mute button if possible, nodding to indicate understanding and raising eyebrows if he doesn’t. Meetings have been in school and have been held in good rooms for meetings, with enough space. AW can cope with noise up to a certain point, but can get a headache if it is too noisy.

People involved in consultation: Young person (AW), Autism Development Officer.
Consultation method: Meeting in a school learning support base.

Information:
AW went to a large bookshop and looked for books on autism and onleaving school. Most of the information that AW has found in books hasn’t said anything really helpful, because most of it is not directly relevant and the information is usually written for parents. AW hasn’t had information directly from the school about the process of leaving school. There have been several meetings with Careers in school, more than for other people. As a result of these meetings, AW will meet with a College advisor to find out what courses to undertake. Meetings have involved just AW and the Careers advisor. The meetings have been informative, and AW has been treated as an equal rather than singled out as autistic, which is good. It would be very helpful to have detailed information on what the meeting is about, before and after the meeting, to see if any conclusions have been reached.

Control of planning:
AW does feel in control of what will happen in future. It helps that AW’s parents view their child as a person, not as ‘autistic’ or as a ‘person with a disadvantage’.
No formal paperwork has been used in AW’s planning so far. It would be helpful to have a form for planning for school leaving.
A checklist would be quite useful for people with autistic syndromes. This could give a detailed sketch of what to do.

Other information
- It’s important to speak directly to a person with autism, and not just to the person in charge, which is what usually happens.
- Some people with autistic syndromes might find it helpful to write a series of ‘reports’ on what they do to get ready for leaving school (like in the book ‘Flowers for Algernon’).
- Support workers should be paid a fair wage for what they do.
- Primary school was the most difficult time of AW’s life and it should be changed, the Head teacher ‘didn’t believe’ in ASD. AW is much more relaxed at the secondary school as the staff are better trained.
**People involved in consultation:** Young person (BV), mother, Autism Development Officer.

**Consultation method:** Meeting at the family home.

---

**Outcomes:**

BV is aged 16, and is still officially at school but is not attending. The school is an urban secondary school. BV is waiting to find out about getting into a hairdressing course at college [BV was successful]. She tried a hairdressing work experience placement, but the people there were the problem. Support for Learning used to have some input, but not any more. There had been some support from a teacher with the Autism Outreach Education Service, but that teacher’s job has been cut.

In school, BV was being forced to ‘transfer’ between classes.

“If the teacher can’t handle you, then they move you to another class. You end up in a class with people you don’t know, and this can happen more than once a day.”

BV’s mother is concerned that BV is a vulnerable adult, and that there has never been provision to stop her ‘wandering off’ at school, which happens often. There is a lot of drug use at the school, and BV has only avoided drugs because she knows that drugs would badly affect her. Primary school was good, but there has been no real teaching since first year of secondary and she has been stuck in a class with people with many problems.

BV’s health is not great, and she knows that she is ‘different’ but doesn’t have an understanding of the autistic spectrum. The arrangement for BV was to be 2 days at school, 2 days in work experience and 1 day in college each week. There has been no help with getting to and from college, and no help or alternative for the work placement has been offered.

---

**Understanding of planning:**

Budgeting and finding a place to stay are things that BV will need help with. BV’s mother has asked the school to help with budgeting and living skills, but nothing helpful has been done.

**Meetings:**

At one meeting, BV was been met by a bunch of people with suits who just talked to each other. They made a point of getting BV down to the meeting but then didn’t ask her much. At this meeting, BV just nodded and said nothing.

BV’s mother says that the last meeting was a Record of Needs meeting, and that not much was said there. A transitions planning meeting should have happened at Christmas, but it didn’t happen.

**Information:**

No written information has been given to BV about getting ready to leave school. One guidance teacher wasn’t helpful, but another helped to arrange the college placement, and a third guidance teacher has also been helpful. One Careers advisor said that BV ‘will never have the grades’ to get into hairdressing, and will end up working in McDonalds and will amount to no more.

**Ownership:**

There have been no planning documents because there has been no real planning.

**Other information from the young person.**

- The school is a disgrace. The physical environment is terrible and there is blatant drug abuse. The school has no interest in BV.
Outcomes:
CT lives in the family home, he is in 4\textsuperscript{th} year at a rural secondary school, attends school 4 days a week and attends a college one day a week to do music. CT has a helper in all classes. Autism ‘seems a big deal for other people’, but CT doesn’t mind it. CT doesn’t really have plans for leaving school but is thinking about it.

Understanding of planning:
A careers advisor who came to the school has been helping CT to make decisions about his life.

Meetings:
A transitional review meeting was held recently. This was good – CT put his own ideas past the people who attended the meeting, and they talked about these ideas. The right people attended, there were not too many or too few people, and the meeting environment was quite comfortable. CT knew everyone who attended the meeting, but it’s not clear to CT about who will ensure that plans actually happen.

People involved in consultation: Young person (CT), Autism Development Officer.
Consultation method: First part – email, second part – MSN Messenger. The consultation method was changed half way through to suit the young person.

Information:
At a careers meeting a while ago, some information was provided but it didn’t really help. It was general information about what careers are available, and it wasn’t really relevant to CT’s interests. In order to get information in future, CT would just ask in school.

Control of planning:
CT feels in control of his plans for adulthood, but some more advice would be good. No particular documents have been used to help with planning.
People involved in consultation: Young person (DS), Autism Development Officer.
Consultation method: Meeting in a school guidance office.

Outcomes:
DS is in 3rd year at a rural secondary school, and plans to do some work experience through the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. DS’s hobbies include ice skating, knitting, walking the dog, helping around the house and looking after animals on the family croft. Although DS has autism, this is not too bad and doesn’t bother her too much. DS is interested in going to college and has already found out some things about college.

Understanding of planning:
There are some concerns for DS about getting ready for adulthood. Money might be a problem, because flats can be too expensive when you want to go to college. But you can practice for living on your own, before leaving home.
DS already has some idea of what decisions will have to be made before leaving school, and has visited one agricultural college and found out information about another. It has been quite easy for DS to work out what she might do after leaving school. What doesn’t help is when people put on pressure. A solution to this is to not make decisions when under pressure, and DS can make good decisions when left alone to think about them.

Meetings:
There have been meetings between DS and guidance staff from the school. Each meeting has involved just one member of staff from guidance and this has been fine. Guidance staff have given good information. Meetings took place in the same room where this consultation took place. The room is good for peace and quiet, and the light in the room is very good (there is a lot of daylight).

Information:
DS requested a college prospectus from a website, and has received it through the post. A visit to a college was another good source of information, and a visit to another local college would probably be helpful.

Control of planning:
DS has already put in some effort to getting ready for leaving school. Recently, there has been no formal planning for her leaving school, so there are no plans on paper.
Outcomes:
ER lives in the family home, he is in 4th year at an urban secondary school and plans to stay on until 6th year. Going to college is a possibility, but ER has no definite plans.

Understanding of planning:
It’s not clear to ER about what decisions he will have to make for leaving school. PSE classes have sometimes been about leaving school, but these classes have not been all that great and have been very vague.
ER usually puts thought into decision making, but is never really good at it. Meetings haven’t helped with decision making.

Meetings:
ER has attended several meetings. His experience is that these haven’t really been productive. People were bringing up issues but nothing came out of the meetings, and people were mainly just talking amongst themselves with not much input from ER. There was no problem with the number of meetings – ER just wants something to come out of them.
At meetings, ER tends to break down to giving ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers. The only result of the last meeting is that he now has to go to a study club. Important people were missing from that meeting – ER doesn’t go to these meetings just to have a laugh.
It’s impossible to elaborate clearly in most meetings. The arrangement for this meeting was very good [the consultation: 3 people in a large room]. It is not intimidating, and it’s nice to know a person before you talk to them [ER had received an introductory letter explaining the consultation meeting’s purpose]. It’s not good to meet a total stranger. It’s much better to write to the person in advance, rather than saying the day before that there will be a meeting the next day.

ER’s mother remembers 5 meetings in school that have taken place between 1st and 4th year, plus 2 health reviews.

Information:
PSE classes have given ER some information about how to find a job and about interview techniques, but with no detail. Sometimes the class will just be made to watch a video for an hour. For interviews, for example, what’s really needed is detailed information about what to do, how to dress and what to take. Other than this, ER has no preference about how information is provided, and is more concerned that planning and preparation just isn’t being done.
It might be helpful to hear from someone who has been through leaving school, such as someone who has gone to college and who can tell you what it’s like.

Control of planning:
Teachers and Careers workers might have come up with plans for ER, but he doesn’t really know. ER wants to get post-school arrangements sorted, but doesn’t know what to decide. He has been given websites to look at and has been given a general idea, but first needs to know what to plan about. No planning documents have been given to him.
What ER would like to receive is a simple letter about what happened at each meeting, in simple language, with no jargon.
Outcomes:
FP is attending a rural college outside of the Highlands, and is in the first year of two years at this college. She is doing a 1 year HNC course in Multimedia flexibly over this time, and is 'studying constantly' because the work is so enjoyable. In the local community FP organises and pays for her participation in martial arts, archery and lifesaving. Supported accommodation is provided for FP, who can now move to accommodation with less support due to improvements in independent living skills. The house is good, and there is a rota for cleaning, cooking and washing up, and 1 to 1 support for shopping and cooking. FP's mother says that the extra year is designed to reduce stress, by reducing pressure about having to leave. There is also an emphasis on developing social skills. FP was educated out-of-area, entered care following a crisis, then went to a better out-of-area school. A lot of good planning has been done by a Social Worker and by tutors at the college.

Understanding of planning:
FP is aware of what decisions will need to be made for leaving college and going to university. FP might have been informed about plans for leaving school, but can't remember (due to a memory problem).

Meetings:
There have been many meetings over the last few years. The meetings didn't interest FP very much, who was just apprehensive about change and just wanted things to be right. FP's mother says that meetings did take place. There have been regular review meetings at the college, and problems have been dealt with as they arise. These have been very well run, with everyone turning up as planned with all relevant documents. Small, relaxed meetings have been held, at a round table with about 6 familiar people.

Information:
FP has already started looking at materials for going to university.
Outcomes:
C is in the 4th year of secondary school he is currently studying for his standard grades. His favourite subject is computing his least favourite is maths and English. C has moved secondary schools. He thinks that this was an excellent move as he finds the new school much more relaxed. Had he not moved he thinks he would still be walking round the streets skiving. C is leaving at the end of this year and his plan is to go to Inverness College to do computing technology. The course he hopes to do opens up HNC level so he might go on to do that but at this stage he isn’t sure and is concentrating on the next step.

Understanding of planning:
C is focussing on moving to College. He has talked to the careers advisor, school and people from the College about this. C knows that he can go speak to Careers Scotland if he needs help in the future with his plans.

Meetings:
C has had a meeting with Careers Scotland at school about the courses that might interest him and from this meeting he found out about the course he has now applied to. This meeting was arranged by the school. C had help from the school with filling out the college application form. The College then contacted the school to arrange a meeting with C about any extra support he will need. This meeting was held at the College and C went down by himself. In the meeting the lady went over the support C might need and also the funding he could access for travel and buying books. C feels that more meetings with Careers advisors might be useful.

People involved in consultation: C and Assistant Educational Psychologist
Consultation method: Meeting with C at his school.

Information:
C has got most of his information from the meetings he has had with Careers Scotland, school and with the College.

Control of planning:
C has had a lot of support with making the transition to College. He feels it has been appropriate, useful, and is happy with the result.

Other information from the young person.
- The new school has been a turning point for C. Without this he feels that his truanting would have continued and it would have been very unlikely that he would be moving on to a positive destination.
- C feels that more meetings with Careers advisors might be useful.
**People involved in consultation:** T and Assistant Educational Psychologist.

**Consultation method:** Meeting at T’s school.

**Outcomes:**
T is in S4 and is studying for her standard grades. She has had issues with behaviour but has been working with the Children’s Service Worker on anger management which she thinks will be useful for when she gets a job. T is also part of G6 which does various projects in school, at the moment they are doing a graffiti board. T thinks this has been useful in building up her confidence and has shown that she can work in a team. T’s ambition is to become a nurse, she plans to leave school after this year and do access to childcare at a local college and then go on to do access to nursing at North Glasgow College, an area where she has family connections. The access to nursing college will only take people who are over 21, however T rang the college and found out that they will take people earlier if they complete the access to childcare course.

**Meetings:**
T has had a meeting with careers, however she had already sorted out her plans so the meeting wasn’t that useful, although the advisor did send her some interesting information on nursing. T has begun to think about how she will fund her courses and the support available but feels she may need to speak to her guidance teacher about this.

**Information:**
T uses the internet to research courses and phones the Colleges if any further information is required. The careers advisor did provide some useful information on nursing and T may need to speak to her guidance teacher about funding and support issues.

**Control of planning:**
T is very much in control of her plans, she enjoys doing it herself.

**Understanding of planning:**
T likes to organise things herself and does this well. T found the course in Glasgow, rang the College and found out how she would get on the course before she was 21, she then contacted the local College and arranged for an application for the access to childcare course to be sent to her, filled out the application form and organised references from her teachers. T may need help sorting out funding.

**Other information from the young person:**
- T loves the local youth club as it is peaceful and fun.
- T feels that the support school gives leavers in S5 and S6 is greater than what S4 leavers get and she would like, for instance, job interview practice to be made available to S4s.
Outcomes:
F is in S4 and is doing standard grades at the moment and was doing a six week evening class in beauty and hair therapy, however it had finished the evening before the interview. She has moved schools because of issues she had in her last school with behaviour, but now prefers the new school as it’s a lot quieter and easier to concentrate. Her plan is to get an apprenticeship at a hairdressers, F tried to get one this year but everyone had apprentices so she is going to stay on for 5th year to do intermediate 2s and try again next year. If she doesn't get an apprenticeship next year then she will go to college to do SVQ2 hairdressing, but that would be a last resort as F would rather be in a salon than stuck in College.

Information:
F did her work experience at a local hairdresser and enjoyed that. This made her sure hairdressing was what she wanted to do. School organised for F to go to the hair dressing academy for an open day which was useful as they told F about the good points and the bad points of the job. Douglas has also helped F with planning how she is going to get an apprenticeship.

Control of planning:
F feels her plans are pretty well sorted as long as she gets an apprenticeship. Work experience was important for her decision to become a hairdresser and she feels she has been well supported by school and Douglas.

Understanding of planning:
The school has been helping her, they arranged for F to do the evening class. F has spoken to Douglas Forbes, a Careers Scotland key worker, three times. The meetings with Douglas have been useful in helping her work out the best way to get an apprenticeship next year.

Meetings:
Douglas the Careers Scotland key worker has met F three times at school. The first meeting was to get to know F and her plans, the next was a short meeting to make sure she was set on her plans and the last meeting helped her think about getting Saturday jobs in a hair dressers so that it will be easier for F to get an apprenticeship. They also discussed options for getting part time work.

Other information from the young person.
- F appreciates the help she has got from Anne-Marie the Children’s Service Worker who has helped her through hard times and helped F improve her ability to communicate with people.
- F thinks there should be more work experience in school.
People involved in consultation: D and Assistant Educational Psychologist.
Consultation method: Meeting with D at a youth club.

Outcomes:
D is on a Get Ready for Work course, he is really delighted with it as it is allowing him to improve his computer skills. He enjoys crafts. His ambition is to be a mechanic. On leaving school he went to College in Inverness but he didn’t like the lack of practical work and that it only ran three days a week. He found getting a placement with garages in Inverness difficult and didn’t think there was enough support for this from the College. He also found travelling to and from College was a problem. This all meant he only stayed two months. After leaving he tried to get jobs locally but their was nothing going for him and he didn’t want to go on the Job Seekers allowance and sit at home all day, so he was glad Douglas Forbes the Careers Scotland key worker got in touch with him and organised a place on this course for him. Currently he is trying to get an apprenticeship at a garage with help from the College and split his time between College and an apprenticeship.

Meetings:
D had a meeting with Careers in school and they went through planning with him but he was sure he wanted to go to college to be a mechanic. After leaving the course Douglas got in touch with D and suggested the Get Ready for Work course, he took D and five other people down to the College where they met the course tutor who explained what they would be doing on the course, he found this very useful and wished someone from the Inverness College course had talked to him about what he would be doing on that course.

Information:
In school the careers advisor provided most of the information to D about his options. D would have liked more information on what he would be doing on the course; he thinks speaking to the course tutor would have been useful. A mechanics club in school for younger kids run by a guy from a local garage would be very useful for finding out about being a mechanic.

Understanding of planning:
D had a work placement at a local garage whilst he was at school, he enjoyed the hands on work and this convinced him that mechanics was the career he wanted. D had a meeting with careers in school; he was given a lot of information on becoming a mechanic and was told about the College course and given an application form. Douglas getting in touch with him helped D get things sorted and the College is helping D get an apprenticeship.

Control of planning:
The kind of support D is getting from Douglas now would have been very useful earlier, he thinks back in school there was too much focus on getting him onto a course without enough support and useful information.
**Outcomes:**
E is currently in S4 and doing her Standard Grades, she really enjoys English. She is in the XL club which has been helping her improve her skill with talking to people and it has helped her confidence a great deal, she organised a trip by herself. As part of the XL club E had to prepare for and take part in a mock interview. She thinks the XL club will help her when she has a job. E would like to be a beautician and wants to study at the best college she can get into.

**Information:**
The careers advisor gave E a lot of information which she has used as a starting point for her own research using prospectuses and the internet.

**Control of planning:**
E knows what she wants to do but needed the careers advisor to help begin getting some firm plans together.

**Other information from the young person.**
- E would like more courses in S4. She thinks that there is not enough opportunity in S4 for young people to pursue their interests, which means that when people leave they don’t have the skills to do what they want to do.

**Meetings:**
E had a meeting with Careers Scotland in school. They went through her plans and what she likes and dislikes and then went through what jobs would suit her, which the advisor helped explain, and the courses that are available locally and nationally. E hasn’t met Careers again but is planning to. Her mum has been helping E decide on the best course.
**People involved in consultation:** J and Assistant Educational Psychologist.

**Consultation method:** Meeting in J’s school.

**Outcomes:**
J is in the 4th year of secondary school, he is currently studying for his Standard Grades. He has recently moved schools because he wasn’t getting on well at his last school. J is involved in sports inside and outside of school and his favourite subject is PE. He is staying on in S5 to do Sports Leadership and Higher PE, English and History. J is currently going for rugby coaching awards and is helping teach PE to first years, this was organised by the PE department and the Depute Rector. J also helps with the school pantomimes and plays. He would like to go to university but maybe after a few years of leaving school so he could get a good job and a driving licence.

**Understanding of planning:**
J has thought about what to do when he leaves school but he does not think it will hit until he leaves, as J has loads of things he enjoys but doesn’t know which one he would suit. Speaking to Careers Scotland and work experience has helped his planning.

**Meetings:**
J has spoken to a careers advisor from Careers Scotland in the careers office about his plans. They talked about his likes and dislikes and what jobs he thinks he might like. This has helped him narrow down his options. He has spoken to the youth worker at school but not really about careers.

**Information:**
J did his work experience teaching PE in local primary schools, this was organised by the School and he thinks the teachers went out of their way to help get this set up for him, especially the Depute Rector and the PE department. J enjoyed the work experience and it let him find out more about what being a PE teacher would be like.

**Control of planning:**
J has made plans for doing Highers, he chose the sports leadership course as it will help him on the way to PE teaching, whilst history is good general knowledge and he needs English to get on to a degree. Beyond that he is still unsure, although he thinks taking some time between school and university will help, especially financially. J hopes to go to university, maybe to study to become a PE teacher but at this point, although he knows he would enjoy PE teaching, he is still unsure whether he will suit it.

**Other information from the young person.**
- For J it is important that relationships are built on mutual respect and he thinks that this is an important lesson for doing well in a job that people need to learn in school from their relationships with teachers.
YP Who Need More Choices

More Chances

People involved in consultation: L and SC.
Consultation method: Meeting with L at a youth club.

Outcomes:
L is 17 and is currently on a Get Ready for Work course. He likes socialising with his mates. After leaving school L went onto a Get Ready for Work course, this finished and Careers Scotland arranged for him to do a work placement at ILM, a company that recycles white electrical goods. Careers Scotland then suggested he start an access to construction course at Dingwall College, he didn’t enjoy the electrical side of this course so with help from Careers Scotland he got onto his current course. He has always wanted to be in the construction industry and get himself a trade but wasn’t sure what he wanted to do. From the experience he has gained from working on building sites through college placements and work experience he has found that he really enjoys joinery and hopes to pursue this as a career.

Meetings:
In school he had a couple of meetings with the careers advisor and they went through what jobs would suit him but he didn’t know what he wanted to do and wasn’t really interested, so it wasn’t that useful. Careers Scotland got back in touch with him after he left and Douglas has built a good relationship with L. L can phone him if he needs help and Douglas keeps in touch with L. If a meeting is needed it is usually held upstairs at the youth club, in a private room.

Information:
For deciding on a career it has been the work experience and placements that have been most important. For planning for college courses and work placements Douglas Forbes has been the main source of information for L.

Control of planning:
The Get Ready for Work course has helped L with job skills. Douglas helps L in thinking through what courses and work experience he would like to do. This has allowed L to try out different trades and find one that best suits him.

Other information from the young person
- Douglas the Key worker has been critical in making sure L gains the skills to fulfil his ambitions.
**People involved in consultation:** M and Assistant Educational Psychologist.

**Consultation method:** Meeting with M at his school.

**Outcomes:**
M is in the 4th year of school, he is studying for his standard grades. His favourite subjects are PE CDT and English. M does DT instead of French which gives him a free period to do extra work to bring up his grades. M plans to stay on until the end of 5th or 6th year, during which time he plans to take the opportunity to spend a day a week at college. After leaving school he wants to learn a trade, either joinery or plumbing, however M is really good at sport so he may join the army and become a PE teacher.

**Meetings:**
M organised a meeting with careers in which they went through the sports he is good at, his hobbies and things he might find interesting. It lasted about fifty minutes. M didn’t find it that useful as he felt they didn’t give him enough information.

**Information:**
The meeting with careers gave M some information but he would have liked more. He has also researched careers online during PSE.

**Understanding of planning:**
As M plans to stay on at school he hasn’t done a great deal of planning yet, however over the next few years at school he is going to get more information on trades and physical education. He has spoken to his parents, teachers and careers about his plans and will do so again closer to his leaving date. Work experience was helpful for deciding on what sort of trade M would enjoy.

**Control of planning:**
M is leading his planning, he has organised the meeting with careers and is doing his own research.

**Other information from the young person.**
- M would like more opportunities and more classes in school as he feels this would help people decide what they want to do when they leave school.
Outcomes:
I am doing a year’s placement with Project Scotland. I do 30 hours a week volunteering and we get £55.00 a week plus travel expenses. I went to Volunteering Highland to see what placements there were and I came across Inverness Blitz and I decided to find out about that. To begin with I was just volunteering but found Project Scotland. So I decided to do that for a year as I still didn’t know what I wanted to do after school so it was just something to do. But now I know I want to do something with sport.
At first I didn’t have any intentions of doing media or any of that, but I have learned how to do it properly. I do all the press releases but I also do some coaching with the youngsters now. I did some coaching when I was still at school. I got some training in it. I have had a lot of support this year to do this.
I do not know how things will work next year but Paul (Careers Scotland) and my mentor from Project Scotland they are looking at it for me.
I live with my Dad but he works off-shore for 2 weeks and I live with my mum when he is away. I have applied for my own house and that should be coming up soon. I have worked out the finances for it. I will manage most of the cooking and cleaning but there are just some things I will need help with. I can get help when I need it. All my family helps out; I have got quite a big family and everyone helps in their own way. I have friends I can ask.
I am organised at everything except I don’t know what I want to do as a job. Transport is fine, well its OK I either get a lift from someone in my family or I can get a taxi if they can’t do it. I can just get a normal taxi I don’t need a special one.
Understanding of planning:
I made up my mind to leave school, everyone asked me to think about it. I had done my standard grades. I couldn’t have got Highers even if I had tried my hardest. I think what I got in school was the best that I could have got. So I didn’t think I should stay.
Meetings:
My support teacher didn’t want me to leave but she set up a meeting with Paul, so I met him one lunch time a week. Those meetings were useful. We did sheets and that to find out what I wanted to do. The only thing I wanted to do was to get a job but I didn’t know what job I wanted. I am in college quite a lot just now and so I decided college might be an option. I have applied for college to do a sports course next year.
Information:
Every time we met we had sketch pad drawings and it was all written down. [There was] information about the things that were to do in Inverness.
Control of planning:
I decided everything myself. People gave me their opinions and said what they could do. No one stopped me.
Other information from the young person:
- My school was brilliant. Everyone says their school is the worst but mine is great.
- Me, the teachers and my mum and dad came up with idea that I should tell everyone in my year about what was wrong [after diagnosis] Everyone in the school has been good and friendly and that.
People involved in consultation: ZC and Children’s Consultation Worker
Consultation method: Completed the questions at home on her computer

Outcomes:
I have severe cerebral palsy. I can’t speak and use a communication aid and I can’t do anything for myself and rely on other people for all my day to day tasks. I get independence from using my electric chair. My 3 year transition period was the most unhappy, frightening and upsetting time of my life. I have now left school for almost a year now and life in the end wasn’t so bad but there is still a lot of room for improvement.

I live with my mom, dad and brother. I was lucky that with all my pushing I did when I was at my meeting and out with the meeting I managed to get 3 half days at Inverness College studying Reading, Scottish History and IT which is in the learning support part of the college. I have also just finished a computer course in North Highland which was a normal college course which I really enjoyed because it pushed me to think about what I had to do and I was with normal young adults and we all had our problems but we managed to finish the course as a group which was nice. I can not work because my disability is so restricting.

The only hobby I have is wheelchair dancing which I have to travel to Inverness once a week. I really enjoy working hard towards our competitions. Now that I have left school there are not so many groups I can access. I used to go to a youth club once a week but that stopped when I left school as they only take young adults up to 19 years of age. Then I started to go to an over 18 group but that too has finished as the person who run it lost his funding. That upset me as that was the only time I could go somewhere independently as there were helpers at the group, and we caught a minibus to the club which made all of us feel special.

Understanding of planning:
I need to be encouraged to be as independent as possible if I am ever going to be able to live on my own some day, which is what I dream of. I know I would always need support to do this and although in the end of the day I know it would always depend on the cost and the funding issues that go with this, whether I would ever be able to achieve this. My preparation for adulthood was a very, very hard road. I was lucky because although I am physically disabled and a non-speaker I have a brain that works and at my meetings I wrote letters on my computer of how I felt and this explained to everyone what I was feeling and what my dreams were. For a long time people said they understood and would work towards my goals. At the end of the three year transition I was no further forward, so I decided to write letters of my own to people like the head of the council who deals with the funding for special need places at college, my local MP and I even went as far as to write to Jack McConnel and Tony Blair. The last two didn’t even reply but my local MP was very supportive.

I found out by myself that other communities give their young adults more choice of higher education and they are allowed 4 full days of a variety of academic studies for a period of three years which I felt I wanted for myself. I was first only offered 1 half day which I felt insulted by as I felt this is all the college thought I was worth, but after my door banging and treading on a few toes I managed to get 3 half days and a half day at North Highland College which I felt was a lot better. But I would have liked more, as I feel that after I have had maybe three years of college I would like to in some way be able to do some work, even if it is only voluntary, writing letters as I know that no firm would take me on, as I need a carer and adaptations to toilets and this doesn’t fit into today’s vision of disabled people like me are looked on as nobodies.

[ZC’s story continues on next page]
**Meetings:**
The planning of what is involved to leave school is a hard one as we are asked what we want in life and what our goals are but as most of us have only known school and home life, have can we make these choices? This makes us feel frightened as we don’t always know what’s out there for us and we don’t know where to go to get this information we need so that we can make what we want a reality. My meetings were always held twice a year in school with all the relevant bodies. Towards the end of my school life I had a planning meeting when I invited people I wanted and at this meeting what I hoped for was written down and I was given this huge piece of paper at the end but still nothing positive came out of it. It was as if everyone was going through the motions but now no one to do anything. I had various meetings with my school careers advisor in the last year of school but this didn’t give me much choice and they only seemed to follow up information that I had gone out to find out about what I could expect in the future which was hard going. It was as if there was no hope for me when I left school.

I think the way these meetings are put together should change for the better, giving us clear ideas about what’s out there not by talking but showing us as then and only then can we know if we are capable or comfortable with the choices we have chosen, as sometimes things don’t work out for one reason or another and we find ourselves left with nothing. Not only should our choices be mapped out with our full knowledge and understanding, I feel there should be a back up plan worked out in case funding or places fall down at the last hurdle. As people with disabilities need a full and interesting life, the same as other young adults as we all have a place in society and we should be treated equal.

**Information:**
I would have liked time to explore fully what was on offer in the wide world and find out what I was good at and what I could do that would stretch my mind and self worth and decide what I could do not only for my first year of leaving, but what was going to happen to me in the future, like exploring jobs, colleges, clubs, day centres, independent living and any other options that are out there. Surely the professionals that give us these choices should know more about what is out there for all disabilities, and maybe we should get people who just deal with people with disabilities rather than other school leavers whether disabled or not.
People involved in consultation: BE and Children’s Consultation Worker
Consultation method: Interview at home

Outcomes:
I am at Cantray Bridge College. It is every day, Monday to Friday. I am there for a two month trial. If I am successful I can get a six year placement. I’d quite like to do it for a year or so. When I left school I did 22 weeks of building and learning to do things like that.
I do rugby in winter, sailing in the summer. I haven’t been out socially recently; working at Cantray Bridge makes me tired. I go out sometimes at the weekend with my friends. We take a couple of drinks, just in the house. I haven’t been in the night clubs recently.
I live at home with my mum, dad and sister. I’d like to live independently, in a flat with a couple of mates.
I can look after my health most of the time. I can do all the cooking, washing and stuff but I couldn’t manage my money. I could be sensible about drinking, smoking and that.
I am happy with my relationships most of the time.
When I was in school I couldn’t concentrate in the classroom, I would have liked to work in a different environment, something like Cantray Bridge. There was some point being in school and class, but not all the time.

Understanding of planning:
It was hard to leave school. Once when I had made the decision I kept going back I wanted to go back. It was a little bit pushed, the decision to leave, but it was my decision.
I had just grown out of it. I was getting too old and I didn’t feel I’d learned a lot. The careers advice did help a bit. There weren’t very many options for me when I left. My parents and the careers advisor helped me look for options where I could still live at home. I chose to do the building at college. Cantray Bridge was pressurised on me so I did a 5 day trial. But I enjoyed it, so I am not sorry. There weren’t other options then I was just at home.

Meetings:
Careers meetings were at the local hall in youth worker’s office not in school. I think I invited my mum once, I can’t remember. I can’t remember what the meetings were like. I think it was more talking than paperwork. She was trying to work out something for me. I had no special meeting [at school].

Information:
I got options for college courses and that. Cantray Bridge was done by my social worker, she discussed it with my parents. We looked it up on the internet. More information about the college courses available would have helped; something that is not too difficult.

Control of planning:
The college was my idea but the rest of the stuff I was pushed through. I didn’t have very much say in it. I think it would have been better if it had been different at the time, but the outcome is OK so far.
People involved in consultation: MM and Transitions Coordinator  
Consultation method: Interview at school

Outcomes:
I attend school for two days and college for three. School is a Monday and Friday and I am the leader of the Equals Group. We recycle paper from the school. I make sure everyone does their jobs properly and that they are all busy. I am working on my CV, just got my grades to go in. I go to College on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. I had a placement doing brickwork but that was boring, I had done it before. My best day is Thursday, I do joinery and history. I want to be a joiner fitting kitchens, not roofs, I don’t like heights.

I enjoy playing football, playing on the computer and watching TV. I found a programme on TV called Talking Sex With Your Parents that was interesting I haven’t talked to them though.

I have a friend and we play the computer and sometimes have pretend fights, we like Miller Beer. I am not with my girlfriend we are not talking, don’t know what I have done.

I have been away on holiday with the school, I used to go to Thor House but that was boring, I don’t go anymore. I would like a holiday somewhere but I don’t know where.

I live with my mum, step dad and brother. We all get on well I like them. I see my real dad every second weekend we chill out and listen to music. Sometimes I help him with his work gardening, I cut the grass.

I have good relationships with my teachers, and at college and with my friend Shaun.

The things I need help with are reading and spelling, cooking and knowing when the food is ready.

Understanding of planning:
In the future I would like my own place; I would like to share it with somebody—don’t know who. I have talked about this to my mum and step dad but not my dad I forgot. There are things I would need to learn: paying the rent, tax, TV licence, phone bill, gas bill making sure there is electricity, food, and cooking. The music couldn’t be too loud because of the neighbours.

Careers helped me plan to go to College from school. I was happy they asked me what I wanted to do. I think I am ready to move on after the summer, sort of, I am getting someone who will help me to know the things you need to know when you leave school, job, pay and rent all the things to “manage life after school”.

Meetings:
I had a meeting this morning talking about the future, she is coming back next week to talk some more. I would like to learn more about being a joiner at College next year.

The meetings were fine, my mum, 2 teachers, Head teacher, me and the lady from careers were there: that was fine. My meetings happen in school, I have had one big one and two small ones with the careers lady. I would have liked some more to talk about the future and make more plans. If there was stuff written down I didn’t see it I didn’t see leaflets or books or anything, maybe better if I had had something to look at — I don’t know.

Information:
I don’t have anything written down about my plan, maybe my mum has. I do know about my college plan. I have all my certificates in an envelope.

Control of planning:
I was able to say what I wanted but don’t feel it was enough—don’t know though. I do feel I have made my own decisions about what. I want I understand how to make a good decision. If I was stuck I would ask my mum or the teacher.
**People involved in consultation:** R, Children’s Consultation Worker and Transitions Coordinator.

**Consultation method:** Interview at youth club

**Outcomes:**
Left school, I can’t remember, all this year I have been out of school. I work at Nansen Highland. I do stuff like first aid, well anything really. I go 4 times a week all day. I get my own taxi. I sometimes enjoy it. I like cooking and first aid and things like that. I get bullied there by a girl. The boss is trying to help me out but it is still a problem.

On Friday I go to St Clements School and help some people.

I help at the Strathpeffer Hotel as a volunteer. I work at the weekend from 2.00 pm until about 11.00 pm. I do my own bit of work and watch out for fights. Whenever there is a fight I ask the barperson to phone the police.

[Socially] I go to the pipe band. I go to it as a helper. I don’t play but I like pipe music.

[Hobbies] I play the accordion. There is a barn dance coming up when I will play it. I pick it up by ear.

[Where do you live?] At home with parents and one brother. I’d like to live somewhere like Dingwall in the future with my girlfriend. Not yet but in the future. I’d need help to get the right money and the right house. I’d need help managing bills and so on. I think I’d manage cooking.

[Health] I can look after myself. I could look after myself keeping clean and so on.

**Understanding of planning:**
I know I need extra help. I know when I need help and can ask for it.

**Meetings:**
While I was at school they talked about Nansen. There weren’t any other things talked about. I asked for St Clements and I got that too.

**Information:**
I got a book for the Nansen Project. I was talking to my girlfriend about the house, she says that it is not time yet. I don’t know who else to ask.

**Control of planning:**
It was my choice to do these things.
Outcomes:
Right now I do anything, I do college fashion and relaxation, for a couple more weeks. Then I go to the library to read a book for a wee while. I don’t tell my mum she’d be “Oh another genius in the house. I don’t want two of them”. I live with my mother and my brother and 13 pets, dogs and cats. We are going to find some of them a new home. I love my mum. She is not well. I wish that I had a girlfriend. I only have friends in my computer games. J. is like the brother, I treat him like a brother. I am the computer expert for the consoles. There is [a girl] called S. at college. If I do something really silly she will laugh. [Special hobby] PlayStation 2, fishing, roller bowl, a bit of baseball, last time I played I broke a window. I help about the house. I look after the puppies like mad. I don’t go to the dentist because I clean my teeth everyday anyway. I clean myself since I have eczema, I have a shower mostly everyday. [Did Doctor talk to you about your eczema?] Eczema is apparently all about stress and worrying too much. If I am out in the sun I try to find as much shade as possible. I hate the sun. I took the doctor’s advice about my eczema. It has all gone except for a bit on my back and my scalp.

Understanding of planning:
[Were things planned at school?] Yes I think so, since I have special needs, everyone has different special needs in education. I have a psychologist [and have been told] my knowledge age limit is 5 to 6. Being grown up [is about] I respect everyone else and be very polite, help around in the house or anyone else’s house, like my friend’s house. Take responsibility for yourself, take responsibility for your money.

Control of planning:
Badaguish helped me. I would like to be the waiter there; washing and drying the plates and that. And get the dessert ready for them. I like cooking, it is one my strongest hobbies. I know I couldn’t go for a day, I’d need to go for a whole week. I wouldn’t mind doing that and working my butt off. It would be good work experience. If I’m shut down from doing something, [something] I would love doing is always there to comfort me.

Other information from the young person:
- I think I am a big help in school.
**People involved in consultation:** CK, Children’s Consultation Worker, father then mother  
**Consultation method:** Interview at home

**Outcomes:**  
I thought I could go to college to do something with horses and animals. I am not sure if I can get the right signing support to do that. I am going to stay on at school for two more years to do more subjects; some subjects I need like science and some I enjoy like geography. The signing support for science is a bit difficult. They don’t have the right signs. When I go to college it will be very important that someone can do the right signs for the science and other subjects. I would like to work with horses and have heard about residential horse riding courses but don’t know if the funding and signing would be available.  
When I leave home I will manage to make new friends, I will help them learn to sign for the deaf. I can understand what people say if they speak very clearly, but it is harder to follow if it is a big group or if they talk too quickly.  
When I leave college I want to be able to get a job and make a home and to earn enough money to do the things I want to do.  
I had work experience in a vet but it was a town vet and there were only pet animals like cats or dogs. I would have liked a country vet and going out to see cows, horses and sheep. It was a bit boring. One work experience is not enough, I’d like another one.

**Understanding of planning:**  
I need signing for all my subjects so I can get my exams by sixth year. My signing teachers just now are good, but I need the more experienced signing teachers. I had teachers in S3 who were not so experienced and they did not have qualified signing to help me with my subjects. I have had to catch up in PE and in Administration. That has been very difficult. This is a problem everywhere there are not enough trained signing teachers. It depends on where you live.  
It is the first time the school have had young people with cochlear implant and this was hard for the school as we have the ability to do subjects at a higher level as we are able to understand language better. English is not my first language so it has been harder for me. My family have spoken English at home to help me.  
**Meetings:**  
I saw the careers person in school but they were not able to sign and did not understand about how I would need full signing support at college.  
Someone who was deaf came to visit us and talk about his work, his future, his sport. I thought it was a good idea to have deaf people in because it makes it relevant to me.  
(CK’s story continues on next page)
**People involved in consultation:** CK, Children’s Consultation Worker, father then mother

**Consultation method:** Interview at home (continued)

**Information:**
I need more information about college and about signing. I need to find out if there is accommodation with other deaf people. I don’t know where to go to get the information about college or university and how I can be supported there. Is there anywhere I can go where I will be with other young people who have hearing impairment when I am at college or university? I don’t know where to get that information. Also if there are any deaf clubs I can go to. I want to make friends with people my own age and my own level of ability. I need someone to be able to sign when I am out socially as people talk too fast and I miss out on the conversation.

**Control of planning:**
I might not be able to choose where I want to go or what course I want to do. I think I may have to choose a place that can offer signing. If I go to university I won’t get signed all the time, I will only get one or two hours’ support. I can’t manage without full signing. I don’t know if I can get this. I need full signed support to get my qualifications. I want to be involved in all stages of the planning for my future. I need specialist careers advice, especially about funding for signing support.

**Other information from the young person:**
- In Denmark I could go to any college, they would put in a translator, a person who could sign, and who would stay with me wherever I was studying.
- In Denmark there is a ‘High School’ which is a boarding school for the last year of school; where you still finish your education but live away from home with your friends. 9 out of 10 teenagers go to these schools. These schools have different emphasis, perhaps drama or sport. It helps you decide what job or career you might want to do. There would be a signing school where I would get the help I need. I think this would be a good idea for Scotland.
People involved in consultation: Mother and Children’s Consultation Worker (young person is not able to express an opinion on anything that is not happening now but has taken part in a video telling his story)
Consultation method: Interview at home

Outcomes:
AN had a record of needs and was in school until he was 19. He is now 22 years old. Using direct payments and Independent Living Fund (ILF) AN has a busy week, doing some sort of ‘work’ in the morning and leisure in the afternoon.

Understanding of planning:
AN did not understand about the concept of leaving school. His parents asked for him to have work placements so he could begin to experience that there was life outside school, however the school could not supply a support worker. His parents persisted and AN got to do his work experience using one of the Direct Payment carers. This was a great help to him, he was animated and enjoyed the physical work. His parents felt he could now understand that he was going to leave school and do something different. The placement was crucial to his understanding about leaving school, he needed the concrete experience of “work”. In the end he was not anxious leaving school but looked forward to leaving and going to the croft. He said he liked “working hard”.

Meetings:
At Record of Needs reviews transition seemed to be on the back burner, there was no help with what options might be available; parents had to find out for themselves; the only discussion was about the [day care] Centre or sending AN away to somewhere that specialised in his type of epilepsy. The parents felt that projects like the Nansen project were for people who had moderate learning disability rather than severe disability like AN.
The parents pushed for Person Centred Planning (PCP). Using photos a book was made up of who AN was and what he liked. The PCP was key to his transition as it showed up AN’s likes and interests. The PCP led to AN having a plan but no service to deliver it.

Information:
AN’s parents decided to ask for a bigger Direct Payments package to allow them to apply for Independent Living Fund. The amount being asked for was the equivalent of AN attending the day care centre 5 days, but with the ILF on top, his parents were able to tailor a program for AN. The timing was crucial to allow for recruiting and employing staff before AN left school to ensure there would be no gap in service. The Social Worker needed to approve the package; then it had to go to the ILF people and so forth. The panel who decide the social work packages (RAP) did not have time to consider his package at first. The Social worker was supportive but powerless to help. Eventually the approval did go through but the whole process had been enormously stressful to the family.

Control of planning:
The change in routine was difficult for AN at first and his seizures increased in frequency for a time. It took time for his parents to get used to handing over care especially when AN had seizures. But they held team meetings with staff and discussed how to handle his moods and understand his communication. His parents now report that the staff have been great and it has worked well.

Other information:
- AN’s parents feel it was a long and difficult journey through transition. They also say that managing Direct Payments is like running a small business. They feel that parents need advocacy at this time and that transition workers are needed; people who know what is available in terms of projects which are appropriate for people with more profound learning needs, and who are trained in person centred planning.
- Appropriate respite is needed for parent carers.
People involved in consultation: Mother and Children’s Consultation Worker

Consultation method: AF has complex and multiple impairment due to a degenerative condition. AF is unable to express herself verbally or to understand the concept of time, she responds to her current circumstances only.

Outcomes:
AF lives at home with her parents and younger brother. She attends Drummond School and goes to a special needs playscheme when she is well. AF’s health has deteriorated a lot recently. This makes it hard to look into the future. When AF is ill and at home, her mother looks after her; her father can take time off work to provide the care occasionally when needed. AF leaves school at the end of June 2007.
AF tends to be really quiet, there is nothing to indicate if she is happy or not. AF seems to feel safe in her own home, she especially loves her bed and her bedroom. She inhabits a very small world, very limited. The family are not able to go out together as a family. Mum is not able to have a social life as caring for AF does not really allow for it.
Transition in health services is a worry for the parents. At the moment they have open access to the children’s ward at the hospital but that is all changing and there will now have to be a referral from the GP. Considering the complexity and deterioration of AF’s condition it is hard to see how this will work.
There was a health meeting held where various professionals met to discuss the transfer of equipment. The parents had not realised that the medical equipment AF uses would have to go back to children’s services and be reapplied for from adult services. For example, her gate trainer which was made to measure and will be unlikely to fit anyone else, belongs to children’s services and so must remain at school rather than follow AF.

Meetings:
At future needs meetings the parents have been told that AF should be going to the Day Care Centre after she leaves school but this is apparently dependent on the funding being available. Previously AF did not have a social worker and this has delayed the planning for post school. She now has a social worker involved and an application has been made for the Day Care centre.
The Day Care centre people and social worker had not attended future planning meetings until the last meeting in January. This has delayed a support package being drawn up for A. It should have started earlier if adult social work had attended. The last meeting was full of gloom about funding. The package goes back to one department and then the other and it will only happen if the funding is there. It is depressing for the parents. Also AF needs stimulation and company which will be difficult to provide at home all day with her mother.

Information:
Mum has been down to look at the Day Care Centre but was quite disappointed; the manageress said they are not really geared up for someone like AF although they would like to be.
There have been no written plans for AF; it has all been oral; these have lacked clarity. Written information about and from the meetings, listing options, would have been helpful.

Control of planning:
AF has not had any control of her planning

Other information:
- The respite situation does not look promising. AF’s mother said “The council should be absolutely and utterly ashamed of themselves for not providing for this younger age group.”
- A lack of respite puts extra pressure on families. If the mother takes unwell what would happen to AF then?
People involved in consultation: I and Children’s Consultation Worker
Consultation method: Interview at youth club

Outcomes:
I go to college at the moment, I’m in 2nd year of the skills builder course. I do cooking and maths just now, I can’t remember what else.
I go out with friends up the street and to the shop. There are not really things to do we just go to each others houses. We still go out if the weather is not good.
I just started work experience in the last week, I answer phone calls, type, take stuff to the post office and post letters. It is a full day. When I am in here I don’t do computers but phone calls and letters etc.
I go to YOFI [youth club] but not tomorrow as I am going off to see my boyfriend. I’ve been going out with him for a month today but I’ve not met him yet, I talk to him on the phone.
I was in care for 13 years but not now I am 18. I was with a good family and I am still living with them until I get somewhere of my own. I’ve sent for incapacity so I can give them money for looking after me. Hopefully I’ll get a flat of my own. I’ve just phoned up and my Social Worker has phoned up. I’d get help if I got a flat; I’d need help with bills. I can clean but I can’t cook. I can’t manage money at all. I thought about sharing a flat with my mate, she would help me.

Health] I manage. I see a doctor about my chest, I am on an inhaler. I don’t have to pay for prescriptions. My doctor hasn’t changed.
I understand why I need help; I can do some things myself but I need help till I get good at it.
I want to get a job in the end, definitely a paid job. I would need help probably. I want to work in a hotel but I can’t figure out money to save myself so I couldn’t do the till. I could work in an office.
I am not with careers any more. They only helped me for stuff with college. College are not helping me find a job. My Social Worker is only looking for a house for me not a job. My new Social Worker will be helping me look for a job.

Understanding of planning:
I did get the right help from my close family. I made the decisions about leaving school, I just said ‘I am going to do this, do that.’ and my foster mum said ‘Right, fine you go ahead and do it. It’s your life, you go ahead and do it.’ I wasn’t sure if there was a learning support bit [in college] because I have special needs. So they checked with college and they did have support for learning. So they took me up and I got accepted and I started. But for two whole months I was bored stiff, they wouldn’t let me start college, they wouldn’t let me in XL club [at school] but eventually they let me in [to college].

Meetings:
We had meetings in school about my future. My teachers and foster mum went plus the Depute, we discussed it, all [about] my future. They wanted me to stay, I wanted to leave. We had a meeting in school when I was 15. She was hoping I’d be able stay on till I was 18. I was actually only in school two days ‘cause I was in college some days. There was nothing else for me [to do at school]. My teachers had a lot of meetings and they said they had nothing else for me so I said ‘Can I leave then?’ and they said ‘Yes’ so I left right away. I was able to keep college on.

Information:
I got information, they told about what would happen and asked if I was OK with it. I said ‘Yes I am happy with it.’ They wrote it down and I got a copy of it.

Control of planning:
It was my plan, I have control of it but people have helped.
**People involved in consultation:** FRN and Through/After Care Coordinator

**Consultation method:** Interview from questionnaire

---

**Outcomes:**
FRN is still at school, leaving this summer. She is living in rented accommodation with a landlady. She is going on to higher education, hopefully in Edinburgh. She hopes to live in Halls of Residence there. FRN enjoys using the internet, music and after school activities. She walks 2 miles to school and back to keep fit and would go to her GP if she had any health needs. She has friends around to talk and listen to.

L. her Through/After Care Coordinator helped FRN with her moving on plan. There are things she needs to plan now for leaving school.

**Meetings:**
FRN has one weekly meeting with L. These are social meetings and have been very helpful.

**Information:**
FRN has had no information from school. Students are just told to look at prospectuses etc. There is no other support. It would have been a great help to have more discussions with Guidance/Careers about career choices, access to a telephone etc.

**Control of planning:**
FRN feels she has had full control of her planning. She will leave school hopefully with Highers and a Pathways plan. This could be in a better format. It could be in a presentation folder which could be added to when and as other achievements are reached and include a CV etc.
People involved in consultation: JLP and Through/After Care Coordinator (T/ACC)
Consultation method: Interview with questionnaire.

Outcomes:
JLP attends Get Ready for Work at Lochaber College. He lives with his partner at his partner’s house. JLP plays football, computers and mixes with friends. JLP exercises, plays football and walks to keep healthy. He would talk to his doctor or the Through/After Care Coordinator if he needed health information. JLP needs to get full time employment and support to complete his moving on plan. These things could have been identified while he was still at school.

Understanding of planning:
While at school JLP did not feel prepared for adulthood. He thinks now that he made wrong choices. [If he could do something differently?] He would have reduced offending.

Meetings:
FRN has had regular meetings with the Through Care /After Care Coordinator. These are in the form of informal discussions. They are good. There was sometimes written information.

Information:
FRN can’t remember about any information he may or may not have received.

Control of planning:
FRN felt in control when home. He didn’t leave school with any [certificates or anything to show achievements].
People involved in consultation: BF and Development Officer for Interrupted Learning.
Consultation method: Interview with questionnaire.

Outcomes:
BF is not in school although of school age; she lives with her parents and 3 brothers. BF keeps healthy by taking exercise, eating healthily and health lessons. [If you needed to find out about health?] “I’d ask my sister.” BF has her best friends, her whole family and her teacher to talk to and socialises by cleaning up, babysitting, shopping, swimming and going to the pictures.

Understanding of planning:
There has been no plan but BF feels “pretty good” about growing up and is “quite happy” about the decisions taken so far.

Meetings:
There was one formal meeting with her teacher. To make meetings better, BF thought they should “make it in a nice place”.

Information:
No information has been given. BF was not at school long enough to get many certificates but did get a maths certificate. She would have liked a written report to take away from school.

Control of planning:
Plans have been decided by the family but are “fine by me”.
**People involved in consultation:** JW and Development Officer for Interrupted Learning.

**Consultation method:** Telephone interview with questionnaire.

**Outcomes:**
JW is in school one day a week, is involved in SCF projects and is a waitress in an hotel part-time 5 days a week. She lives on a Travellers’ site with her parents, 2 sisters and her brother. JW socialises by going out with her sisters, shopping or talking to her friends on the phone.

JW looks after her health by eating a healthy diet and taking exercise – she walks a lot. If she needs advice on health matters she would arrange to see the local nurse. She could call on family and friends if she needed someone to talk to.

**Understanding of planning:**
JW can get information from her family and friends, could ask the teacher, college or Careers Scotland if she needed something. She “feels fine” about growing up; she has made her “own decisions – no plan – feel fine about it”.

**Meetings:**
“No formal meeting [which] is fine by me” JW has received support from teachers, college and careers; this has been “useful”.

**Information:**
JW received information from Careers Scotland, teacher and Save the Children. She said she is “quite happy” with the information given [it] “helped me a lot”

**Control of planning:**
JW’s moving on was “completely my own decision”. She did not have a written moving on plan. “Don’t want a written down plan.” She has left school with some Access 3 certificates and has sat Standard Grade English and is awaiting the result.
We would find it really useful to continue to find out about young people’s experiences of transition and transition planning, so we have put together a set of questions. We hope that young people will continue to contribute to making transition in Highland a better process through answering them.

Please return your answers/comments to;

Gillian Newman
Highland Children’s Forum
Unit 6,
15 Lotland Street,
Inverness, IV1 1ST
Telephone: 07789 680 811
email: transition@highlandchildrensforum.org

Your Life

What makes you happy?
What do you do (or would like to do) to get more skills?
What do you do to stay healthy?
Where do you get information about keeping healthy?
How do your close relationships make you feel e.g. with friends, family, lovers?
How do you feel about your community?
Your Planning

In what ways did adults support you to get useful information when you needed it?

How did the information and support you got help you to make your own decisions, if at all?

How did your decisions influence your plans?

What did you like about your planning meetings e.g. being listened to, the people there, having enough time, having questions answered?

What didn’t you like about your planning meeting e.g. number of people, length of meeting, amount of support, not really listened to, time or place of meeting?

How did the plans you made then help you get where you are now?

Your Life After School

What are you doing now?

What has helped you?

What has got in the way?

What learning or training are you doing?

What are your plans now?

Who is helping you get the information you need?

Who is helping and supporting you to make your plans?

Thank you!