

Submitted online November 28, 2023

Response to Scottish Government re: National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy for Disabled Young People Statement of Intent

Please select the option that best describes you

disabled young person

parent carer of a disabled young person

individual with a role or interest in supporting disabled young people's transition to adulthood

organisation with a role or interest in supporting disabled young people's transition to adulthood

none of the above

3

If you answered 'none of the above' for the previous question, how would you describe yourself?

A member of a research team exploring the transition experiences of young disabled people - <https://disabilityandyouthtransitions.co.uk/>

4

'Who will the strategy be for?' describes what we understand 'transition to adulthood' to mean.

Transition to Adulthood

For the purposes of this strategy, we propose the transition to adulthood will refer to the period when young people develop from children to young adults. This is not a single event, but a process which takes place over a number of years. It is a period of personal development which can involve changes in every area of life. The diagram below illustrates some of these areas.

In line with ARC Scotland's widely endorsed [Principles of Good Transitions](#), we propose to focus on disabled young people aged 14-25 years old, however we know that the transition to adulthood will mean different things to different young people, and as such will be achieved in many different ways and timescales. We also know that this period of transition can also impact on the family or those who care for the young person.

Planning and support provided during this time should therefore be person-centred and respond flexibly to the stage of development and unique needs and aspirations of each young person.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Do you agree that the meaning we have given to 'transition to adulthood' is the correct one for the strategy?

5

Please explain your answer

We agree with the meaning that has been given to transition to adulthood. However, we would suggest that the age range not be limited to 14-25 years given that the transition process can be so complex for disabled young people and can take a longer period of time. We suggest the age range be 14-30.

6

'Who will the strategy be for?' describes what we understand 'disabled young people' to mean.

Disabled Young People

The Scottish Government is committed to the social model of disability that says that people are disabled by barriers in society; not by their impairment or difference and, as such, the term 'disabled people' rather than 'people with disabilities' is preferred.

This reflects feedback from partners in our External Strategic Working Group who are clear the strategy should work on a pan-impairment basis, and that a lack of diagnosis should not prevent a young person accessing the support they need.

However, we also recognise that some individuals who may require additional support to make the transition to young adult life may not identify with the terminology of 'disabled'.

For the purposes of the strategy, we propose that our definition of disability is the same as that which is used within the Equality Act (2010). This means young people are said to be disabled if they have a 'physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities'.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Do you agree that the meaning we have given to 'disabled young people' is the correct one for the strategy?

7

Please explain your answer

The meaning you have given is broad and inclusive. We particularly like the recognition that some people may not define themselves as disabled.

8

Our 'vision' describes what we think the transition to adulthood should be like for disabled young people in the future.

Our proposed vision is that 'disabled young people feel happy and confident in the transition to adulthood, and are empowered and supported to control their own path to success'.

Many young disabled people express optimism and excitement about the future and are keen to move on to the next stage of their lives, but need support to be more empowered, listened to and to be able to direct the transitions process.

In order to achieve this, disabled young people must receive the high quality and timely planning, care and support they need to transition effectively and with continued optimism. Planning should be person-centred; taking account of young person's needs and aspirations and should support them on the path to whichever goals they choose for themselves.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Do you agree that the vision is correct for the strategy?

9

Please explain your answer

The vision puts disabled young people at the centre and recognises the need for support.

10

Our 'priorities' are the things we think we need to focus on to help make the vision come true and improve disabled young people's experiences of the transition to adulthood.

1. Choice, control and empowerment for the young person

Disabled young people should be at the centre of planning and decision making for their future. Early transitions planning should be available to disabled young people and should adopt an holistic, person-centred approach to empower young people to dream big and identify and pursue their goals and aspirations.

2. Clear and coherent information

Disabled young people, their families and others that support them should be aware of the rights and entitlements, and the support and services available during different points of transitions. The provision of national and local information should be clear and accessible.

3. Co-ordination of individual support and communication across sectors

Support for disabled young people during the transition to adulthood can require a multidisciplinary and multiagency approach (e.g health, social work, education, third sector, employment etc). Support from trusted professionals and consistent relationships are key to effective support during this time. Communication across all partners involved in transitions – including disabled young people and their families – with clearly defined roles and responsibilities are vital for ensuring a smooth transition.

4. Consistency of practice and support across Scotland

Professionals who support disabled young people during their transition to young adult life should work to incorporate the principles and characteristics of good transitions into policy, planning and practice to ensure consistency of practice across Scotland. Professionals should be given the support and guidance they need to explore and improve transitions practices. Disabled young people, their families and professionals supporting them should have access to learning opportunities to support better transitions.

5. Collection of data to measure progress and improvements

The measures of successful transitions to adulthood should consider life courses, in addition to traditionally-understood positive destinations. Data relating to young people's experiences of their transitions to adulthood should be collected, analysed and reported upon regularly in order to understand the extent to which young people are experiencing a positive and supported transition to young adult life.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Do you agree that the priorities are the correct ones for the strategy?

11

Please explain your answer

We agree that the priorities are important ones to pursue in the strategy. We think the priorities need to highlight the importance of figuring out HOW the priority area will be achieved. Some specific comments:

(2) importance of information being available in a coordinated way – so while it may be difficult to have everything on one platform, there should be somewhere where there are links to all the other sources of information

(3) key question is HOW will this happen? It would be good to see the priority flagging the importance of working out the mechanisms that will ensure coordination of support and communication

(4) again, HOW will consistency of practice and support be achieved – and what is the basis of this? Will there be legislation underpinning the responsibilities of statutory partners? It would be helpful to see acknowledgement of need to identify mechanisms

(5) we are very happy to see the acknowledgement of data to measure progress. Again, it would be good to see the priority flagging the importance of working out the HOW question

12

Do you have any other comments on the Statement of Intent?

We think the key thing is to develop a strategy that has teeth, clearly identifies statutory responsibilities and considers the resources required to achieve all the priorities identified. The fear is that the strategy will be aspirational but not implementable.