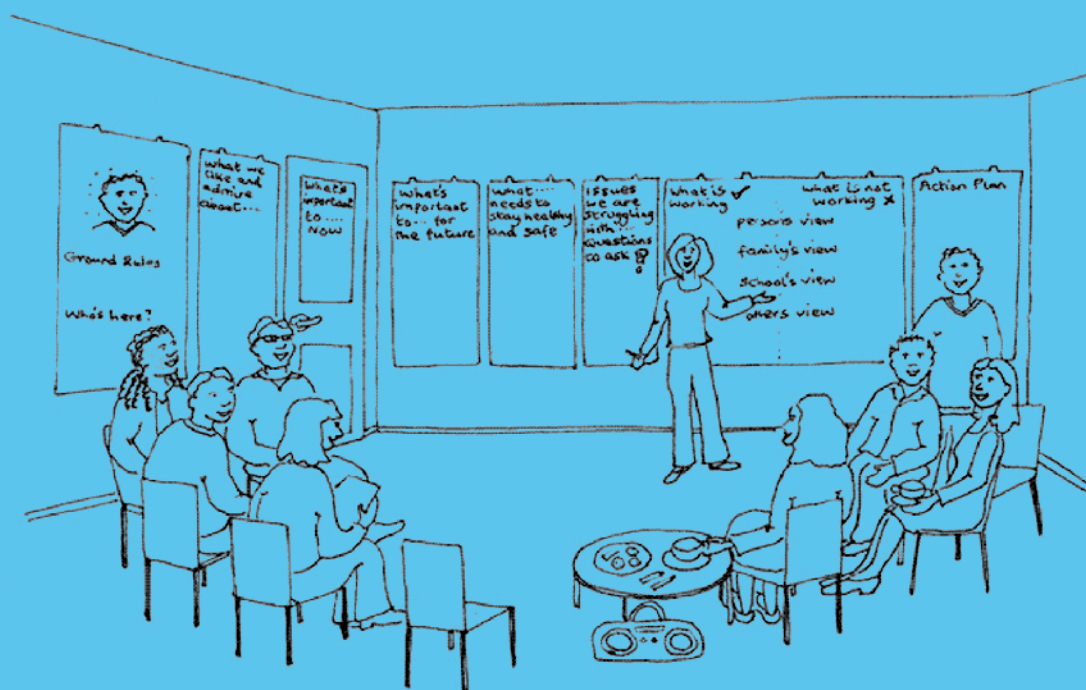


Person Centred Transition Reviews

A national programme for developing person centred approaches to transition planning for young people with special educational needs

Alison Wertheimer



“The visual aspects benefit all.”

Teaching assistant

“I feel powerful”

Young person

“100% behind this type of review.”

Teacher

“Helping at Hamish’s review was my proudest moment of last year.”

Friend

The Valuing People Support Team commissioned this report about the person centred transition reviews programme. Alison Wertheimer, an independent writer and researcher, wrote the report. Routledge will publish Alison's book about psychosocial recovery from brain haemorrhage in 2008. Alison also works for a Primary Care Trust.

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Summary of the report

This report is a review of what the Valuing People Support Team has been doing to help young people (and their families) with using a new way of doing transition planning. Transition reviews now use person centred approaches.

2004-2005 was the first year of the Programme. Four local authorities in London piloted the approach.

The national programme began in April 2005 with seventy local authorities. Part two of this report is about what young people, their families and professionals said about their experiences of the 2005-2006 programme. People's experiences since April 2006 are currently being written up.

What this report is about

Everyone who took part in the programme in 2005-2006 was asked three questions about using person centred reviews:

- What did you like about them and what worked well?
- What did you not like about them and what did not work well?
- What questions do you have about these reviews?

Lots of people answered these questions which was helpful. They included young people having their review, their families and their friends, and professionals. This report is about what they said. At the end of this report there are some general comments about the work (Conclusions) and suggestions about what needs to happen next (Recommendations).

90% of young people said that they had never attended a review before.

The young person is the most important person at the review; they invite people to come to the review and how to make it feel comfortable for them (with their favourite food and music).

The review is about everything in the young person's life - not just education.

Families like this way of doing reviews; they feel more equal with professionals and can contribute more.

Professionals said this is a good way of doing transition reviews and they enjoy the meetings. They also find out a lot more about young people.

Everyone works together as partners.

Writing up on flip charts means lots of useful information is gathered.

The reviews ask everyone what they like about the young person and what they are good at; this is very positive.

The reviews are friendly and fun; there is a lot of good energy and the meetings can suit individual young people's wishes and needs.

The review ends with a plan for action which says what will happen next, who will make it happen and when they will do that.

Helping the young person and their family (and the school staff) prepare for the review is very helpful.

This is what people said they did not like and what did not work well

- Some young people did not get enough support to take part in the review.
- Schools did not always get enough information beforehand about person centred approaches and how the reviews would be done.
- Some people said the reviews took longer than the hour they had allocated - but other people said there was too little time to talk about everything.
- Not everyone was committed to using person centred approaches, including senior managers and local leaders.
- People sometimes came late to reviews or left before the meeting had finished.
- The rooms were sometimes too small or were not the right kind of space for the young person.
- Some professionals said it would be impossible for all young people to have transition reviews using person centred approaches.

Questions people asked about the reviews

- We know this way of doing transition planning works, but how can we make it happen for more young people?
- How can we get government departments to give their backing and to find the resources so that all young people can have a person centred transition plan?

- How can we make sure that senior managers and other local leaders give their strong support and commitment to what we are doing?
- How can we find more trainers and facilitators?
- Should facilitators be part of children's services or should they be in adult services?
- How can we work more closely with special schools so that they are involved from the start?

What are our conclusions so far?

- The time is right for every young person to have transition planning based on person centred approaches.
- Reviews can be done differently; we do not have to tick boxes and we can plan more creatively using this process.
- These reviews can collect more information about the young people than in previous transition reviews.
- This process helps good partnership working which has made a very positive difference for young people, their families and professionals.
- These reviews focus on action and change so that reviews lead to starting to make changes in young people's lives.
- The commitment and energy of the national consultants/trainers and the quality of their work helped young people and their families start to realise their aspirations.
- Change has started to happen at the local level, but we also need national government to lead change more widely (i.e. strategic-level change).

What recommendations arise out of what people said?

All young people should be able to have transition planning which uses person centred approaches.

There should be joined-up policies, strategies and procedures for transition planning so that these reviews meet the current statutory requirements.

National government should advise local authorities about how they can ensure that all young people having transition reviews which use person centred approaches and how they can do this.

It would be helpful if resources could be made available to recruit, train and support more independent facilitators.

Partnership working between children's and adult services must be better so that everyone's roles and responsibilities are clearly understood.

Resources for transition planning must be sufficient for preparation, the review meeting and for capturing the learning after each review.

PART I: Introduction

1.1 Background to the National Programme

Since 2001, a series of national policy initiatives, together with research findings, have drawn attention to the need to improve transition planning for young people with special educational needs. The programme of work described in this report is therefore timely - and urgently needed.

Recent research (e.g. Bridging the Divide at Transition, Norah Fry Research Centre/BILD 2002) has shown that young people and their families find the statutory transition planning process confusing, and that far too few young people are able to fulfil their aspirations through education and work:

The White Paper, Valuing People (Department of Health 2001) is the national strategy for learning disability. It has 11 objectives that aim to enable people with learning disabilities to live ordinary lives. Objective 2 is about young people's transition into adult life and says that young people with learning disabilities should have the same opportunities as other young people.

As well as the objective of improving transition, Valuing People also makes young people in transition a priority for person centred planning (Objective 3). Person centred planning is one of the main ways of achieving the changes set out in Valuing People. Each local authority has a Learning Disability Partnership Board that is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the White Paper in its locality. Partnership Boards have produced person centred planning frameworks, which should include their proposals for how young people will be supported to plan for themselves.

Person centred planning is a way of helping people to decide what they want to do and enabling services and communities to support them to achieve their aspirations. This is very different to traditional approaches where people are usually offered a narrow range of services.

Since the publication of Valuing People, other national strategies have prioritised transition as an area in need of improvement. The Special Educational Needs Strategy, Removing Barriers to Achievement (2004), says that arrangements for transition to



“I feel powerful”

Young person

adulthood for young people with a range of special educational needs must improve and recommends that transition planning should build on the person centred planning arrangements introduced in Valuing People.

The National Service Framework for Children and Maternity Services, (2004), sets a national standard for young people with disabilities and/or complex health needs and says that transition plans should take a person centred planning approach.

The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report, Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People (2005) recognizes the importance of working with families of young children and with young people in transition, and promotes person centred planning.

The Children Act (2004), and the Green Papers, Every Child Matters (2003) and Youth Matters (2005), all stress the importance of involving children, young people and families in planning. The Social Care White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say (2005), also has a focus on transition and stresses the importance of children's and adult services working closely together.

In 2007, The Learning and Skills Council published Learning for Living and Work. This strategy is aimed at improving post-16 education and employment for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and recognises the importance of using person centred approaches.

Also in 2007, the government published Progression through Partnership. This is a cross-government strategy specifically aimed at people with learning disabilities and seeks to support people to achieve fulfilling lives. This strategy also stresses the importance of person centred approaches.

1.2 The National Programme: Introduction

This has been running as follows:

Phase 1 (2004-2005): piloting person centred approaches to Year 9 reviews in 4 authorities (London Region).

Phase 2 (2005-2006): a) person centred approaches for Year 10 reviews in the four pilot authorities; and b) person centred approaches for Year 9 reviews in 70 local authorities in all nine regions.

“The review was brilliant, the best review they we have ever been a part of. I want my daughter to have a review.”

Friends of young person

Phase 3 (2006-2007): a) a Next Steps programme building on work in the four pilot authorities; b) Year 10 reviews in the 70 authorities participating in the 05-06 programmes; and c) Year 9 reviews in an additional 80 local authorities.

Phase 4 (2007-2008): a) continuing the next steps programme; b) Year 9 and Year 10 reviews in all local authorities with training available for more facilitators.

The sequence for developing person centred approaches to transition plans has been:

Year 9 reviews

Year 10 reviews

Next Steps

1.3 Piloting the National Programme (Phase I: 2004-2005)

The Valuing People Support Team produced an information pack for local Transition Champions in Spring 2003, and events were held in each social care region to introduce the pack. These events brought together a range of professionals, agencies, and parents and young people involved in transition planning. The overwhelming message from these events was that person centred planning for young people should start as early as possible, and certainly from Year 9, when the statutory transition process begins for young people aged 13/14.

The work on person centred transition reviews started as a Pilot Programme in four London authorities (Lambeth, Bexley, Newham, and Barking and Dagenham) and was funded by the Valuing People Support Team. The aim was for the Year 9 transition review to be person centred, using some of the person centred thinking tools from “Essential Lifestyle Planning”. This way of running a review had already been tried on a small scale in Hull and the feedback from all involved was very positive.

The Pilot Programme ran between April 2004 and March 2005 and brought together young people, family members, voluntary sector organisations and professionals from education, health, children and adult social care and Connexions. Two or three people in each local authority were trained to facilitate reviews and reviews using person centred approaches were held with ten young people.

“Overall, I found the whole experience was very positive and empowering. I feel that this style of review will really give people a voice and help them to move on in their own lives.”

Charlotte

In March 2005, people met to share their experiences and start planning for the following year. A DVD of this day captures the outcomes and learning from the pilot. Everyone involved in this work, but particularly the young people and their families, concluded that this new way of working was a significant improvement on their previous experiences. It was also felt that it would be applicable to children and young people with the whole range of needs in all settings.

This pilot was extended to run in 70 local authorities (see 1.4.) and the four pilot areas began to explore Next Steps which involved these actions in 2005-2006:

- Developing the running Year 10 reviews in ways which genuinely explore positive options for the future and lead to the development of individual budgets.
- Training more local people to facilitate reviews so that more young people can have transition review meetings using person centred approaches.
- Training some local people to be trainers so that they can then train more local facilitators.
- Reviewing local transition planning protocols and procedures so that they are compatible with person centred working.
- Working with the young people who had a person centred Year 9 review in 2004-2005 to make sure that their Year 10 review builds on that.
- Extending this way of working to include young people with a range of support needs (e.g. “looked after” children).
- Exploring how the school curriculum can support person centred approaches to planning.

During 2006-2007, the learning from these four pilot areas informed the work in the 70 local authorities during 2005-2006.

1.4 The National Programme (Phase 2: 2005-2006)

Building on the success of the pilot programme, a national programme was launched from 2005, jointly funded by the Valuing People Support Team (VPST) and the Department

“I’ve attended 24 reviews recently and the one young person I remember clearly is the young person who had a Person Centred Review.”

Connexions worker

for Education and Skills (DfES). Drawing on the experience of the pilot, the national programme worked with 70 local authorities, across all 9 regions. This means that at least 140 young people attending 70 schools had their Year 9 reviews using person centred approaches between September 2005 and February 2006.

A Next Steps programme of work was developed in the four London pilot authorities which involved:

- Increasing the number of children involved in transition planning meetings using person centred approaches.
- Building the capacity of local people to facilitate person centred approaches to transition meetings by providing further training and support, and training some local people to enable them to train others.
- Reviewing local transition planning protocols and procedures so that they are compatible with person centred working.
- Working with the young people now in Year 10 to ensure that their Year 10 transition planning review builds on the Year 9 review.
- Exploring how to link this programme to the national development of individual budgets and self-directed services.
- Using the person centred approaches to transition planning young people who have traditionally experienced multiple assessments, such as those in residential schools or children's homes, or with high needs for health support; this will make links with the development of single assessment.
- Exploring the use of this planning approach with children with a range of special educational and other needs.

“This has been really good, lots of people showed an interest in my daughter. Really nice to see what everyone think. Didn't think I would enjoy the writing part but it was good.”

Dad

1.5 Continuing Work (Phase 3: 2006-2007)

Since April 2006 the programme has continued with the following objectives to be met by March 2007:

- All local authorities who have not yet participated in Phases 1 or 2 will have used person centred approaches for Year 9 reviews.
- Local authorities participating in Phase 2 of the programme will have completed the Next Steps.

- The four pilot authorities (Phase 1) are continuing to be supported to explore whole-system change and links to individual budgets and self-directed services.
- A national conference in June 2007 celebrated the programme's achievements.
- Every local authority has participated in the programme.
- At least 300 young people will have had a person centred Year 9 transition review that will have resulted in a person centred transition plan by the end of the year.
- At least 100 young people will have had a person centred Year 10 review linked to "keys to citizenship".
- At least 300 people will have trained as person centred review facilitators. These include people from all relevant agencies and family carers.
- At least 100 people will have been trained to facilitate Year 10 reviews and to be able to make links to In Control and Keys to Citizenship.
- In at least two local authorities (Newham and Lambeth) the person centred Year 10 reviews has been linked to the development of individual budgets.
- Six 'best practice' schools are being supported to develop person centred thinking throughout the curriculum and to use person centred reviews in year 6. Some schools have committed to use the person centred review process for every review that takes place in the school from reception age (Pathways School in Devon).

"Helping at Hamish's review was my proudest moment of last year".

Friend

1.6 (Phase 4: 2007-2008)

During 2007-2008 the programme is:

- Offering year 9 and year 10 reviews' training and is open to all local authorities who want to have more trained facilitators.
- Regional events are continuing to help people to join up their work on person centred reviews with work to improve multi-agency working and to improve post-16 opportunities for education, employment or other person centred outcomes.
- Publishing Person Centred Approaches in Schools. This book is based on the work of the Best Practice Schools.

1.7 How the Programme works locally

Although details may differ slightly from area to area, when an LEA agrees to participate in the National Programme, these are usually the key actions starting with planning and concluding with a celebration and with deciding what the next steps should be:

- National consultants with experience and knowledge about using person centred planning approaches within transition reviews liaise with the local authority.
- A local leadership team is identified which usually includes the local authority's Person centred Planning Coordinator and Transition Champion.
- National consultants meet with the leadership team to explain what the programme involve.
- The consultants facilitate two training days, to support the development of a strong local team. Each day ends with agreeing specific goals and an action plan for the next steps.
- The first day is a awareness and mapping. The leadership team maps out the local schools, who needs to be involved in the programme and identifies who else is doing person centred planning in their locality.
- The second day is a Design Day; the consultants meet the leadership team, staff from local special schools, families, person centred planning facilitators and Connexions staff. They decide which young people might be offered a transition review using person centred approaches, and how to make this happen locally.
- A local team of facilitators attends three training days where they learn how to facilitate Year 9 transition meetings using person centred approaches.
- These reviews are carried out with individual children and the trainer coaches the facilitator to do their first review. A meeting is held with the national consultants, soon after the reviews start and another meeting a few months later. These days provide the chance for everyone to stop and think how things are working - what is working well and what has not turned out so well. Everyone shares their learning, does some problem-solving together and suggests changes that could be made to help things work (even) better.

“Being able to write on flipchart enabled me to say something I wouldn't have been confident to raise verbally.”

Parent

- A Celebration Day is held for everyone who has taken part, including the young people and their families, and action plans are made about how they will continue person centred planning for transition reviews.

I.8 Structure and Contents of this Report

This report is in three parts:

Part 1: Background (see above)

An Introduction to the National Programme outlines recent key national policy initiatives from Valuing People (2001) onwards which propose the development of person centred approaches to transition planning for young people with special educational needs. This remainder of this Part then explains the main phases of the National Programme and provides a brief description of key actions in local areas.

Part 2: Learning from the National Programme, 2005-2006

This part of the report seeks to capture the learning from Phase 2 of the National Programme, which worked with 70 local authorities. It is based on feedback from the nine regions and broadly follows the headings / questions used in individual person centred planning reviews (e.g. what worked well; what did not work so well).

Part 3: Conclusions and Recommendations

This final part of the report includes conclusions from the National Programme work and makes a series of recommendations for future action based on what people said.

PART 2: Learning from the 2005-2006 Programme

The feedback from everyone participating in this phase of the National Programme was rich and varied. We heard from young people and their families, from school staff, from others in learning disability services and from the facilitators. It was possible to draw on reports of the regional and national celebration days, accounts of individual young people's reviews and feedback from local areas within each region. Comments were mostly extremely positive, but there was also a small amount of feedback about what participants felt hadn't worked so well which will enable changes to be made to the way things are done. Questions and issues raised will also help us with the next stages of this programme (see 1.5. above).

Feedback was gathered by participants answering a series of questions, which broadly follow the framework used in person centred reviews.

Feedback from the national programme	Person centred approaches to transition reviews
Part 2: What we liked and what worked well about the Programme?	What we like and admire about [the person]?
Part 2: What didn't work well about the Programme?	What is working well for [the person]?
Part 2: Questions to answer and issues to resolve	What's not working well for [the person]?
Part 3: Conclusions and Recommendations	Questions to answer and issues to resolve for [the person]. [The person's] Action Plan

2.1 What we liked and what worked well

Feedback about what participants in the programme liked and what they thought had worked well are reported here. (This is partly to avoid repetition but also because when people said they liked something, this usually meant it worked well for them).

People's experiences

The experiences of the young people

Most young people had never been to a review meeting before. Using a person centred approach is a completely different experience. Not only were the young people usually present throughout their meeting but they were the focus - they were at the centre. In one person's words, this was "a powerful experience".

"This person centred planning meeting is very different from ones I have done previously... [it] was nice to see lots of interaction with Connor, whereas in the past clients didn't contribute very much."

The young people were present at their reviews but were also contributing and directly involved on the day. Their involvement in planning and preparing for their review meeting - deciding who they wanted to invite, choosing refreshments and background music, and doing some preparatory work on the review questions, all enabled them to maximise their input on the day, and hearing "their" favourite music played helped maintain the group's focus on them and gave a relaxed feel in the room.

"The best thing for me was allowing [sic] the service user to participate. Even if they have limited capabilities, their smiles and laughter help the group feel that they are meeting the client's needs."

Even when the young person chooses to spend some time not directly participating, they can still be very fully present:

“Jenny had a table at the back of the room where she sat for some time with Rene. She was clearly listening very carefully as sometimes she got up and indicated very clearly that her mum or teacher should write something on the large sheets around the room. She also added some things of her own.

Students loved being in the room with their parents and enjoyed being the centre of attention. They responded better being in the review from the beginning rather than coming in for the last few minutes.

Sumesh contributed throughout the meeting and was able, with support from people in the group, to represent his views on all the posters. [His] humour and skills really came across, such as speaking French and saying there was not enough maths on the timetable! Sumesh liked having music on and talking about concerts and singing with the group.”

The young people themselves really liked being “able to speak like everyone else” and “talk about our lives”; their enjoyment and sense of empowerment was clear.

“Throughout the meeting he was smiling and appeared relaxed and interested in what people were saying about him and his achievements; at times he was encouraging others to write more about him by giving them pens!”

The experiences of the families

Feedback from the families strongly suggests that they liked the general approach of person centred planning and this new format for reviews. Compared with their experiences of attending previous more traditional reviews, they liked the fact that the young person was at the centre of the review.

“It was relaxed and much more open; you could see what was happening and the interest that people have in my son.”

The families really appreciated playing a more central role in the reviews. They felt more involved and more able to ask questions about matters that concerned them. Generally they felt on a more equal footing with professionals, some of whom they were meeting for the first time. The relaxed and friendly way in which the reviews were conducted, encouraged parents to contribute more.

Well, it was much more relaxed; I did not have to go to the head teacher’s office and think ‘what have I done? It make you think you will be put on report...In the past it has been too officy!

“Being able to write on the flip chart enabled me to say something I wouldn’t have been confident to raise verbally.”

Families particularly liked the opening phase of the meeting, where everyone said what they liked and admired about the young person. Hearing such positive messages, particularly if previous communication with professionals had focused on the young person’s difficulties and disabilities, could be a moving experience.

“One dad liked hearing all the positive things.”

Although families usually think that they know the young person well, they appreciated gaining a fuller picture from other people’s contributions. The “review” could also be an opportunity to literally “re-view” their son or daughter.

“[It was] useful to find out how other people perceive our son.”

With some reviews, families could also hear the son or daughter sharing their thoughts and feelings for the first time.

“It was great for my daughter to say so much; it was lovely to have the time to hear what she wanted to say about the things we had not thought about. It was good to be able to talk about her loneliness; it’s process like this that really help my daughter with her self-esteem.”

Although a great deal of work was accomplished in the review meetings, the relaxed and informal atmosphere of the review meetings, encouraged families to participate more fully than perhaps they had hitherto felt able to.

As the young person chooses who they’ll invite to their review, other relatives (as well as parents) sometimes attend and they often make an important contribution to the review.

“Luke is very close to his grandmother, Bea, so she supported him throughout the meeting, explaining what was happening. This meant that his mother, Jane, could really concentrate on everything that was being discussed.”

Siblings’ involvement in reviews was also seen as working well, providing another/different perspective on the young person.

“Jason’s younger brother and sister were involved in the meeting, and they contributed fully throughout, saying what they liked and admired about Jason ... and writing and drawing on the posters in the ‘mingling’ session. Their contribution was really important because they spoke about Jason as a brother and a person – not as a pupil or someone who needs support.”

“Ashleigh (who had been given time off school specially) read a poem she had written about Joe- there couldn’t have been a nicer tribute.”

Even when not all the family could be present, the time spent helping families to prepare the review, by going through the questions to be answered on the flip charts, was well worthwhile.

“Connor’s family has thought about the headings and had brought some ideas to go up on the boards. Members of the family who couldn’t make it to the meeting had also written things they liked and admired about him.”

Spending time with the families before the review worked well; it helped them feel included in the review process from the start, rather than just sending them in invitation to the review meeting. Although it was made clear that the young person was the focus of the review, it also acknowledged the important role that families play in helping to plan for the young person’s future.

“[Joe’s] family made me very welcome and told me lots of things that would make the meeting special for Joe. They gave careful thought to all the people who could tell us about Joe the person, his likes and dislikes. And about the things he needs to keep him safe and healthy.”

The experiences of the young people’s friends

Some young people invited their friends to their review which provided a new and valuable dimension to transition reviews; They liked being able to contribute to each other’s reviews and helping to build a fuller picture of the young person; this reminds everyone that the young person is not only a “son” or “daughter”, a “brother” or a “sister”, and a “student”; they are also a “friend”.

“It was nice having my friend David in my review.”

The friends too found the experience enjoyable:

“It was cool because it was all about my best friend.”

“[I] really love coming to these annual reviews to support my mates.”

Friends also had a real sense of achievement in contributing to each other's reviews.

“Helping at Hamish's review was my proudest moment of the last year.”

The experiences of the professionals

Many different professionals were involved in these reviews and the process was able to engage a wide range of people including staff from special schools, children's social services, adult social services, Connexions, educational psychology services, paediatrics, psychiatry, speech and language therapy, community nursing, Special educational needs coordinators.

For professionals (like most others), using person centred approaches was a new way of doing transition planning and many commented positively on this.

“All problems were highlighted and positive comments on how to improve were given.”

They found they could not only provide the information needed for the review meetings, but could also obtain the information they needed to complete their work on the transition process (e.g. completing the paperwork).

“[The social worker] was pleased to have got all the information he needed for his paperwork.”

They appreciated and strongly supported the involvement of the young people.

“It's the first time in my teaching career that I have seen a young person one hundred percent engaged in their review – I haven't seen this before!”

“The young person [was] more involved...stayed in the review for longer and contributed much more... this has shown us the value of encouraging this.”

They liked the fact that person centred planning is holistic in its approach.

“The person centred process facilitated the production of a far more comprehensive plan than is usual, as there was a thorough look at all the important points.”

“The paediatrician felt it was useful to target specific actions related to the whole of the person’s life.”

They liked the more relaxed and informal atmosphere of the reviews.

“Very different feel to this review - very relaxed - felt I’d gained much more information.”

“Nice not to go through paperwork in the usual way.”

“I’ve been to loads of reviews and this felt much more informal.”

“Warm and fun and friendly.”

Even if a professional had never met the young person before, they found that the review meeting could really help them get to know them.

“Those who hadn’t met Joe before were amazed at how well they felt they knew him after such a short time and how much more clearly has to share with us. Professionals found it useful to hear about other aspects of Joe’s life.”

“It was the first time in many years of attending reviews that I have remembered the young person hours later. It helped to identify accurate information, good needs profile and was client-centred and at all times enlightening.”

“Getting to know the real person and not just the information in a report.”

Professionals meeting the young person for the first time, were also able to contribute usefully to the review.

What’s it about? The essence of person centred planning

It’s focused

Many participants commented on how this new way of doing transition planning meant that there was a much clearer focus on the young person throughout the meeting.

“Reece is at the centre; he’s the important person.”

It’s positive

Many participants appreciated that reviews using person centred approaches started on a very positive note (What we like and admire [about the young person]). Starting the meeting in this way, could also provide a very positive note to the rest of the review.

“The people at the meeting spoke about Jenny’s kind and loving character; [she is] caring and friendly. Later on, these qualities came up again, when talking about how she loved children. This led to people thinking about whether Jenny might get involved in child care in the future. Her mother thought this would not be possible for her because she has Down’s syndrome. The facilitators said that it is important to consider all the possible opportunities for Jenny and find out what she might like to do in the future.”

The review process also asks everyone to think about what is 'not going well' for the young person but this information could also lead everyone to think about what could be changed. Jenny, again:

“Some things emerged that were not working for Jenny. There’s a significant lack of activity outside school for young people of Jenny’s age and getting to places where things were going on was even more difficult. Jane agreed, in Jenny’s action plan, to look at the local website to find out what groups and clubs were currently running...her teacher and her mum would also work on ‘stranger danger’ and road safety so that Jenny is more confident to be out with friends and at clubs ”

It’s energising

The words 'energy' and 'energising' appeared quite often in the feedback - sometimes also linked to participants feeling a sense of empowerment.

“The interactivity of the meeting energised people in different ways.”

“The meeting itself created momentum and energy.”

“Excited - had a brilliant experience.”

There are several possible reasons for this. The 'mingling' stage when people are walking round the room and writing on the flip charts emphasises that the review is about action. This is very different from meetings where everyone sits round the table (which can send some people to sleep). Person centred approaches help to keep everyone active and engaged in the process.

It’s holistic

By using person centred approaches, a very different and much fuller picture of the young person emerged as the focus shifted from traditional transition planning which could often be about deciding how the young person can be fitted into adult services. As a care manager pointed out, this “gave a well rounded understanding of the individual”.

“We gained a holistic picture of Sarah - great process, relaxed and comfortable for people.”

It's flexible

Previous transition reviews often followed a pre-set format; person centred approaches allow greater flexibility, recognising that the “one size fits all” approach isn't always helpful. These reviews differed, reflecting the different personalities of each young person. This can even start at the planning stage so that the people invited, the room used, the refreshments and the music, can all be adapted to individual preferences and needs (as much as possible).

“Mathew's meeting had to be rearranged due to a family bereavement leading to change of date. Although [his meeting] was small, with just his parents and his teacher present, in some ways it made it easier for him to contribute. A small meeting was probably more comfortable for Matthew.”

It's different/it's a new way of doing planning

There were numerous positive comments about people's experiences of participating in these reviews, as these comments illustrate.

“Fun and relaxed...open and informal...honest...less intimidating for the young person...a more friendly environment...review felt relaxed and not rushed.”

Another longer comment gives a good feel to the atmosphere of these reviews:

“People took a while to get used to getting up and walking around, instead of talking round a table, but they were soon moving enthusiastically from poster to poster, taking the chance to talk with one another, especially with Joe.”

The positive, open and relaxed atmosphere of using person centred approaches for the reviews affected the way everyone contributed to meeting.

For the young people and their families

Pupils and their parents responded particularly well – they were relaxed, participated more than usual and gave very positive feedback.

And for professionals too

Professionals involved were also very positive. All felt they had had the necessary opportunities to elicit and give information and all had appreciated the pupil involvement and the more relaxed and informal nature of the reviews.

So it is possible to create what one person described as a ‘social atmosphere’ but also do some very productive work and meet the statutory requirements of transition planning. A speech therapist commented:

“[It was] more relaxed, less formal, more person centred, well planned and organised.”

Creating this kind of atmosphere may be one reason why participants were able to start thinking differently. Approaching the review meeting with an open mind, gave everyone permission to try something different and as staff in one school said, it enable them to “start thinking outside the box” - to think of new and different ways of how the young person can be supported.

It’s about partnership

Person centred approaches recognise and value everyone’s contribution and everyone’s information. Working together like this was really appreciated; it marked a shift in the balance of power, in participants’ roles and relationships. Young people, their families and professionals could be equal players in this process.

“People in the meeting felt like ‘equal players’; there wasn’t a professional hierarchy.”

“Equal roles - everyone had a chance to speak.”

For some review meetings, the young people had chosen to invite people who they hadn’t met before - Connexions workers for example. Despite this, several people mentioned that this hadn’t been a barrier to participating in the meeting and they’d welcomed the chance to start getting to know the young person they would be working with in the future.

“Frances but [they] still participated in the process and gave appropriate comments.”

By bringing together a much wider group of people than has usually been the case with traditional transition review meetings, not only did this result in a much fuller picture of the young person but everyone was able to “bounce ideas round” the room when it came to the action planning stage.

Strength and effectiveness through networking [and] reassurance that others share the same issues.

The National Programme also demonstrated the importance of working in partnership. Bringing in consultants with knowledge and experience of person centred planning and harnessing that to local knowledge of people and services, emphasised partnership from the start (particularly at the Design Day stage - see 1.6. above).

It's about action for change

People liked the action planning. Having a clear action plan by the end of the meeting, with realistic and specific goals, meant that the meeting was productive; the review wasn't just an end in itself but became a springboard for action and change in the young person's life.

“I like the way the action plan get generated, very specific and linked to discussion.”

The action plan is much more than a “wish list”; it specifies what action is needed, who will make sure this happens and when this will be completed.

“Once everyone had finished writing, Sue summarised the main points and with everyone's agreement, decided what the action points were. Sinead wrote up an Action Plan. Various people agreed to take forward some of the action points and a timescale was put on each one with the named person responsible for doing it.”

Action plans have two important aims: they can make sure that wishes or aspirations start to become real, but they can also address those areas of the young person's life where things aren't working well and where there are barrier to change.

The review highlighted the health care that would be needed to help Jenny to become more independent. The school agreed to put forward another referral though for her to have speech therapy and to make sure that the referral isn't forgotten about because there isn't currently a speech therapist in post.

Because reviews using person centred approaches are holistic, action plans can reflect this.

The transition worker said that action points from this meeting were different from a recent formal review, which meant that the meet was able to reflect a broader range of issues.

How it's done/practicalities

Securing commitment

Successfully involving a range of staff and agencies is a key step in the process of getting the reviews off the ground.

The pilot was introduced to staff at the school and other agencies involved, through an introductory meeting which included a mock review. Attendance at this meeting was good, with representatives from school, Connexions, children's and adult social services, the NHS Trust and the local authority. All participants were very positive about the process.

Having the support of people in leadership roles made a considerable difference as to how well the programme worked at a local level. Reviews went well where there was back-up and leadership from senior staff.

Gaining the trust and support of schools was essential in order to introduce this new and different way of doing transition reviews.

“Getting the trust of the head teachers to allow us to facilitate the meetings [was important].”

Having secured this commitment, head teachers could take this initiative forward and senior school staff could then become useful champions for change.

The [acting head teacher] also met with the [deputy head at another school] to discuss the experience at her school. [This deputy head] was a key player in the implementation [at her school] and became a useful champion within the schools for the approach, which was considered quite radical initially.

The review meeting worked well when everyone was prepared to 'give it a go', even if they were unfamiliar with the concept of person centredness.

Preparing for reviews

While this report has so far focused on the actual review meeting, preparation was hugely important and increased the chances of having a successful and productive meeting. Engaging with those who would be present on the day was central. Introducing the concept of person centred planning, explaining the review process, and helping participants to start to focus on the young person were all essential steps. This could also lead to a very focused meeting, with a great deal being agreed in a short time and a clear action plan generated.

“The preparation work that was done prior to the review was vital to the smooth running of the review; it meant that no one would be put in any embarrassing situations and everyone felt safe.

Everyone present knew what to expect and could therefore participate fully.”

Helping the young person to prepare for their review enabled the facilitator to develop the relationship with them, particularly if the facilitator had not met them before. Here is one example of how this worked:

“Meetings were set up firstly with Frances to determine who she wanted to invite, how she wanted the invitation to look and what food and drink she wanted at the review. I [the facilitator] also wanted a good level of understanding regarding Frances. Communication abilities: I wanted to know what aids, if any, did she use and who, if anyone, would need to be with Frances to enable her to have her say in the proceedings. The school kindly gave [me] copies of educational statements and the latest report from Speech Therapy to aid in our understanding. All in all, I had three visits with Frances to watch her in the classroom [and] allow her to become comfortable with me.”

Classroom time could also make a useful contribution to helping the young people prepare for their reviews.

[With their class teacher] the young people themselves had worked hard on producing artwork, depicting the various things which were important to them, such as families, friends, hobbies and interests, etc.

Preparatory work with families was also important. Meeting with them provided opportunities for families to learn more about person centred planning and start to think about what they would like to contribute to the review. It also introduces the importance of partnership and collaboration from the start.

“Prior to the reviews, both sets of parents were approached...the process was explained to them and they were introduced to the “Listen to Me” workbook. The workbook was completed over a series of weeks, partly in school and partly at home and the input from families was really helpful.

Families were much more focused before the meeting and really knew what they wanted to get out of it. [Home visits were] a good opportunity for strong relationship building with young people and parents.”

Having an independent facilitator meant it was important for them to build a good working relationship with the staff at the young person’s school. Teachers and others could make a very positive difference to the actual review. For example:

“[The] class teacher actively supported the project and looked at how the children could present themselves in the review including the children role-playing reviews and rehearsing inviting everyone into the meeting [at the start]. [He also] put together a slideshow of work the young people had produced over the previous 12 months at school.”

Because school staff were taking part in a new kind of transition planning, this worked better if they had the chance to talk about their concerns and understand how person centred approaches work.

“[We] went into school to explain the process to some of the teachers ... through the process of a Powerpoint presentation, we saw the shift from doubting/indifferent to enthusiasm on the part of the teachers; we were there for a substantial amount of time due to the interest it evoked, and we answered as many questions as we were able to.”

Having the right setting

Reviews took place in a variety of settings and facilitators sometimes had to be flexible and creative as they prepared for a review.

“The room we had was not ideal, but we made the best of it. We hung the headed posters all around the walls so that people could walk round using felt pens to add to what they wanted to say.

We had been given photographs by her mum and the school had loaned us her certificates of achievement so that we could personalise the scene for Yasmin and her family at the review We set up the room with the guidance of the pictures and the video we had watched on the [facilitators’] training...the room took on a relaxed atmosphere.”

Having a room which was familiar to the young person and in which s/he felt comfortable was important. Luke’s transition review, the meeting was in the school library.

“It’s a light and airy room, with a sea view. In the past his reviews have been held in the head teacher’s office so this felt more relaxed for everyone.

[It was] good to have it in Reece’s favourite room at school.”

Individual young people will vary in the kind of setting where they feel comfortable, so the thinking and planning which goes into setting up these reviews is really important.

Gathering and recording information

With person centred approaches to planning, information is generally collected and recorded on posters or flip charts around the room. For most people this was a new and often very empowering experience; it was very different from “ticking the boxes” and once people got used to this way of doing things, the majority enjoyed it and found it helpful. The result was usually that more information about the person was gathered than in more traditional reviews.

“Using flip charts is a good way of capturing everyone’s contributions all in one go!”

“I never normally speak - this is the first time I’ve contributed to a review.”

“Being able to write on the flip chart enabled me to say something I wouldn’t have been confident to raise verbally.”

When someone didn’t feel comfortable with writing on flip charts themselves, the facilitator could record their comments for them. At other times, the facilitator(s) supported people to contribute:

Both Linda and Deb assisted everyone to write up on each of the flip chart sheets, asking incisive questions to encourage capturing rich information and detail.

With everyone’s contributions posted up on walls, this also made it a more transparent process than usual.

“It’s great having all the information on the walls. It’s an inclusive, transparent process.”

Recording all the information in this way, also meant that no one had to take notes; everyone could listen better and there was an instant record of the meeting.

Luke’s Mum said how she’d appreciated everything being written up on the walls so she’d not had to take notes and could just listen to what people said.

Using a variety of media/resources

The flexibility of the person centred planning process means that a range of media approaches can be used, starting with the individual young person and helping each to participate as fully as possible. Where a young person’s way of communicating was non-verbal, the challenge was to make sure that they were fully included in the review.

“Jason took part in all of the meeting, particularly the opening section. He brought two switches with him - one that said ‘yes’ when it was pressed, and the other ‘no’, and he used these throughout.”

Facilitating the review process

Training and supporting the facilitators' further development is a key part of the national programme. Although concerns were raised (see below), about future recruitment and training of facilitators as the programme is rolled out to all local authorities, feedback about their work in 05-06 was very positive.

Having an independent facilitator was seen as important.

“It was good that their work was done by someone outside of school as it brought a different perspective.”

The facilitator's role - asking questions and helping people to elaborate on what they wanted to say, and making sure everyone had a say in the meeting – was appreciated. This is a unique role; it can't be equated with chairing a meeting.

New facilitators were usually supported by one of the national consultants and having good support could make the review process run well.

“What can one say about Louise? She was an absolute tower of strength on the day of the reviews and was really supportive of Sarah and Sean. Despite a number of ‘challenges’ that manifested themselves, such as young people being poorly [and] reviews having to be rescheduled to accommodate people running late...she remained unflappable and totally committed to supporting the process in any practical way she could. Her enthusiasm and energy rubbed off on everyone, her friendly and cheerful demeanour was infectious, but above all, her calmness and composure meant that Sarah and Sean were ably supported throughout the day.”

Making time/taking time

Feedback included numerous comments (many from professionals) about the time required both for preparation and for the review itself. Most reviews lasted about one or one and a half hours which some people thought worked well in terms of getting through the agenda without rushing.

“Preparation led to a very focused meeting with a lot agreed in a short time and a clear Action Plan as an outcome.”

Families who'd attended previous reviews, appreciated an hour-long review which gave them more time to talk than in previous reviews. There were positive comments about a ninety-minute review feeling 'relaxed and not rushed' although feedback from the same review included the criticism that 'the review took too long...[and] would not be possible to do with all pupils on transition.

The 'mingling' part of the review when everyone walked round and wrote up on the flip charts was an effective use of time; a lot of information could be captured and recorded, rather than having a meeting where people have to take it in turns to speak.

Making time to think about how the reviews worked was also important and appreciated by participants. Time for learning from everyone's experiences, for sharing ideas, and for celebrating success were seen to work well.

2.2 What didn't work well

Although feedback from the regions was overwhelmingly positive, there were aspects of the programme which some participants said hadn't worked well for them. Their comments are reported here because, together with the questions and issues raised (see below), they will assist the Valuing People Support Team to plan further stages of the national programme as more local authorities start developing person centred approaches to transition planning. This mirrors 'what isn't working well for [the young person] in individuals' reviews which are used as a catalyst for change.

For the young people - getting the right room and support from school staff

Although most young people's experiences of their review were positive, one person told her teacher she found it was "scary". Someone else found the room "too small" and for another the review meeting was "too long". Their comments highlight the importance of careful preparation and planning so that the young person can feel as comfortable as possible.

There was some more feedback from one young person about the room.

"Sumesh asked a lot of questions about the room: "Whose classroom was it?"... "What would be happening next in the room?" I think Sumesh would have appreciated a bit more control over where the meeting took place and if it involved a stage, so much the better."

Ensuring young people are well supported - either by staff, family members or friends - is essential, although last-minute glitches are sometimes unavoidable.

"No staff support given to Michael or Frances, due to lack of staff."

For the families - making sure that the meeting was long enough

One family, who were generally very positive about the review, also expressed concerns about lack of time. Some schools would only allocate an hour to the reviews and this could make it difficult for the meeting had been sufficiently comprehensive.

“They felt [the review] didn’t achieve its objectives due to the lack of time allocated. They felt that the review was quite rushed...that there was no opportunity to discuss the report and their daughter’s progress. They also felt that a lot of information was gathered...but there was no opportunity to feed back and discuss different people’s perspectives.”

Having their son or daughter present could also be difficult and one family found it difficult to talk about issues in front of the young person.

For the professionals - needing commitment from everyone

Although there was much positive feedback, professionals drew attention to some issues when they considered things hadn’t worked well for them: schools not receiving adequate information about person centred approaches; using the classroom which was disruptive for the class and where there was limited wall space.

Professionals found some aspects of the reviews didn’t work well for them, but they also raised many helpful issues and asked pertinent questions which add to your learning about this phase of the programme (see 2.3).

Lack of commitment

Reviews didn’t always work so well where those involved lacked commitment to this new way of doing transition planning. This manifested itself in one of several ways.

“Education not taking ownership.”

“Not everyone was “on board” [and there were] Individuals not prepared to give the process a chance.”

“The meeting started late as people did not turn up on time.”

“People arriving late and leaving early - commitment!”

A lack of commitment on the part of senior managers and leaders could also be a barrier to making positive changes in the way transition planning is carried out.

“Whilst the pilot worked well at ground level, there does not seem to be much knowledge of the pilot among senior managers and officials in any of the professions involved. Without this, there is a concern that the project will not be sustainable.”

Arranging the reviews

There was critical feedback about some arrangements for reviews (e.g. where the review takes place, deciding length of the review and time of day), but this is perhaps not surprising with a new venture.

Finding the right room sometimes meant making compromises – making the best of what was available; finding a space which was right for the young person wasn’t always possible; for example, the room was sometimes too small. Rooms were occasionally too noisy, necessitating a move elsewhere. Facilitators sometimes had little or no choice of venue and the resources needed - paper, flip chart paper and pens – weren’t always available.

The timing of reviews could present difficulties.

“The review was at 10.30 because of school timings. It did not begin until 10.45 and school staff began to walk in on the review at each lunch at 12 noon.”

The length of time allocated for individual reviews generated *many* comments (though not all were negative). Some people thought the reviews didn’t work well because there was too little time, it felt too rushed and there was insufficient time to cover all the issues adequately, including those raised in the preparation.

“It was very difficult to cover all the ground in the hour that the school allocated. As a result, setting educational objectives was not adequately covered.”

On the other hand, some people said the length of the review made it impracticable to extend the pilot to all young people coming up to transition. The comment was also made that one-and-a-half hour reviews would be a problem for some professionals.

“The amount of time it would take to offer all students this kind of review is not feasible for the school.”

2.3 Questions (to answer) and issues (to resolve)

This part of the report has the same headings which are used in individuals' reviews which use person centred approaches. The feedback here from the 05-06 stage of the programme provides useful guidance about the issues which need to be addressed in the future as person centred transition planning is rolled out to more local authorities.

Many of these questions and issues are encapsulated in this comment from one of the regional reports. Person centred approaches work for transition planning - how do we get systems in place which make this a possibility for all young people?

We do firmly believe that person centred reviewing is the right approach and the desirable thing for us to do. We are not sure however, that at the moment the system within which it needs to operate is fit for the purpose. How will this be enabled?

Here is the verbatim feedback, grouped under a series of headings.

How do we secure commitment and ownership from everyone?

- We need some big cheeses in the government and its departments, the DfES and DoH to champion person centred reviews publicly.
- We know it works! The government needs to make it happen.
- What are the practicalities of making this a reality for all young people?
- Commitment of senior management.
- Enthusiasm from schools, teachers and head teachers involved.
- The Transitions Task Group continues to support this process throughout education services, head teachers are getting on board, more champions are being identified all the time.
- People [need] to feel it is important to change the current process.

How do we bring it all together, with joined up systems which meet statutory requirements?

- We need to consider how to better link the requirements of the annual review with the style of the transition review.
- The school still needs to be sure that reviews done this way will let them fill in all the forms that the local authority need, and although the benefits are clear, the sheer time needed could be a problem.
- It should be possible to incorporate the key areas of transition reviews into the Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) curriculum.
- How do we join up the person centred report and the school report?
- How to incorporate review of the school report more?
- What efforts have been made to tie in with Connexions' Transitions protocol including Section 140?

- Feedback from the LEA was that this style of transition plan fully met their requirements and, indeed, was more detailed than previous paperwork. Focusing on the transition aspects of the review rather than attempting to cover this and the statement review gave us a chance to get this right first. The next step will be to incorporate a statement review in the meeting.
- At a follow-up meeting for professionals... the paperwork produced was discussed and the Statementing Officer from the local authority was happy for all future transition paperwork to be completed using the person centred planning headings.
- Reviewing should be part of the inspection regime.
- Changes to the SEN Code of Practice should clearly place responsibilities for reviews with Children's Trusts and not individual schools.
- Person centred reviewing is not just for young people with learning disabilities but could be further developed into the looked-after system and performance review and management. Will this be driven by the powers that be?
- OFSTED must make the person centred review process a requirement.
- We have no person centred planning facilitators employed by education services to take the person centred review to a person centred plan.
- Need closer involvement of health professionals where the young person has complex medical issues.
- We need to work more closely with school to organise meetings around their procedure and schedule for producing educational reviews [[but this also links with the previous heading].
- We need to ensure schools are kept informed about the project, and work more closely with them in the planning of meetings, taking into account the timescales schools work to for reviews, circulating reports and ensuring adequate notice is given.
- The local authority must inform schools to get on board and train person centred review facilitators [and] take ownership.
- Why should adult services put all this time and energy into schools?

How will person centred transition planning be resourced?

- There is the need to develop real capacity to facilitate reviews. Designated time is required to develop expertise and make the process as time-efficient as possible. We need a coordination role within local authorities; a pool of trained facilitators with ring-fenced time; central government should make explicit their expectation that reviews will operate in a person centred way with funding where necessary.
- Added value far outstrips added costs but the latter cannot be denied. How will schools be supported over practicalities, time, resource and planning?

How do we build successful and effective partnerships?

- Need to ensure everyone is on board.
- We need a multidisciplinary steering group/working party.

- We are starting from a baseline where we devote the minimum resources and time because we have little confidence that the current system will result in any positive changes for the young person and their family.
- Time is need for reflection and learning.
- Need to look at the evolving lead professional role and whether review facilitation could and should be part of this.
- We have a reliance on person centred planning facilitators employed usually be adult services to deliver person centred approaches to transition reviews in our schools.

How should we be preparing for and facilitating the reviews?

- Thorough preparation, including spending time with the young person and with their family.
- How do we support parents/young people who feel uneasy about reading /writing in front of everyone?
- Collecting input from those not able to attend?
- Time is a concern [for schools].
- Should there be a choice about where [the reviews] are held?
- Jason could have contributed more, with more preparation. He was less involved in the second part of the meeting and we need to think about how the action planning part could be made more interesting for him.

What facilitation is needed?

- More facilitators are needed.
- Without facilitators and access to the means to provide future facilitators the process will not be sustainable.
- Training of facilitators is too long.
- We need a full-time facilitator to provide person centred reviews for everyone.
- Dedicated Year 9 and Year 10 facilitators are needed.

- Not possible to be part of the circle of support and facilitate the meeting - two separate roles.
- At a 16+ review it might be difficult to facilitate the review and to participate as a Connexions worker.

When should person centred reviews start for the young person?

- How do we get younger pupils prepared for more involvement in reviews?
- Are person centred reviews right for Year 9s?
- Year 9 or Year 10 is very early to be starting this process; it might fit in better with young people in 16+.
- Has consideration been given to possible different approaches for young people leaving school at 16 compared to 18 or 19?

Other miscellaneous issues and questions?

- Tell families about person centred reviewing so that they demand it for themselves.
- There needs to be a quality framework so we can judge when things are good.

PART 3: Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

- The National Programme has made a great start by addressing the problems and challenges of transition outlined in Valuing People (para 3.35) which made it a stressful and difficult time for families and young people. Now, the young person is involved and at the centre of their transition and co-ordination between agencies has, in many cases, improved considerably.
- We've had a team of passionate and committed trainers who have been able to inspire others.
- This team was able to tap into and use the aspirations of others - for example, families and young people.
- The time for this initiative is right - it is consistent with a wider national agenda for children and young people.
- We have known for a long time what the problem was with traditional reviews - now we can tackle it.
- Bureaucratic processes have been getting in the way of transition reviews but statutory requirements can be met, using person centred approaches.
- Person centred approaches enable everyone to think about and plan for young people's futures by moving away from a "tick boxes" approach.
- The programme has demonstrated good partnership and collaborative working in practice.
- By working at the local level, the Programme has demonstrated that practice-led change is possible, rather than relying solely on national (top-down) policy-led change.
- The person centred approach to transition reviews yields much more information about the young person.
- This is a problem-solving, solution-focused approach and Action Plans are clear and specific about what actions need to be taken, who will make sure they happen and within a clear time frame.
- Actions Plans are ordinary and real - and realistic.

3.2 Recommendations

Securing commitment and ownership

People feel strongly that local authorities (and other relevant agencies) need advice on how to use person centred approaches for young people's transition planning. It would be really good if it were a requirement not an option.

It would make so much difference if senior managers and others in leadership posts provided strong local leadership to ensure that person centred approaches to transition planning for young people with special educational needs replaced the more traditional review process.

Joined up systems/meeting statutory requirements

The person centred transition plans produced from this new style of planning need to be consistent with the statutory requirements of local authorities regarding annual reviews. This is already happening in some areas.

Key areas addressed in transition plans should be part of the Personal, Health and Social Education curriculum to ensure that young people are able to prepare for their transition reviews. This is already being addressed through the Best Practice in person centred thinking schools programme.

Person centred transition action plans need to be able to mesh in with, and lead to, person centred plans for young adults. These are already being developed in some areas.

Building effective partnerships

A multi-disciplinary approach at local level, involving education, health and social services and employment-related agencies needs to be involved from the start when person centred approaches are developed for transition reviews.

As the National Programme has demonstrated, partnership working involving young people, their families, and professionals can be extremely successful and an empowering experiences for the young people and their families and professionals.

Partnership working with schools, involving head teachers and other staff, needs to start as early as possible to secure their commitment to developing person centred approaches to transition planning. Working closely with schools will continue to be important during preparation and planning before the actual review meetings.

Resourcing person centred approaches to transition planning

The successful roll-out of this new approach to transition planning will need to be adequately resourced as the programme is extended and capacity is developed.

Resources are needed to provide adequate time for training and supporting facilitators (see below), and for planning, preparation and carrying out the reviews.

Resources are also needed so that adequate time is made available for capturing the learning from these new developments (and for celebrating success).

Preparation for reviews

Good preparation for each review is essential. The time required for this has resource implications but is necessary to ensure that everyone - the young person, their family and friends, and professionals - is well prepared and can maximise their input to the review.

The family and the young person need time to find out about and understand what person-centred approaches involve so that they can play as full a part as possible on the day.

Preparation needs to include gathering information about the young person from people who may be unable to be present at the review itself.

Schools need to play a central role in preparation, particularly in terms of the room to be used, equipment needed and deciding the timing for the review.

Schools can play an important role in helping young people with their reviews (e.g. helping them produce materials and ideas for use at the review).

Facilitation

More people need to be recruited, trained and supported to facilitate reviews using person centred approaches.

Dedicated facilitator posts are needed for Year 9 and Year 10 reviews.

It is a really good idea for at least some facilitators to be independent as there can be conflicts in facilitating and participating in the actual review.

