

# The Process of Transition for students with complex needs

## Kirklees Cluster



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### Summary

This case study is actually made up of 4 separate illustrations of different students who are experiencing the journey of transition towards adulthood. We want to give students and their parents / carers a picture of the process which we hope will give reassurance and hope to those beginning on their own pathway.

The outcome is a collection of 4 individual stories that will highlight different stages on the journey and be available to students and parents/carers to 'bring to life' the experiences and options available within our booklet for life beyond 19. We aim to have the case studies available in each school and the college plus at C&K Careers to be used as an illustration for students to read and consider when confronted with the array of options. The case studies examples:

- Provide real life experiences from the last 12 months
- Illustrate service provider options available in 2013 to school leavers
- Feature students from the schools and college involved in the Partnership
- Highlight the problems that may occur and resolutions reached
- Give hope and reassurance that there is 'life after 19'

Compiled in June 2013 by the Partnership between

- Castle Hill School, Huddersfield
- Fairfield School, Batley
- Hollybank School, Mirfield
- Kirklees College, Huddersfield

The case study is aimed at students, parents and carers within the PMLD sector of secondary education.

Any contact concerning the case study should be made to Anne Mulherin at Hollybank School [a.mulherin@hollybanktrust.com](mailto:a.mulherin@hollybanktrust.com)

The individual students and where necessary their parents, have given written consent for the use of their pictures and stories.

## Introduction

The 4 students come from the schools involved in the Kirklees Cluster. 1 student has been attending Kirklees College for 24 months having left one of the special schools in 2011. The schools involved in the case study are all schools for students with special needs / learning differences from 5 years of age up to 19. Hollybank School is a charitable trust whereas the other schools plus the college are funded by the Local Authority. Except for Hollybank where the case study student is a resident for 48 weeks of the year, the students are day pupils. What we wanted to achieve by accompanying the map and booklet with a case study is for students and parents/carers to get a rounded feel for the opportunities and experiences available locally within the Kirklees transition process. We endeavoured to make the information as easy to read and understand as possible so as to be inclusive to our audience and also by including pictures in the case details, we hope to make the examples meaningful and personal to the students at the start of their own journey towards adulthood.

## Implementation

In planning our approach we felt the journey to adulthood could be best illustrated by following students from age 16 to 20+ and we could each select our own students for this purpose. The individuals were selected and when approached, very excited. The beginning of the journey starts when a student moves into Post 16 or Sixth Form. [Key Stage 5]

## Muzamil

Muzamil lives with his family in Birkby, an area of Huddersfield. Muzamil has a non-specific, complex learning disability and has made a smooth transition into his school's Sixth Form.

Muzamil coped well with the busy atmosphere in the Sixth Form area of school and adapted to the various routines of the week and staff and group changes. He showed an interest in what was going on in the classroom and became more involved in activities.

Targets for the year were discussed and agreed with mum at the Parents Evening. One target is for regular exercise: Muzamil has started to do his Sports Leader Award. He has enjoyed playing football and using the school gym.

By the next half term he would access The Zone on St Andrew's Road to use the gym equipment there. He also continued to walk with the Newsome Walking Network Group when the weather improved. Another target was to have the opportunity to do an unsupported link visit to the school's Year 7 class to help pupils there with various classroom activities.

In Year 13 Muzamil will have the opportunity to link with Huddersfield College and a C&K Careers' Adviser to discuss his options for the future. At the end of the 1st year in the Post 16 Department, parents are provided with the opportunity to discuss future placements with class teachers on an on-going basis. They are also invited to the Leavers' Coffee and Cake event in January and the Leavers' Fair in June to meet with service providers, benefits advisors, staff from Kirklees College and C&K Careers representatives. Mum was happy that Muzamil is maturing in the Sixth Form. She worried about his growing independence though, as he will sometimes leave the house alone and will speak to people on the street. Mum would like to see him occupied at home but finds this difficult herself. Mum stated that he would like to go to college when he leaves school at 19.



Muzamil is a very open, friendly young man; kind and caring and empathetic with his peers. He always starts the day with some writing, he also uses the computer. Much of his work continues to be work related and he enjoys placement links local schools, the Chestnut Centre and the Bridgewood Trust.

During an average week Muzamil visits Waves, Active and Highfields which are 3 of the service providers in the Kirklees area. During this second year of Post 16, a member of the Transition Team commented that Muzamil would probably find the Connections course at Kirklees College suitable. A Transition Team representative began the initial paperwork for Muzamil's Transition process. Families will also meet a representative from the Transition Team. The representative will attend the Transition Review meeting and discuss placement options with the whole family. The representative will then be in regular contact with the family to ensure an appropriate placement is found.

The second case study is a student about to leave school this July. Her story shows the process building up to the final decision made by the Transition Team and other individuals including therapists, social services and representatives from the local education authority.

## Mary

Mary is about to complete her final year of compulsory education. Mary is already 19 years old and will leave school in July 2013. Mary comes from a neighbouring authority and is funded for a 48 week placement. Her achievement profile at school is quite high on the pre Entry Level scale but her physical limitations and medical requirements would make Kirklees College an un-realistic option.



At 16 years of age Mary moved into the Post 16 Department and the curriculum changed somewhat. Mary still followed an Individual Education Plan with personalised learning in the morning but she now has more work related and cultural activities in the afternoon, including Enterprise sessions where she makes items to sell at various occasions during the school year. Students in Post 16 also have Intensive Interaction sessions, iMUSE and join in with the Enrichment (Post 19) activities. In the final year of her three years in the Post 16 Department, Mary experienced accompanied sessions at the Enrichment Department which is on the Roe Head site. This was felt to be appropriate for Mary. Mary enjoys wheelchair dancing, Messy Art sessions and the Creative Writing group.

he decision process regarding her adult placement, has been a formative process over a 3 year period of review meetings which involve input from her parents, teachers, care staff (both in School and from the Residential Care Team), social workers from her home authority , an Educational Psychologist, Health Care professionals as well as Mary herself. The medical input from the School nursing and therapy teams is important to tas Mary requires a high level of medical care.

The final transition meeting took place just prior to the Easter holidays when Mary was already 19 years old. Additional information asked for from the previous meeting was discussed. Funding for future residency and an agreed programme of suitable, stimulating activity was anticipated to be agreed and funded by various partners within Mary's home authority. Mary's home local authority are duty bound to consider various options for Mary's future adult life as well as considering Mary's current provision. With only a few weeks before Mary leaves school, the decision has been made for Mary to remain at her school and enter the adult provision there.

## Jade

The main stakeholders in all the case profiles are the students themselves, their parents / carers and the individual schools. It was necessary to abide by the MCA [Mental Capacity Act] and involve the students in giving their permission as all students are over the age of 16. It was not deemed necessary to convene a Best Interest group in any specific case but where it was felt to be good practice, symbols were used to explain the request and make certain the individual understood the context and the implication of giving consent. Jade is an example of a young woman who was eager to tell her story.



Jade lives in her own flat in Gomersal, West Yorkshire, next door to her foster family. She will be 20 years old this year and despite several physical problems plus significant social and emotional difficulties, Jade is a very friendly, sociable young woman. Jade has followed the Essential Skills Award and achieved many certificates, reaching Entry 1 accreditation in certain units. She achieved OCR Young Enterprise Award and a Young Leaders Award in addition to gaining many swimming achievements at Spenborough pool.

On her transition pathway Jade visited stalls at a 'Moving On' day. In October 2011 she attended a multi-agency leavers' planning meeting in preparation for leaving at age 19 in 2012. She also had 1-1 with C&K Careers. Further dedicated careers planning meetings took place with Year 14 staff in her school. Jade and the rest of her group made a film about their experiences and visits they had made. It was felt that Jade would find it difficult to cope with an external work placement from school.

While in post 16 Jade participated in many work related learning opportunities. From being in Key stage 4 until leaving school she did the tannoy and called the bus numbers two nights a week.

Jade was member of the Young Enterprise business in Post 16; working in craft in year 12, paper craft in year 13 and gardening in year 14. She was also part of the Business Administration team looking after the finances and marketing of the company. Jade represented the enterprise business by working on a stall selling craft with our business link partners, First Direct Bank. She spent Monday mornings on a supported transition link to Kirklees College (Dewsbury Centre) during autumn 2011. She also went on weekly class visits to a variety of Post 19 provision. By December 2011 Jade had decided that college wouldn't suit her, from what she had seen of other provision she went on to spend three Mondays supported at Active followed by further supported visits to Waves. She finally decided that she liked Waves and both school staff and her family agreed with her that it would be the most suitable placement and able to meet her needs.

Since leaving school 12 months ago, Jade has successfully continued with a part time placement at Waves. However Jade still has a number of days unfilled. During this time she enjoys her Jacuzzi bath, playing games on her Nintendo, meals out and shopping.

The Kirklees Cluster includes C&K Careers and Kirklees College. Although not directly involved in the case studies, the individual students are closely monitored and supported by the careers service.

Once students have left school many attend Kirklees College on the Connections Programme; a two year, three-days a week course specially planned for students from special schools who have achieved at least level five on the Achievement Continuum.

The aim is to have a maximum of 8 students per group. The students study a range of topics, based on the themes of Being Healthy, Environment & Community, Creative & Expressive Arts, Life Skills & Citizenship and Club Afternoon. All topics are underpinned by numeracy, literacy and personal skills and all students have Individual Learning Plans for each of these underpinning skills. Most students are working at pre-entry level 5 up to level 8, although some students could be working at E1. Students from the Connections course will usually go onto other College courses after completing their 2 years.

## Casey

Casey started College in September 2011 after experiencing a link from Castle Hill School. She had a behaviour plan in place for challenging behaviour however her link had been successful and she had appeared to settle well into her College class.

The school link ran from November 2010 to June 2011, every Wednesday afternoon with a group of 5 Students from Castle Hill and 2 members of staff, arriving in time for lunch. Students would then infill into the 2 Connections Club Afternoon sessions running. Casey lived at home with her father and brother. Casey also had a Personal Adviser who visited College with Casey's father on a parental visit prior to her starting with us.



Initially, Casey's father had some reservations as to whether we would be able to meet Casey's behavioural needs but these were dispelled as it was felt that we would as a result of having got to know her over the course of the link programme. Casey had been diagnosed with Autism in her statement of Special Educational Needs. We soon realised the best way to work with Casey was a non-confrontational approach and that Casey took time to get to know people, therefore consistent staffing was essential. Although this was challenging, it continued to be vital since she would only work effectively with staff who knew her well and who knew how to work with her. In December 2011 Casey's father died very suddenly and her brother who himself was only in his 20's became her main carer. This was a very difficult time for both Casey and her family who were suddenly left with the care of their sister whilst grieving for their father.

Casey will be moving onto an E1 course in September 2013. Her tutor has developed an 'easy to understand document' for all future staff working with Casey at College. This pack' of 4 case studies case has been produced and published as a result of seven Cluster meetings attended by representatives from each school and the college. . The cost of the printing is being shared between the 4 organisations involved.

The case study 'pack' is available alongside the 'What Next? Opportunities' booklet which is being printed by C&K Careers as is a Map showing all the service opportunities appropriate to the students with complex needs in Kirklees. The ability to design and print the map and booklet was made available to the Cluster by C&K Careers. A local printer is producing the case profiles. It is intended that the profile of students will change each year to ensure we keep abreast of changes and opportunities within the area. The Cluster /partnership intend to continue working together next year to maintain the provision of the booklet, map and case study.

The case study pack will be available through the schools, college and the Careers Service. Various members of the Cluster have promoted our outputs – including the case study- at a number of networks and groups throughout Kirklees over the past six months. A launch of the

project as a whole will be made at a Careers day being held at Fairfield School in Batley on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

The general framework for each profile was put together from the guidance given by the LSIS and our Regional Adviser, Lynne Cutts. The decision to audit the transitional process through 4 different students was made at the second Cluster meeting in January 2013 although the activity related to the third objective in our Action Plan and was therefore not scheduled to be addressed until April. Each member of the Cluster took one aspect of the Transition Journey and identified a suitable student.

The initial response has been very positive and feedback has confirmed that the illustrations of progress along the 'road to adulthood' post 19 are well complemented by the case study alongside the map and booklet.

### Outcomes and impacts

The whole package of outputs within the Kirklees Cluster's project has not yet been distributed to the schools of Kirklees. Pupils with multiple and complex needs are almost exclusively within the Cluster schools and many progress to Kirklees College. However during the progress made towards completion, the pupils in Post 16 / Sixth Form of the schools have been involved in various aspects of the work and have been used to 'trial' our 3 specific outputs. Feedback from colleagues, parents, students and other professionals in networks has been very positive.

Comments have been very much along the lines of "filling a gap"; and "wish this had been available when my son left school". As we have created a publication which was non-existent previously, it is not difficult to gain support. We knew there was a need from our involvement over many previous years, so we had a good basis for the initial bid.

On reflection we have recognised that we should have gained written support for the individuals to be involved in the study much earlier as in one case it was quite problematic to get in touch again, once students leave school. However the requirement for consent meant we had to be in contact with students and families / carers virtually the whole time and that gave us their constant feedback.

Inclusion of a small but important group of students and school leavers who had no specific information available to them has given us the opportunity to highlight the need for inclusion and maximise on opportunities to work in collaboration with other services. Careers and the Social Services Transition Team have played a big part in this project. We have created a need to continue the work of the Partnership as the whole publication [map; booklet and case study] will need to be reviewed and updated when necessary but certainly on an annual basis. By linking each organisation together through web links and links to service providers the communication will definitely improve, for the benefit of students who face the daunting process of Transition in 2014 onwards.

### The key points have been to-

1. agree common goals and define clearly the outputs at the beginning within an action plan
2. keep action notes and delegate tasks within the strengths of the group
3. set timescales and adjust when necessary
4. keep in touch between meetings via e-mail, phone, texts etc. and share feedback and comments
5. remain upbeat and positive that we will continue this work!