

Transition-A Journey for all Young People

What is transition?

All young people with or without a long term condition go through a variety of transition periods, the most well known is transition from primary to secondary school. In healthcare the word transition is used to describe the development of a young person's knowledge and skills to manage their healthcare, this will include the eventual *transfer* to adult services. Transition continues after *transfer* into adult services and hence involves both child and adult centred services.

It is a gradual process that gives young people, their family and anyone involved in the young person's care, time to get them ready to transfer to adult services and discuss what healthcare needs are required. This will include deciding which services are best for the young person and where they will receive that care.

The aims of transition are to:

- Provide high quality, co-ordinated, uninterrupted health-care that is young person centred, age/developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive. It aims to be a flexible, responsive and comprehensive process for all those involved
- It aims to promote skills in self-care, self-advocacy, communication, decision-making and assertiveness while enhancing the young person's sense of control
- Provide support for parents/carers and wider family members
- To maximise life-long functioning and potential

When will transition start?

The timing of transition will vary depending on when a young person is ready. It can start around 11 years old but this varies from person to person. Throughout transition the young person's healthcare team will be supporting them for their eventual transfer to adult health services. *Transfer* to adult services includes assessing how ready the young person and their family is to transfer, exchanging information between services and providing the young person with practical information about adult health care.

What happens in transition?

Transition is basically all about growing up and developing skills to build confidence and independence so that a young person gradually learns to manage some or all of their own health care and well-being.

What are transition skills?

Transition skills include lots of things like: speaking up for yourself (advocacy) and setting goals. As a young person's confidence and skills gradually improve they may begin to ask more questions or choose to see the doctor/nurse on their own for a short time.

Transition plans

Transition checklists and plans will be used in consultation with the young person's healthcare team and aim to empower the young person and their parents/carers throughout the transition journey. It's a way of letting those who are supporting young person's healthcare know where the gaps are in their knowledge and identify what skills need more support.

Transfer to adult care

There is no exact time when a young person will move to adult services. Healthcare teams will plan with the young person and their family, helping them to look at where the ongoing healthcare needs can be met and how this will fit in with the young person's future plans.

As the transition process prepares the young person for their eventual transfer to an adult hospital they are encouraged to start thinking about questions to ask their healthcare team. These could include:

- What is the plan for my transition?
- When am I moving to an adult hospital?
- What is different about adult hospitals?
- Can I choose which adult hospital I move to?
- Can I meet the adult staff before I leave children's services?
- Can I visit the adult hospital to look around?
- Are there any young people I can talk to about moving to an adult hospital?
- How will my condition affect my future, such as college, university or work?

Healthcare staff understand that moving away from the a trusted adolescent team that has been looking after them for many years can be scary, but hopefully by getting

involved in the transition process, a young person and their family will feel more confident and happier about the move.

Transitional care is underpinned by the core principles of adolescent medicine and the development of young person friendly health care services.

Young Persons Top Tip

- Transition is about making plans with you - and not about you. You will have an active role, helping to determine your readiness through setting goals and building your confidence. This process will occur slowly across your adolescence (from [Latin](#): *adolescere* meaning "to grow up") giving you time to learn new skills and practice them with your healthcare team.
- During an appointment don't be afraid to ask if you don't understand what a health professional has said. For example 'I didn't understand what you said, can you say that again?'
- During transition there may be a number of things that you might want support or help with-don't bottle up your concerns- a shared problem or worry is much better to deal with than trying to sort things out on your own

Parent/Carers Top Tips

- Ask how your local health services support transition skills for young people (Be aware they may not be very advanced in their transition knowledge, you may have to educate them)
- Encourage young people to come up with a list of their own questions to ask in clinic
- When a young person is ready give them a chance to speak to members of the healthcare team on their own. (This can be quite hard for parents/carers not to be a part of all healthcare conversations-but young people of all abilities need the opportunity to build up their own advocacy skills)