



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

3 JANUARY 2005

FINAL REPORT – DEVELOPING LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present the findings of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel's review of the development of the Council's Learning Disability Services.

AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

2. The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to examine how Social Services meet the needs of young people making the transition from Children's Services to Adult Services.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

3. The terms of reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:
 - (a) To gain an understanding of the current position and the Council's statutory duties.
 - (b) To establish how social services prepare young people for the transition
 - (c) To gain an understanding of the cost implications for social services which are associated with the transition.
 - (d) To gain an understanding of how services are commissioned with the Council's partner organisations.
 - (e) To discuss the practical effects with service users.
 - (f) To investigate what services are available in the community and whether it meets the needs of young people.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

4. Members of the Panel met formally between 28 June 2005 and 11 October 2005 to discuss/receive evidence relating to this investigation and a detailed record of the topics discussed at those meetings are available from the Committee Management System (COMMIS), accessible via the Council's website.
5. A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:
 - (a) Detailed officer presentations supplemented by verbal evidence.
 - (b) Presentations and discussions with representatives from the Connexions Service and Children's Services
 - (c) Meeting with Parents who have experience of the Transitions Process
6. The report has been compiled on the basis of their evidence and other background information listed at the end of the report.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

7. The membership of the Panel was as detailed below:

Councillors C Rooney (Chair), Councillor A E Ward (Vice-Chair), Councillors Davison, Ferrier, Hubbard, J Jones and JA Jones
Co-opted Members – Elizabeth Briggs, June Holt and James McCowat

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8. In setting the scene for the review officers noted that there were three key elements for young people with disabilities that are associated with the transition from childhood to adult life. These are:
 - the move from school to further education
 - the move from Children and Family services to Adult Social Care Services
 - their entitlement to welfare benefits in their own right
9. In undertaking the review the panel wanted to consider how young people were supported through this process and how the needs of those young people were met.

THE PANEL'S FINDINGS

TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURRENT POSITION AND THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY DUTIES

10. The panel learnt that there is a wide range of government legislation that provides for young people and young people with disabilities. For local authorities their responsibilities for children and families are guided by the following:
 - **The 1989 Children Act** – this act places a duty on local authorities to provide support and services for children in need. Children with disabilities are included

in the definition of children in need. The level of support and services varies from area to area based on locally agreed eligibility criteria

- **The Care Leavers Act 2001** – places a duty on the Local Authority to support the ‘Looked After’ young person in education, training or employment, to stay in contact and to support financially (if appropriate) until the age of 25.
- **The Disabled Person’s Act 1986** – under this act, young disabled people approaching adulthood were entitled to an assessment of their needs so that services could be in place for them.

11. The panel learnt that Social Services had a responsibility to ensure that there were proper procedures in place for the transfer of the responsibility of young people from Children’s Services to Adult Services. Officers noted that it was important that Adult and Children’s services plan together for young people in transition and that there is a clear understanding of how the two services will work together.

12. There are also a number of principles that guide the transition process. Firstly, Adult Services have the responsibility to undertake any assessment against the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) criteria. This will identify whether the young person is likely to need support from Social Care, when Adult Services will become involved and what support is likely to be available. It will also ensure that the young person is offered a transitions plan before finishing full time education and that the provision will meet the needs of young people in accordance with legislation

13. Secondly, as outlined by the Department of Health the document ‘Valuing People’ outlines the challenging principles that Adult Social Care must develop. The main driver to Valuing People says that as young people grow up, getting the support they and their family need should be a smooth and easy process. Young people should have the same chances in their lives as everyone else. Valuing People therefore has 4 key principles for people which are having:

- rights as citizens
- inclusion in local communities
- choice in daily life
- real chances to be independent

14. In other words, it is about people having influence on their own decisions, and enough money to have a good life. For example the use of Direct Payments to enable them to buy the kind of support they require, to live in their own home and have the support they need to enable them to be part of the community they live in.

15. Valuing People also states that Adult Social Services should ensure that:

- there are more opportunities locally for young people to attend colleges, and to have increased options to be included in mainstream courses
- that young people with learning disabilities are able to take part in local training schemes and to get jobs
- that gaps in local opportunities and provision can be tackled
- that young people with learning disabilities have more opportunities to do the things that other young people do, through person centred planning and direct payments

- that young people with learning disabilities are able to say what they want to do and that services and community supports enable them to achieve their ambitions.

16. The panel learned that the Connexions service also worked with young people to help them realise their career aspirations and that Social Services worked in partnership with them to ensure local needs could be catered for. However the panel learned that locally there were gaps in provision of training schemes for young disabled people. Findings from the discussions with Connexions are further explored in paragraph 40.

TO ESTABLISH HOW SOCIAL SERVICES PREPARE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE TRANSITION

17. The panel was keen to establish how the Council's social services department ensured that the transition process was co-ordinated in a way to ensure a seamless transition for young people and which ensured all their needs were taken into account. The panel learned that this was achieved through a number of initiatives and services, namely the Council's Transitions Forum, Person Centred Planning, the provision of Welfare Benefits Advice and Joint working between departments.

Transitions Forum

18. Adult Services have established a Transitions Forum that is chaired by the Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities. The aim of the forum is to achieve a planned, timely and seamless transition for vulnerable young people with special needs who need support into adulthood. It meets on a minimum of 4 times per year and comprises of the key practitioners which includes Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust, Connexions Manager, Transitions Co-ordinator and the Learning and Skills Council.

19. The forum has a number of objectives which include

- promoting individual potential and independence
- developing partnerships between multi agency stakeholders, including parents and carers
- identifying multi-agency resource requirements
- analysing need
- information sharing
- ensuring appropriate information systems and processes are in place to identify young people in need
- support a timely handover between services.

20. Young people with complex needs are presented to the Transitions Forum for discussion with regard to their transfer between services. The aim is for the following outcomes to be achieved:

- named responsible officers within services relevant for individual needs work to continue with the current responsible service
- joint work to be arranged with agreed dates for commencement and termination (a minimum of 12 months joint work is required to ensure smooth transition)
- transfer with agreed transfer date

21. The resource implications will also be considered by the forum as well as the process to achieve the resources agreed. Re-referral will also take place in the event of a plan failure, needs change or fundamental disagreement.

Person Centred Planning

22. The panel learned that the focus for Social Services was to encourage people to move away from traditional day services. In order to assist this process, young people were identified from age 14, through the transition forum, and were offered a Person Centred Plan (PCP). A PCP would then be used to establish the service users needs and then identify the range of community-based employment and leisure facilities available to that individual to fulfil their needs.

23. In further detail, PCP is as described – planning focused on a person. It is about developing creative solutions to long-standing issues and providing solutions not analysis. The aim is to move away from reliance upon social care supports by increasing the range of community and family or relatives support networks. The process gives the person more control and choice over what support services they require to in order to assist them to be in control and thus lead a more fulfilled life.

24. The panel learned that there are a number of key principles surrounding PCP which are outlined below:

- The focus for the plan is the real world, not service led – person centred planning is about getting someone a life, not getting them a service
- the focus is on the person and their whole life, the planning meeting is not to discuss the difficulties the service or the professionals may be experiencing or the constraints they are working within
- the control is on the person and their advocates, and the person and the people who love and care for the person are the primary authority
- the professionals are there to provide specialist advice, knowledge, and support, but it is not their meeting.
- Universal needs are as important as medical needs
- The focus is on the individual and their aspirations
- There is future orientation
- There is a commitment to address conflict openly and honestly
- There is a commitment to reach a consensus for action
- There is a willingness to come up with non-traditional, sustainable solutions.

Limited Take-Up

25. The panel learned about the issue of the current low take-up of people receiving a PCP. At the time of the review there were only 13% of people in transition who have had received a PCP.

26. This was due to a number of reasons that were outlined to the panel. Firstly, the PCP process is seen as something which is time consuming and schools do not have the time within the education curriculum. Sometimes children are not included in their 14 plus review and the culture in schools sometimes does not embrace the concept of PCP. There can also be a lack of ownership from schools to implement PCP as schools can see it as a process for young people when they move into adult life. Social Workers, teachers and health colleagues have had PCP training but the training is not implemented within the schools. Parents and families can also see the process as intrusive or perhaps not relevant while the young person is at school and schools or social workers may not communicate information about PCP effectively to young people and their parents.

Increasing the PCP Numbers

27. As Social Services are aware of the low take up in the use of PCP they have thus identified a range of solutions to try and improve the numbers of people who want and receive a PCP. When young people are identified at the Transitions Forum at the age of 14 plus they are automatically offered a PCP, with an explanation of the benefits, such as the range of community based facilities, employment and leisure facilities that available to them. Service users are also informed about the financial support can be used in order to fund those facilities by using such means as Direct Payments, the Independent Living fund or existing social services supports. Officers were also using existing plans to show other young adults how they can gain a better quality of life by having their own PCP.
28. The Council has become involved in a national development programme 'Person centred 14 plus Reviews' which is designed to take Essential Lifestyles Planning to schools at the 14 plus review stage.
29. Awareness training was to be developed for the Learning Disability Community team, schools, Connexions and Further Education providers.
30. A development called 'The Big Plan' along with Redcar and Cleveland Council brings together a group of young adults, their families and friends and support agencies together in order to plan their transition into adult life.
31. The panel saw first hand how PCPs were put together by viewing examples of those person centre plans which had been developed from a number of service users. The panel learned that PCPs can take up to 6 months to complete and that the needs of the service users are taken into account first hand by taking account of their hopes, fears and dreams for the future. The panel also agreed with officers that the PCP was a good way of ensuring a holistic approach to identifying the needs of the service user and the types of service and facilities they require.

Welfare Benefits Advice for Young People

32. The panel recognised that the benefits system was a complex area and even more so because at 16 young people can, for the first time, choose to claim the benefits in their own right. The panel were therefore interested to find out about what support was available to young people, once they reached 16 to help them find their way through the benefits process, and also to ensure they were claiming the benefits that they were entitled to.
33. The panel had a brief introduction to the many benefits available to young people and when and how they were made available. The panel learned that the main benefit that is available to young people is the Incapacity Benefit in Youth, or if young people stay on in education their parents can claim benefits on behalf of their children up until the young person is 19. There are also benefits which young people who are living in supported living homes can claim in their own right.
34. The panel learned that there was a great deal of support for young people with regard to benefits advice. Firstly, their Connexions worker is available to assist them and secondly, Middlesbrough Welfare Rights Unit provides a great deal of benefits advice. Social Services caseworkers can give advice and help young people challenge any decisions that they think are unfair. Training on the benefits system is given to social workers and there is an advice line for them to contact. The training that has been

given has been so good that Connexions and other health care professionals have wanted to access it.

35. The panel learned that for some families, the process of the child being able to claim for benefits in their own right can be difficult one, and that it is life changing for both children and their parents. In some cases parents may have come to rely on the money they have received from the benefits and can be reluctant to leave the control of the benefit. However the aim of social services is to enable people to become more independent and encourage the take up of benefits and direct payments to enable young people to spend their money on the services and support they want.
36. Advice is available for young people and their families in such cases. An independent advocate would be available to discuss the issues. This is a service user's right and is offered to service users rather than them having to ask for it.

Joint working between Children's Services and Adult Services

37. The panel received a discussion paper regarding work in progress to develop the Transitions Service in Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland. The need for the development of the policy has arisen because evidence suggests that the current transitions service systems are fragmented, involve many agencies and result in work being replicated and in some cases young people entering Adult Services at 18 with no transitions plan in place.
38. In addition some young people with complex health needs receive a service from health, and are unknown to social services until they reach 18, when they are referred to adult social care and therefore have no transition plan in place, or the family have not wanted Children's Services but do now need adult support. Information is therefore crucial both at a qualitative level at an early age in a child's life, this places the child at the centre of an planning and quantitatively to inform Adult Services of cohorts of young people who may need specialist services in the future.
39. It was identified to the panel that there had been some weaknesses in the previous level of service provision, duplication of work, gaps in provision, staff vacancies, no overall responsibility for the Person Centred Plans. The development of the policy, it was hoped, would lead to providing young people aged between 12-25 with the following which it was hoped would address the aforementioned weaknesses in the system:
- a single point of referral
 - a key co-ordinator system to best meet individual need
 - a person centred plan
 - more opportunity and choice through forward planning
 - a consistent service
 - reduced anxiety for young people and their families
 - better outcomes for young adults

Connexions

40. During the course of the review the panel heard from Adult Social Services and Children's Services about the part they played in the transition process for young people. Having also identified the significant role that the Connexions Service played in young people's lives the panel considered it important to hear the views from representatives from Connexions about the work they do and how they link to the transitions process.

41. The panel learned that Connexions have a team of personal advisors that are based in Middlesbrough's Special Schools and who also work with young people with disabilities who are in mainstream education and arranged support for children who are in out of area placements. Initially contact is made with young people when they are in year 9 at school, personal advisors assisted with the development of Person Centred Plans and attended all 14 plus reviews to act as an advocate (a statutory duty). As you would expect, personal advisors develop supportive relationships with young people and assisted them in moving on to new opportunities.
42. It was apparent from the meeting with Connexions and Adult Services that there was a close working relationship, evidence of this was shown in the high number of working hours the Connexions team had with Middlesbrough in comparison with other local authorities within the Tees Valley.
43. In discussions with Connexions the panel learned of two issues facing the transitions process. Firstly whether or not the best use of the 14 plus reviews was being made and secondly service provision including how the Job Centre Plus funding cuts would impact on current service provision.
44. At present 14 plus reviews take place at school with a representative from the Connexions service. However it was identified that those reviews are not just about education and are about planning for the whole of people's lives. It was suggested that one of the challenges for those representatives involved is to work with schools to ensure that the best results are gained from those meetings. At present the meeting is scheduled for 45 minutes and it was suggested that in that meeting it could be trying to achieve too much in too short a time.
45. When planning for a person's future, officers need to ensure that the choices that are being offered can be delivered, and that the courses that are provided by colleges provide good quality education and not just another form of day care service. The panel had learned that there was a shortage in training opportunities, and the recent government Job Centre funding cuts had compounded this. The Learning and Skills Council was, at the time of writing the report, due to meet with social services to set out which parts of the current provision they could or couldn't continue to fund.
46. It could also be more difficult for service users with more challenging behaviour to find a place on a training or educational course. It was recognised that they may need a more unique or one off provision and social services were looking at how the use of Direct Payments could ensure that a more individual tailored package could be put together.
47. Having considered the above evidence the panel were in agreement that the current approach being taken by the Council's Social Services department were assisting young people to prepare and cope with the transition between Children's Services and Adult Services.

TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE COST IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES WHICH ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSITION

48. In order to understand the full picture with regard to the transition process the panel considered it important to understand the cost of the provision of services.

49. The main point with regard to the cost implications for Social Services was that forecasts had shown that there would be a significant increase in the numbers of people who would be needing support from Adult Social Services in the coming years.

50. Social Services constantly reviewed the information on service users, this is because new service users can become known to the Council at any time. The likely cost of new service users is very significant and the projected costs are built into the social care medium term financial plan that then will feed into the Council's overall medium term financial plan.

51. The panel was made aware that the demand led financial pressures were unavoidable and can be much too big to be absorbed by the current Social Care budget. However, planning is on going in order to minimise the impact to the Council by establishing the most cost-effective model of meeting the demand.

52. Projected Service User Numbers – it can be seen that there is an anticipated increase in the number of service users, which will of course result in increased costs to the Social Services budget, the projected figures are detailed in Table 1 below

Table 1

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Autism	5	3	6	8	4	3	8	6
Challenging Behaviour	0	13	12	18	13	0	0	0
Total	5	16	18	26	17	3	8	6

53. Resulting Projected Cost

Table 2

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Autism	120	253	403	732	955	1114	1375	1783
Challenging Behaviour	0	188	734	1661	2206	2251	2296	2341
Total	120	441	1136	2393	3161	3365	3671	4125

54. Table 2 shows the cost to social services following the projected rise in the numbers of people who would need Adult Services in the future. From the table above it can be seen that in 2005/06 the total cost to Social Services is £120,000 and this will continue to rise to reach 3 million in 2009 and 4 million in 2012. The next three years expenditure was a major concern for Social Services. It was noted that the figures above could rise as they only accounted for those people currently known to the department and that there will be people not currently known to social services who will require care in the future.

TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF HOW SERVICES ARE COMMISSIONED WITH THE COUNCIL'S PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Commissioning Services

55. The panel learned that a definition of commissioning was as follows: 'Commissioning is at the very heart of providing effective Social Care. It is the process by which Local Authorities decide how to spend their money to get the best possible services for local people. Members, managers, staff at all levels, service users and carers, statutory agencies and service providers in the independent sector need to contribute to this'.
56. Within the learning disabilities sector of social services there are a number of types of services that are commissioned
- residential care
 - nursing care
 - domiciliary care
 - day care
 - transport
57. In Middlesbrough the number of providers within those sectors is as follows
- residential care – 8
 - nursing care – 3
 - Independent Supported Living – 4
 - Home Care/Community Support – 9
 - Other – 3
 - Total – 27
58. The types of services provided include respite care, advocacy, Direct Payment support services, housing related support and independent supported living. However it was noted that for some sectors especially residential care provision that the market is quite narrow and there are not many providers available to offer potential services. Social Services officers are also able to advise potential service providers with developing the specifications of the services they want to offer.
59. Again the panel heard the importance of ensuring that there was a supply of services not only for the people of Middlesbrough but for those people currently receiving support and care from services outside of Middlesbrough so that they could receive a more local service.
60. One of the main issues was being able to find providers that the council could commission who were able to provide the type of support that was required. There are providers who are keen to develop respite services however there is always the financial considerations that must have to be taken into account.
61. Financial Information was presented to the panel on the cost of commissioning services for people with learning disabilities

62. Spend on Learning Disability Services

Table 3

	£ (000)
Spend on Social Care related services per annum	21,463
- Supporting People services purchased per annum	6,451
- Services purchased by Social Care on behalf of the PCT	2,226
- Client contributions to services	<u>2,811</u>
Total expenditure per annum	32,951
Social Care spend on Learning Disability services per annum	5,629 (21%)
Supporting People spend on Learning Disability services per annum	2,500 (39%)

63. Table 1 shows that 39% of the supporting people budget is spend on services for people with learning disabilities and this figure is above the national rate.

64. Analysis of Learning Disability Services Expenditure

Table 4

	Social Care Spend £ (000)	Contributions £ (000)	Total £ (000)
Residential/Nursing Care	2125.6	1988.6	4114.2
Day Services	1670.2		1670.2
Independent Supported Living	635.0	1701.8	2972.1
Home Care/Community Support	492.7	78.3	571.0
Direct Payments	190.2	30.7	220.9
Total Social Care Spend	5113.7	3799.4	8913.1

65. A total of nearly £9 million is spend on Learning Disability Services

Analysis of Client Numbers and Unit Costs

Table 5

	Social Care Spend £ (000)	Number of Clients	Unit costs per week
Residential/Nursing Care	2125.6	140	291.98
Day Services	1670.2	260	123.85
Home Care/	429.7	47	201.60

Community Support			
Independent Supported Living	635.0	81	150.76

66. To put the figures into context, it can be seen that for residential care alone 2.1 million is spent on 140 clients. However the policy direction of helping people to live in their own homes has provided a reduction in potential expenditure because a vast majority, as little as 6 years ago, of those people now receiving care to enable them to live in their own homes, would have been receiving care in residential homes at a higher unit cost.
67. As an example of developing new services as a result of demand, the panel learned about the work that was currently being undertaken to develop the Autism Steering Group. The development of the group was amongst a number of social services priorities and social services had identified a gap that needed to be addressed.
68. The group now meets bi-monthly and works with partners across Teesside with the aim of jointly commissioning services for young people and adults with Autism Spectrum disorders. The group has a number of aims and objectives which includes mapping existing initiatives, commissioning project work to be undertaken, work with the National Autistic Society and recruit a Teesside project Manager to take forward the proposed development of Autism focussed services.

TO DISCUSS THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS WITH SERVICE USERS

69. Parents of children who were undergoing, or who had been involved with, the transition process were invited to talk to the panel. A number of panel members attended a session at the Gleneagles Centre with parents who discussed their experiences of the process.
70. One parent had a child who was now a young adult and had gone through the transition process. Unfortunately for him, his family's experience, two years ago, had been difficult.
71. For his child, he felt that the service stopped at 18 and there had been little consideration as to what would happen next, exacerbated by a lack of information and guidance and a lack of co-ordination between departments. For him he felt that improvements that would have helped him could have involved integrating his child into adult services at 17 years old or earlier and then slowly introducing them to the new facilities and workers with regular monthly meetings and contact with all those involved.
72. Unfortunately the service that best suited his child's needs was a residential school 150 miles away. That it was difficult to find out information about alternative services and they had to do a lot of researching potential services on their own. Although the Connexions service had been of help in the provision of financial advice and information about possible services.
73. However for another parent, her recent experiences were much different. For her child, who was just going through the transition process, it had been a positive experience. For her child the process had begun at 15 and there had been regular reviews at their home with all those people involved and with a number of options being presented.

74. Workers from the St Paul's Centre and been involved with her child at the Gleneagles Centre to get to know her child before the transition. And her needs as a carer and her need to secure respite care had been discussed and accommodated where possible.
75. One overriding issue that came out of the discussion was that the provision for young people was limited. St Paul's centre was mentioned as one of the only places in Middlesbrough that provided day care facilities, however it was described as outdated and not suitable for the needs of young adults. Parents considered that its capacity for wheelchair users was limited and its changing facilities were seen as inadequate. The use of Direct Payments as a way of purchasing more tailored care, were discussed however for the parents present they felt that it was complicated and that it still couldn't provide them with the services they and their child required.
76. When discussing the potential of independent living for their children, the parents agreed that smaller homes that provide independent living were beneficial and definite progress from large scale institutions, but they agreed that this kind of provision would depend on the needs and wishes of the individuals concerned and would not suit everyone.
77. It was noted that currently there is a distinction made between the age that Children's Services cover (0 – 18) and that Adult Services cover (18+). However the parents felt that it may be useful to have another category for service users, ie one for young adults, say 18-25, this was because they thought that the St Paul's centre currently catered for older people. They agreed that what was needed was a place where young people could mix with their peers and socialise and make friends.

TO INVESTIGATE WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE COMMUNITY AND WHETHER IT MEETS THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Policy Direction

78. In terms of policy direction the panel were informed of a report which had been submitted to the Executive which presented a policy for supporting adults with learning disabilities in their own community. This was in line with the Government Policy, which since the introduction of the 1993 Community Care Act, emphasised the need to maximise independence and choice for people with disabilities. Following the 1993 Act the Valuing People Agenda, published by the Department of Health in 2001, has also emphasised the need to support people in their own community, with services tailored to their assessed needs.

Middlesbrough's Position

79. In Middlesbrough this policy is implemented through the provision and promotion of community placements particularly in Independent Supported Living Projects. Of which there are 80 people with learning disabilities living in tenancies with support and care, this is either in independent flats or in ordinary 3 or 4 bedroom houses throughout the community. The panel learnt of the success of those projects and heard that as little as 6 years ago the vast majority of those people would have been in residential or nursing care.

80. It is important that the level of support and health care is provided to meet service users needs and that the value of the Independent Living Fund is maximised where eligible.

Ensuring Services for Middlesbrough Residents

81. The panel was also made aware that there were a number of Middlesbrough residents that were supported in placements outside of Middlesbrough. A Strategic Health Authority Review of Specialist Mental Health and Learning Disability Services incorporated an element of needs analysis and identified 16 individuals with complex needs who were being supported in out of county placements. Social Services policy is to identify who those individuals can be 'brought back home' to receive their service provision from Middlesbrough Social Services.

82. Social Services therefore, planned to implement a policy which would see fully developed local services for all adult user groups and that local needs would be responded to by local expertise and resources which would support mainstream services whether Council housing, community, leisure and Adult Education services.

83. This policy would benefit adult users, their families and carers by ensuring care is available in their own community, that people with learning disabilities and complex needs are no longer separated from their families and local environments.

84. There are a number of strategies that Social Services will employ to implement the policy, these include

- responding to local needs by developing and expanding local expertise and resources
- providing local services in partnership (in the community rather than institutional settings)
- supporting people as near as possible to their homes and families
- developing and expanding the capacity of local services
- maximising the take up of Direct Payments respond to differing needs by providing highly individualised service planning and delivery
- ensure that the transfer of assessment and care management responsibilities are appropriately planned and implemented in consultation with service users and carers
- work in partnership with relevant agencies and the community to develop local specialist services which support good practice.

85. In order to assist with the task of helping people to 'return home' a Tees-wide Commissioning Group has been established to develop a number of local opportunities such as day activities, living options and support services. This group comprises of representatives from Social Services and the relevant Primary Care Trust from Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton and Hartlepool.

Independent Supported Living

86. As the panel learnt, and in line with the policy direction Independent Supported Living was being developed in Middlesbrough. In essence, supported living is helping people live in small homely places, with the appropriate level of support to meet their needs, enabling them to make the choices about the things they want to do. As mentioned previously there are now around 80 supported living tenancies across Middlesbrough. These tenancies have been developed in partnership with Housing Associations and Independent Care Providers and are usually bungalows, houses or small blocks of

flats, usually accommodating between 4-6 people. For example a house for 3 people who were in an out of area college who wanted to live together, an 8 place purposely adapted building for young people and two bungalows, purposely built for young people with complex needs and physical disabilities.

Information about the Transition to Adult Services – Booklet

87. The panel was presented with a booklet that is given to parents which describes the transition to adult services process. The booklet also explains which services are available to them and useful contact numbers.

88. The panel was also presented with a report that outlined in detail the provision of support for adults with learning disabilities. In summary this included advice on finance, educational opportunities, employment, health, day care centre provision, leisure facilities, supported residential and nursing provision, and transport. The information is attached for more detailed consideration at Appendix 1.

CONCLUSION

89. Based on evidence given throughout the investigation the Panel made a number of conclusions (paragraph numbers have been included for ease of reference):

- a) That the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that it has proper procedures for the transfer of responsibility from Children's Services to Adult Services and the panel found that those procedures are in place. (*para 10*)
- b) There is a wide range of practical support for young people throughout the transitions process, examples of which includes the Transitions Forum, Person Centred Planning and Benefits Advice. (*para 17-47*)
- c) That Person Centred Plans are an important tool in ensuring the needs and wishes of the young person are taken into account when planning their future. (*para 31*)
- d) However at present there are a limited number of people who have had the opportunity to undertake a Person Centred Plan and the panel recognise the work that is being undertaken to increase those numbers. (*para 27*)
- e) The panel agreed that a Person Centred Plan should be offered as a matter of course and that they are available to all those people who want to undertake them. (*para 25*)
- f) That the agencies and schools that are involved in the Person Centred Planning process must work together to ensure that the best results are gained from those meetings. (*para 44*)
- g) That the development of the Transitions Service Policy is a positive step in bringing together agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach for the Transition Process. (*para 37*)
- h) The panel recognises the value of the work Connexions undertake and the importance of their close and co-ordinated working relationship with the Council. (*para 42*)

- i) That Person Centred Plans should not be driven by the services that are available. That Adult Services should respond to people's needs and work in developing or sign-posting people to the services that they require. *(para 24)*
- j) The panel recognised the Council's duty to ensure training courses are available to those people with learning disabilities who want them. However the panel were concerned about the current shortage of training opportunities and the Council's ability to ensure they are available especially in the light of the recent government funding cuts in this area. *(para 45)*
- k) That the panel recognises that the rising numbers of potential service users will place additional financial demands on the Council. However the panel recognise that this is being planned for by Social Services as much as the forecasting will allow and that the potential cost is being taken into account when budget planning. *(para 53)*
- l) That the panel agree with the policy direction of the Council, in which the Council strive to provide local services, where this is more cost effective, thus enabling service users to receive their care in Middlesbrough and not to have to travel outside of the area. *(para 81)*

RECOMMENDATIONS

90. That the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive:

- a) Whilst the panel recognise that transitions procedures are in place, the panel suggest that consideration be given to investigating the potential benefits of an overlap between young people's Children's Services Social Worker and their new Adult Services Social Worker. (subject to individual needs)
- b) That work continues to increase the numbers of people being offered a Person Centred Plan and an update on the numbers be provided to the panel in 6 months time.
- c) In order to highlight to parents the benefits of person centred planning, that work be undertaken to provide information on Person Centred Planning to parents prior to the child turning 14.
- d) That agencies involved in the Person Centred Planning process meet to discuss the format of Person Centred Planning meetings to ensure the best use is being made of those meetings.
- e) That Adult Services continue to work with the Connexions Service to encourage the use of Person Centred Planning within schools.
- f) Adult Services ensure that consideration is given to working with training providers to commission additional training courses for people with learning disabilities.

- g) Continue to explore the needs of Middlesbrough service users and where possible develop services that can also be offered to other local authority service users
- h) That the department continues to pursue the policy direction that ensures that, for those people that want them, and dependent on individual circumstances, that services are available in their own area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

91. The Panel is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

- Councillor Brenda Thompson, Executive Member for Social Care and Health
- Ruth Hicks, Head of Mental Health and Learning Disability Services
- Tony Parkinson, Head of Performance and Planning
- Sue Holman, Welfare Rights Officer
- Margaret Evans, Social Services
- Linda Lord, Social Services
- Kirsty Freeman, Finance Advisor
- Neville Marshall, Service Manager
- Iain McKenzie, Development Manager (Learning Disabilities)
- John Shiel, Strategic Accountant, Social Services
- Trish Fewster – Children’s Services
- Chris Murphy, Connexions
- Ann Lovatt – Connexions
- Jenny Dalby – Social Services

The panel was particularly grateful to the parents who met with the Panel to discuss their experiences

COUNCILLOR CHARLES ROONEY CHAIR OF THE SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

December 2005

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:

- (a) Policy for Transitions from Children’s Services to Adult Services – Middlesbrough Social Services, January 2002
- (b) Discussion Paper to Develop the Transition Service in Redcar & Cleveland and Middlesbrough, July 05
- (c) Transition To Adult Services – Information Booklet for Carers of Adults with Disabilities in Middlesbrough, Middlesbrough Social Services March 2001