



# Preparing for adult life and transition - Northern Ireland

Information for families

Northern Ireland

Incorporating **The Lady Hoare Trust**

## Introduction

Leaving school and moving into adulthood is a challenging time for all young people with disabilities and their parents. What choices exist and will they help the young person lead a fulfilling life?

Many parents feel anxious at this time, predicting poor services or a possible lack of choice for their children. The support they may have enjoyed through local parents' groups or local children's services may seem to be about to fade away.

For these reasons it is vital that parents and their children plan for transition to adult services and adult life as early as possible. This guide aims to help by bringing together some of the main issues that parents and young people need to think about. It is written for parents with children around the age of 14 as this is the age when planning for this transition process should normally begin.

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## Transition in Northern Ireland

Early teenage years are an important time for a disabled child, as the school should be working with you to start to plan your child's future educational needs as they move towards adulthood. This is called transition planning.

Most parents have told us that they did not find out about their rights in time to make the most of the transition planning process.

It is vital that parents and their children plan for transition to adult services and adult life as early as possible.

Freephone helpline: **0808 808 3555**  
Web: **[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)**

## Annual review of statements

It is good practice to review all statements at least annually as part of the process of continuous assessment. The first annual review after a child's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday is particularly significant in preparation for transition to adult life and it should include a formal Transition Plan. Parents should be given a copy of the plan.

Annual reviews should normally be based on written reports by schools, incorporating the views of staff and, as far as possible, acknowledging parents' views, which should always be sought.

### Annual Reviews from age 14 to 19

Some pupils with statements of special educational needs will remain at school after the age of 16 and Education and Library Boards remain responsible for such pupils until the end of the term during which they reach 19.

The first annual review after the young person's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday should involve the agencies who will play a major role during the post-school years. The transfer of relevant information should ensure that young people receive any necessary specialist help or support during their continuing education and training after leaving school.

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## The Transition Plan

Article 4 of the Education (NI) Order 1996 requires the Education & Library Board to produce a transition plan at the first annual review after the young person's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and any subsequent annual reviews should include a Transition Plan, drawing together information from a range of associated professionals; for example, Health & Social Services and Careers teachers, in order to plan coherently for the young person's transition to adult life.

The Board should seek an opinion from the HSS Trust as to whether the child is a disabled person (Section 5 of the Disabled Persons Act 1989 refers) and consult any other professionals who may have a contribution to make.

The Transition Plan should aim to make adequate and appropriate provision to

reflect the young person's needs and wishes:

## The school

- The code of Practice on Special Educational Needs states there should be a named teacher to co-ordinate the process
- what the young person's curriculum needs during transition
- how the curriculum can help the young person to work on and develop life skills
- decide what approaches should the school be making to other agencies to ensure smooth transition for the young person
- advise of vocational training options, further education courses and transition programmes.

## The professionals

- work to develop close working relationships with colleagues in other agencies to ensure effective and coherent plans for the young person in transition
- involve all appropriate professionals needed to plan for the young person's transition; for example occupational psychologists or therapists
- consult with the young person to decide what specific independence skills need to be particularly fostered during the remaining year(s) in school
- are assessment arrangements for transition clear, relevant and shared between all agencies concerned



- ensure information is transferred from children's to adult services to ensure a smooth transition
- do the arrangements for transition include appropriate training and technological support, for example in encouraging independence in travel, coping with money
- is education after the age of 16 appropriate, and if so, at school or at a college of further education.

## The family

- what do parents expect of their son's or daughter's adult life
- what can they contribute in terms of helping their child develop personal

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and social skills, an adult life-style and acquire new skills

- will parents experience new care needs and require practical help in terms of aids, adaptations or general support during these years.

### The young person

- should be given appropriate information to make an informed choice
- should be advised of local arrangements to provide advocacy and advice if required
- encourage the young person to contribute to his or her own Transition Plan and make positive decisions about the future
- if the young person is living away from home or attending a residential school outside his or her own Board area, are there special issues relating to the location of services when he or she leaves school which should be discussed in planning
- what are the young person's hopes and aspirations for the future, and how can these be met.

The Transition Plan should build on the conclusions reached and targets set at previous annual reviews, including the contributions of teachers responsible for careers education and guidance. It should focus on strengths as well as weaknesses and cover all aspects of the young person's development, allocating clear responsibility for different aspects of development to specific agencies and professionals.

### The role of the Careers Service

A representative from the Careers

Service should be invited to the first annual review following the young person's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, and all subsequent annual reviews. Their guidance should take account of information on further education and training courses, and the wishes and feelings of the young person concerned, as far as these can be ascertained. A careers officer with specialist responsibilities should oversee the young person's choice of provision, and assist the Board and school in securing it and other support such as any advice and counselling they need.

The views of young people should be sought and recorded wherever possible in any assessment, reassessment or review during the years of transition. Some young people may wish to express these views through a trusted professional, family, independent advocate or adviser, or through an officer of the Board.



## Useful contacts and further information

The law dealing with Special Education in Northern Ireland is contained in The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 as amended by The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO).

You can obtain a copy of this document by writing to:  
Department of Education, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, County Down, BT19 7PR or  
Tel: 028 9127 9279  
Email: mail@deni.gov.uk

Alternatively, the document can be downloaded at  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2005/1117/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2005/1117/contents/made)

### Your local Contact a Family:

#### Contact a Family Northern Ireland

The Bridge Community Centre  
50 Railway Street, Lisburn, BT28 1XP  
Tel: 028 9262 7552  
Email: nireland.office@cafamily.org.uk

#### Other organisations in Northern Ireland which may be able to advise on transition matters – education, training, housing, and local services:

#### Crossroads Caring for Carers - Northern Ireland

7 Regent Street, Newtownards  
County Down, BT23 4AB  
Tel: 028 9181 4455  
Email: mail@crossroadscare.co.uk  
Web: www.crossroadscare.co.uk

Head office for Crossroads in Northern Ireland, providing respite care for carers of people with disabilities or long term illness. It acts as a central resource for the Northern Ireland schemes which provide services in the Northern and Eastern Health and Social Services Board areas. Can also put carers' in touch with their nearest scheme.

#### The Cedar Foundation

Adelaide House, Hawthorn Industrial Estate, Falcon Road, Belfast BT12 6SJ  
Tel: 028 9038 7040  
Email: info@cedar-foundation.org  
Web: www.cedar-foundation.org

Services for people with physical disabilities - advice and information on education, training, employment, finding accommodation, care, respite care, transport and mobility. Also provides training and employment, an assisted living scheme providing personal assistance to people at home, an information service for parents of children with motor disabilities and cerebral palsy, and residential services.

#### Disability Action (Head Office)

Portside Business Park, 189 Airport Road West, Belfast, BT3 9ED  
Tel : 028 9029 7880  
Textphone: 028 9029 7882  
Email: hq@disabilityaction.org  
Web: www.disabilityaction.org

Freephone helpline: **0808 808 3555**  
Web: **www.cafamily.org.uk**

Works to ensure people with disabilities attain their full rights as citizens, by supporting inclusion, influencing government policy and changing attitudes. Services include information and advice, training, employment and training support, mobility centre. Also have offices in Derry, Carrickfergus and Dungannon.

### **Barnardo's Parenting Matters Project**

542-544 Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast BT4 3HE  
Tel: 028 9067 2366  
Email: [niparenting.matters@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:niparenting.matters@barnardos.org.uk)  
Web: [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)  
[parentingmatters](http://parentingmatters)

Parent support and education services for parents and carers (of children up to 18 years old). Work in areas and with groups facing disadvantage. Run by parents and carers who are trained to work with parents in groups based at community centres, schools, church halls etc.

### **Action Mental Health (Central Office) Mourne House**

27 Jubilee Road, Newtownards, BT23  
4YH Tel: 0289182 8494  
Tel: 028 9040 3726  
Email: [info@amh.org.uk](mailto:info@amh.org.uk)  
Web: [www.amh.org.uk](http://www.amh.org.uk)

Assessment, guidance and training to assist people with mental health problems gain employment. Nine training units provide work programmes for people recovering from mental ill health. One Stop Information Centres provide advice on job opportunities and training for people with mental health problems.

Learning disability programmes. Youth programme.

### **EGSA Connecting Adults with Learning**

4th Floor, 40 Linenhall Street,  
Belfast, BT2 8BA  
Learners line: 0845 602 6632  
Tel: 028 9024 4274  
Email: [info@egsa.org.uk](mailto:info@egsa.org.uk)  
Web: [www.connect2learn.org.uk](http://www.connect2learn.org.uk)

EGSA's Guidance Advisers are available at a range of venues across Northern Ireland to provide adults with information, advice and guidance on the range of learning opportunities available through local providers and on courses to suit individual circumstances.

### **Gingerbread NI**

169 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HR  
Tel: 028 9023 1417  
Helpline: 0808 808 8090  
Email: [enquiries@gingerbreadni.org](mailto:enquiries@gingerbreadni.org)  
Web: [www.gingerbreadni.org](http://www.gingerbreadni.org)

Advice line for lone parents. Can help with welfare benefits, housing, employment, family and legal issues and education. Also provide face-to-face advice. Offer creche facilities, training and employment programmes, and a network of self-help groups.

### **Northern Ireland Deaf Youth Association**

16 Townsend Enterprise Park, 28  
Townsend Street, Belfast, BT13 2ES  
Tel: 028 9043 8566  
Textphone: 02890 236 453  
Email: [Info@nidya.org.uk](mailto:Info@nidya.org.uk)  
Web: [www.nidya.org.uk](http://www.nidya.org.uk)



Services for young deaf and hard of hearing children and young people between the ages of 5 and 30. Advice on subjects including benefits, education and training and disability. Training courses in youth leadership, counselling skills and first aid. Youth clubs, social events, activity weeks and summer schemes. Mentoring work. Campaigns to raise awareness of the general public and change attitudes to deafness.

### **Northern Ireland Youth Forum**

68 Berry Street, Belfast BT1 1FJ

Tel: 028 9033 1990

Email: [info@niyf.org](mailto:info@niyf.org)

Web: [www.niyf.org](http://www.niyf.org)

Youth led organisation run by and representing the interests of young people aged 14 to 25. Youth rights and citizenship unit, equality unit, youth policy unit and international unit. Access to the internet and training services. Information, advice and signposting on most areas of concern to young people.

### **RNIB Northern Ireland**

40 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BA

Tel: 028 9032 9373

Email: [rnibni@rnib.org.uk](mailto:rnibni@rnib.org.uk)

Web: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

Resource centre and telephone advice for people with serious sight loss. Information and advice on daily living, benefits, employment, education and training. ICT training. Fully equipped resource centre. Offices in Londonderry also.

### **Action for hearing Loss**

Harvester House, 4-8 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8GA T

Tel: 028 9023 9619

Textphone 028 9024 9462

Fax: 028 9031 2032

Email:

[information.nireland@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:information.nireland@hearingloss.org.uk)

[www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk)

Information for deaf people. Communication support, information and help with choosing and using aids and adaptations. Training (including deaf awareness training). Services for deaf people with special needs. Charges for training, communication support, aids and equipment.

### **Extern**

Hydepark House, 3 McKinney Rd

Newtownabbey, BT36 4PE

Tel: 028 9084 0555

Fax: 028 9084 7333

Email: [info@extern.org](mailto:info@extern.org)

Services for children and young people at risk of being taken into care, custody, or school exclusion. Adult services for homeless people, ex-offenders, people with addiction problems, mental health problems, experiencing family breakdown and poverty. Mentoring scheme. Services for community groups, training.

### **Housing Rights Service**

Middleton Buildings, 10-12 High Street

Belfast, BT1 2BA

Tel: 028 9024 5640

Web: [www.housingrights.org.uk](http://www.housingrights.org.uk)

Freephone helpline: **0808 808 3555**

Web: **[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)**

Advice and representation service for people with housing problems - homelessness, rent arrears, mortgage arrears, tenancy problems, harassment, illegal eviction, threatened court action. Provide specialist training and information to assist other advisors/practitioners.

### **Children's Law Centre - Northern Ireland**

3rd Floor, Philip House, 123-137 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AB  
Tel: 028 9024 5704  
Advice line: 0808 808 5678  
Email: [info@childrenslawcentre.org](mailto:info@childrenslawcentre.org)  
Web: [www.childrenslawcentre.org](http://www.childrenslawcentre.org)

Advice and telephone helpline for children, young people, parents, carers and professionals on all aspects of law and policy affecting children and young people. Provides information, legal advice, research and training on children's rights. Freepost advice write to: Chalky Freepost, BEL 3837, Belfast BT15 1BR.

### **Law Centre (NI)**

124 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2GY  
Tel: 028 9024 4401  
Textphone: 028 9023 6340  
Email: [admin.belfast@lawcentreni.org](mailto:admin.belfast@lawcentreni.org)  
Web: [www.lawcentreni.org](http://www.lawcentreni.org)

Legal advice and information for people on low incomes referred by other agencies. Deal with social security, employment, immigration and community care. Representation at tribunals and court. Advice line and publications. Training and consultancy service for advisers in member advice agencies, CABx, voluntary and statutory organisations.

### **Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Belfast Homeless Advice Centre**

32-36 Great Victoria Street, Belfast BT2 7BA

Tel: 03448 920900

Out of hours emergencies:

028 9024 6111

### **Belfast and South East Areas**

Inner Belfast, Greater Belfast, North, Mid and East Down areas: 028 9056 5444

### **South Area**

Newry and Mourne: 028 3083 5000

Armagh & Dungannon: 028 3752 2381

Banbridge & Craigavon: 028 3833 4444

Fermanagh: 028 6638 2000

South Tyrone: 028 8772 2821

### **West Area**

Magherafelt/Cookstown: 028 9446 8833

Omagh: 028 8283 3100

Londonderry, Limavady & Strabane:

028 7134 5171

### **North East Area**

(Co. Antrim and East Londonderry)

Antrim: 028 9446 8833

If you become homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless you should telephone 028 9024 6111 for all areas in Northern Ireland.

After 5pm, homelessness assistance may be accessed through the after hours service as detailed above.

Email: [info@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:info@nihe.gov.uk)

Web: [www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

Assessment of priority need under the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988. Can provide temporary accommodation for those assessed as in priority need - those with children or pregnant, vulnerable because of age (60+), disability or at risk from violence. General housing advice and information to private

and council tenants, and homeless people.

### **Housing Advice NI**

Independent housing rights advice and advocacy.

Web: [www.housingadviceni.org](http://www.housingadviceni.org)

### **Mindwise New Vision**

Tel: 028 9040 2320

Wyndhurst, Knockbracken Health Care Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 8BH

Tel: 028 9040 2323

Email: [info@mindwisenv.org](mailto:info@mindwisenv.org)

Web: [www.mindwisenv.org](http://www.mindwisenv.org)

Range of services for people with severe mental illness, their families and carers. Flexible day care centres, supported accommodation. Information and advice, training and employment, advocacy, respite care, domiciliary care schemes. Carers support groups, user-led Voices forum. Phone the office for details of services and locations.

### **Shelter Northern Ireland**

58 Howard Street, Belfast, BT1 6PJ

Tel: 028 9024 7752

Email: [info@shelterni.org](mailto:info@shelterni.org)

Web: [www.shelterni.org](http://www.shelterni.org)

Advice and information on housing and homelessness for people in housing need. Also campaign on homelessness issues.

### **Simon Community Telephone Helpline**

57 Fitzroy Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1HT

Helpline: 0800 171 2222

Email: [cap@simoncommunity.org](mailto:cap@simoncommunity.org)

[www.simoncommunity.org](http://www.simoncommunity.org)

Work with the Health and Social Services Trusts to provide accommodation for young people leaving care to assist some of the most vulnerable people at this early age. Advice about housing, homelessness, finding accommodation. Advice particularly on social services responsibility in relation to the Children's Order and assessment as a child in need. Also advice for carers and professionals working with young people.

### **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

Equality House, 7 - 9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast, BT2 7DP

Tel: 028 90 500 600

Textphone : 028 90 500 589

Fax : 028 90 248 687

Email: [information@equalityni.org](mailto:information@equalityni.org)

Web: [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

Information, advice and assistance on complaints relating to discrimination, harassment or equality on sex, race, disability, religious belief, political opinion and sexual orientation. Information and education on equalities issues. Oversees the public sector's duty to promote equality of opportunity. Responsible for reviewing equality legislation. Publications, guidance material and research.

### **Mencap Northern Ireland**

Segal House, 4 Annadale Avenue  
Belfast, BT7 3JH

Tel: 028 9069 1351

Helpline: 0800 808 1111

Freephone helpline: **0808 808 3555**

Web: **[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)**

Email: [mencapni@mencap.org.uk](mailto:mencapni@mencap.org.uk)  
Web: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)  
Helpline, information, support and a range of services for children and adults with a learning disability, with a focus on building skills to enable independent living as far as possible. Services include information and advocacy, family support services, children's services, employment projects and residential support.

### **Positive Futures**

Head Office, 2b Park Drive, Bangor  
Co.Down, BT20 4JZ  
Tel: 028 9147 5720  
Email: [info@positive-futures.net](mailto:info@positive-futures.net)  
Web: [www.positive-futures.net](http://www.positive-futures.net)  
Community based services for children, young people and adults with learning difficulties in Northern Ireland. Residential and supported living services, day care, long and short term respite care and family based adult placement services.

### **Society of St Vincent de Paul - Northern Regional Office**

196-200 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2AJ  
Tel: 028 9035 1561  
Email: [info@svpni.co.uk](mailto:info@svpni.co.uk)  
Web: [www.svp-ni.org](http://www.svp-ni.org)

Support and assistance for people in need. Home, hospital and prison visiting. Drop-in centres. Home management and personal development courses. Pre and after school playgroups. Distribute cookers and washing machines. Advice

on benefits, homelessness, money and debt.

### **Citizens Advice Northern Ireland**

Regional Office, 46 Donegall Pass,  
Belfast, BT7 1BS  
Tel: 028 9023 1120  
Email: [info@citizensadvice.co.uk](mailto:info@citizensadvice.co.uk)  
Web: [www.citizensadvice.co.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk)

Northern Ireland office for the network of Citizens Advice Bureaux, which provide advice and information for the general public on a wide range of issues, including benefits, housing rights, money and debt. NIACAB provides support and training for the local CAB and information about local bureaux.

### **Centre for Independent Living**

Linden House  
Beechill Business Park  
96 Beechill Road  
Belfast BT8 7QN  
Tel: 028 9064 8546  
Fax: 028 9064 0598  
Textphone: 028 9064 0598  
Email: [info@cilni.org](mailto:info@cilni.org) [www.cilbelfast.org](http://www.cilbelfast.org)

### **Carers Northern Ireland**

58 Howard Street, Belfast BT1 6PJ  
Tel: 028 9043 9843  
Email: [info@carersni.org](mailto:info@carersni.org)  
Web: [www.carersni.org](http://www.carersni.org)

Information service for carers. Deal with a range of issues including benefits, community care and respite care. Facilitate carers groups and campaign on behalf of carers.

### **Social networking**

Contact a Family is on Facebook and Twitter. Join us at:

#### **Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/contactafamily](http://www.facebook.com/contactafamily)

#### **Twitter**

[twitter.com/contactafamily](https://twitter.com/contactafamily)

#### **Podcasts**

You can download podcasts from our website at [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

#### **Videos**

You can watch videos on our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/cafamily](http://www.youtube.com/cafamily)

Freephone helpline: **0808 808 3555**  
Web: **[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)**

## Getting in contact with us

Free helpline for parents and families  
**0808 808 3555**

Open Mon–Fri, 9.30am–5.00pm  
Access to over 100 languages

**[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)**  
**[www.makingcontact.org](http://www.makingcontact.org)**

Contact a Family Head Office:  
**209-211 City Road, London EC1V 1JN**  
Tel **020 7608 8700**  
Fax **020 7608 8701**  
Email **[info@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:info@cafamily.org.uk)**  
Web **[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)**



Registered Office: 209-211 City Road,  
London EC1V 1JN  
Registered Charity Number: 284912  
Charity registered in Scotland No. SC039169  
Company limited by guarantee  
Registered in England and Wales No. 1633333  
VAT Registration No. GB 749 3846 82

## Other information booklets available

This guide is one of a series produced for parents and groups concerned with the care of disabled children. Our guides include

- A Checklist for parents in Northern Ireland
- A guide to claiming Disability Living Allowance for your disabled child (UK)
- Benefits, tax credits and other financial assistance (UK)
- The tax credits guide (UK)
- Working (UK)
- Fathers (UK)
- Siblings (UK)
- Grandparents (UK)
- Money when your child reaches 16 years of age (UK)

A full list of Contact a Family publications is available on request or can be downloaded from our website [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

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