

3rd November 2025

Dear Josh MacAlister MP, Georgia Gould MP, Stephen Kinnock MP, Dr Zubir Ahmed MP, Alison McGovern MP and Matthew Pennycook MP,

Re: Transition to adulthood

Background

We, the undersigned, represent charities and people with lived experience of disability, including family carers, and we are calling on the relevant ministers in the Department for Education, Department of Health and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to:

1. Introduce a national, cross-departmental plan for transition co-produced by young people with SEND and their families
2. Introduce a named Transition Coordinator to facilitate a person-centred and ambitious approach to transition, focusing on what is possible, not just what is available e.g. bespoke packages of care and support
3. Amend the Care Act 2014 to introduce a statutory age (age 14 years) to begin transition planning working collaboratively with other services across health, education, housing etc.

Transition to adulthood is an important time for all young people; it should be a time of excitement as young people look ahead to their future. However, for many children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and their families, transition to adulthood is a time of anxiety and frustration as late planning and a disjointed approach across health, education and social care result in confusion, uncertainty and a “cliff edge” with gaps and/or an abrupt end to vital support.

Lived experience of transition to adulthood

“The process of the transition just felt like a cliff edge to me. I just remember I felt the whole transition was rushed. The way it impacted me was quite horrific really and I ended up having a mental breakdown. There was no time to process, there was no support around me. I was alone and everything just felt really scary. I felt like I was pushed aside. It needed to be a slow transition, and my son needed me by his side as well. I felt like I was taken away and it must have been quite scary for my son as well. I struggled to get Kaiden into a college, I had to get all the financial things in place for Kaiden. I was on the phone waiting for hours for someone to talk to me. You don’t know what to expect, you don’t know what to ask. It was really scary and you feel overwhelmed. If someone was there supporting you and kind of guiding you through the situation that would have really helped. There are so many things we need to make sure that are in place and it takes a long time to put those things in place”.

Lina Davey, mother to Kaiden

Ofsted Preparation for adulthood arrangements in local areas: thematic review

In December 2024, Ofsted published research which identified systemic and long-standing barriers to transition to adulthood. Challenges included:

- A lack of sufficient specialist residential and supported living accommodation
- Poor communication about what support is available in the local area during preparation for adulthood
- Gaps in the support available to support young people to be included in their local community
- An abrupt end to vital health services including mental health support

Ofsted made several recommendations including that DfE and DHSC should:

- Work together to address conflicting responsibilities and gaps across social care, education and health provision to aid transitions and preparation for adulthood
- Create a national set of standards that outlines clear roles and responsibilities across education, health and social care regarding transitions to adulthood

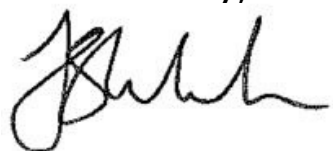
The consequences of the failings in transition to adulthood include:

The systemic failings highlighted above regarding transition to adulthood have a high human and financial cost as young people are pushed into crisis due to a cliff edge in support or placed in services a long way from their local community. Examples include:

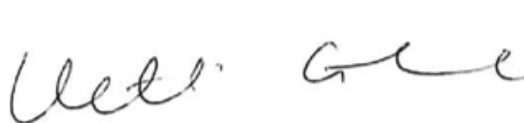
- An increase in admissions to inpatient services. In September 2025, 230 children under 18 who are diagnosed as autistic and/or with a learning disability were in an inpatient unit and this number increases to 405 young people aged 18-24years (representing a 76% increase in young people who have transitioned to adult services placed in inpatient services compared to under 18s). The average cost of an inpatient stay for an autistic person/person with a learning disability is £1.2 million per person
- Young people moving a long way from their families (due to a lack of local services rather than through choice). Research shows that 38% of young people diagnosed as autistic and/or with a learning disability were placed out of area on transition to adulthood upon leaving residential school.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss the points in this letter further and to answer any questions you may have, and would also be happy to facilitate a meeting with family carers with lived experience of supporting a young person through transition to adulthood should this be of use.

Yours sincerely,



Jacqui Shurlock
Chief Executive
The Challenging Behaviour
Foundation



Katie Ghose
Chief Executive
KIDS



Lina Davey
Parent Carer