

## Successful transitioning into adulthood

Preparation for adulthood is important to young people, with 94% agreeing strongly that there needs to be development for transitions. (Kids, 2023)

When asked about becoming an adult and transitions the most common word used by young people to describe feelings about transitions was **anxious**. Other words used commonly were worry, frustrated, mind blown and hard. The most common emoji they used was 🙄 followed by 😞 (Kids, 2025)

But! young people have been clear that with the right support in place transitions do not have to be a traumatic experience.

During the youth voice event young people shared their thoughts on the core principles of great transitions, which are:

- Start early
- Build trust, not paperwork
- Read and use the support plan
- Keep checking in
- Act when things aren't right
- Make us feel heard, understood and supported

During discussions with MP's young people talked about their experiences around transitions, both good and when improvements could have been made. Below are some clear guidelines and good practice young people shared:

### **1. Start Early – Much Earlier Than You Think**

Great transitions begin **months before the young person arrives**, not on the first day.

#### **Why it matters:**

"It gave me comfort to know things were already in the works...it showed they cared."

#### **Good practice:**

- Meet the young person before exams or before summer break.
- Begin planning while they are still in their previous setting.
- Share information early and openly.

### **2. Make Transition a *Process*, Not a Moment**

Transition is not "Year 11 ends / college begins."  
It's a **supported runway** on both sides.

#### **Why it matters:**

"The first couple of months after starting were especially important... there was no guarantee things would work exactly the same."

**Good practice:**

- Plan for *before* and *after* the move.
- Expect to review and adjust support for the first term.
- Build in check-in points rather than waiting for issues.

**3. Build Relationships Before You Build Timetables**

A named, trusted person makes the biggest difference.

**Why it matters:**

"I had someone who would fight my corner... a safe person I could go to."

**Good practice:**

- Introduce the young person to their key staff early.
- Create a simple line of communication (not just a generic email).
- Offer a friendly face, not just a service.

**4. Read the Support Plan – Then Talk About It**

Plans only work if people *read them* and *understand them*.

**Why it matters:**

"A plan can be the best written in the world, but if teachers don't read it... what's the point?"

"You can have the best ice cream in the world, but if no one eats it, what's the point?"

**Good practice:**

- Make sure every relevant member of staff sees the plan.
- Give staff time and training to understand what is required.
- Use student voice to co-write and regularly update it.

**5. Create Opportunities to Practise the Environment**

Visits, walk-arounds, and visual familiarity reduce anxiety and risk.

**Why it matters:**

"That visualisation and familiarisation is always helpful."

**Good practice:**

- Offer quiet visits or repeat tours, not just open days.
- Show routes between subjects, lifts, toilets, rest points.
- Help the student imagine a realistic day.

## **6. Build a Culture Where Asking for Help Isn't Scary**

Young people shouldn't have to choose between hiding their needs and being embarrassed.

### **Why it matters:**

"I didn't want to turn around on the first day and say, 'Hi, I'm the disabled one.'" "Sometimes I was too nervous to say I couldn't do the stairs."

### **Good practice:**

- Avoid putting pressure on young people to self-advocate in front of peers.
- Train staff to spot when adjustments aren't being used or are being ignored.
- Offer private check-ins, not public call-outs.

## **7. Ensure the Right People Support the Right Conversations**

It's not just *what* is shared but *who* shares it.

### **Why it matters:**

"It helped having someone who could speak to teachers on my behalf when I wasn't comfortable."

### **Good practice:**

- Identify who will coordinate communication.
- Encourage staff to check understanding, not assume it.
- Share information at the right time and avoid overload.

## **8. Respond When Things Go Wrong**

Mistakes will happen. What matters is how quickly and respectfully they're addressed.

### **Why it matters:**

"Even when I downplayed it, the staff who supported me knew it wasn't okay and acted."

### **Good practice:**

- Validate the young person's experience.
- Follow up on incidents quickly.
- Show that safeguarding dignity and inclusion is a priority.

Young people also facilitated an interactive quiz for MPs to try, looking at some key statistics about transition to adulthood and life as a disabled adult. Information shared with sources below.

**24% of disabled adults (16–64) live in social housing.** This is compared to 7% of non-disabled counterparts. (Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), 2025)

On average, it costs an **extra £1095 per month for a disabled person to live** to the same standard as a non-disabled person. With the average PIP award being £465 per month, this leaves a £630 shortfall per month versus these extra costs. (Scope, 2025)

Approximately **30% of disabled young people were NEET** (not in employment, education or training) (aged 16–24 years), compared to approximately 9% of non-disabled young people. (Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), 2025)

34% of disabled people with Autism are in employment, compared to 55% of disabled people and 82% of non-disabled people. (House of Commons Library briefing, 2025)

When **transitioning between child and adult health services, 70% of families** (including young people) **report poor experiences.** 58% said transition planning didn't start at the right time (i.e. too late), with 49% also reporting that the young person and parent carers were not involved with transition planning. Almost 70% of young people didn't get to meet with the adult team in advance, and 70% didn't have opportunity to ask questions about the transition process. 72% of young people were also left without a key worker and not knowing who to contact about their health after the transfer. (Wellchild, 2023)

## **References**

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