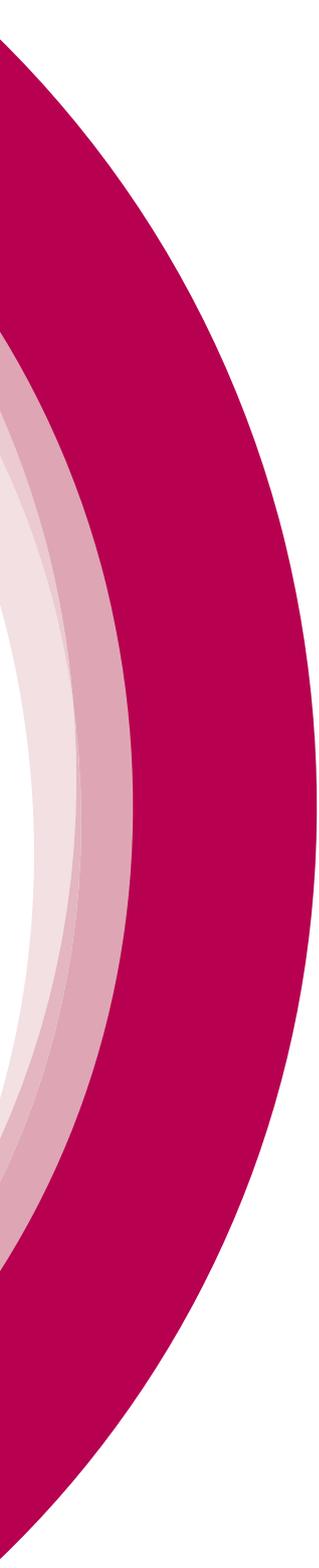


Your guide to

# Transition



## **About this guide**

This guide offers advice and information for parents and carers about the transition process – how to survive it and how to make sure you are able to make successful and positive plans for the future.

Throughout the guide you will find links to other useful organisations and websites, as well as advice and tips from parents who have already been through the transition process. There is also information on action you can take – look for the “what next?” sign for things you can do.

You can find a short explanation of important words and phrases in the key words section at the end of this guide.

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# Transition

**Leaving school and moving into adult life can be an exciting and challenging time for young people and their parents, with lots of changes and choices to be made about the future.**

If your son or daughter has a learning disability, making this transition can be even more complicated. You may be receiving support from a number of different agencies, including health, social care and education services, and these will all change as your child approaches adulthood. In addition, these changes may happen at different times and may not always join up.

To make sure your son or daughter has a positive experience of transition and receives the right support, you as a parent need to make sure that you have the right information and are well prepared for the process.

**“To begin with we had no idea about the key stages in the transition process. They organised the odd work experience placement for him, and tried him on a course for a week, but there wasn’t much else. However, by the end of the process I had become a bit of an expert!”**



## What is transition?

**The term ‘transition’ is used to describe the process of moving from childhood into adult life.**

It is mainly used by professionals to describe the changes in services when a child becomes an adult. However, for you as a parent it will be much more than this – it will be a time when your son or daughter is growing up and becoming an adult.

During transition there will be practical changes in the support you receive. There will also be emotional changes to go through as your son or daughter starts the journey to become more independent. As well as leaving school and perhaps going to college or training, your son or daughter will be making new friends, starting new relationships and maybe thinking about where they want to live.

These decisions and changes can be both exciting and challenging.

## Transition and special educational needs (SEN)

**If your son or daughter has a statement of special educational needs (SEN) the school must carry out a formal transition process which will help you and your son or daughter to plan for the future.**

The school will need to let other agencies, such as social care services, know that this process is underway and that they should be involved. This starts when your child is in year 9 (13 or 14 years old) and will continue until they leave school. Transition support from other agencies may continue until the young person is 25.

If your child has special educational needs (SEN) but no statement they may still need some additional support to plan for the future. It is good practice for those who are on School Action or School Action Plus to have a transition plan but it is not compulsory. You can still ask the school for a meeting to discuss your son or daughter's future.

**In England**, Connexions services based in local authorities support all young people aged 13-19 to plan for their future adult life. Their personal advisers provide information, advice and guidance on education, training and work. Connexions personal advisers can help young people with a learning disability up to the age of 25 and if your son or daughter has a statement of SEN they will be involved in the formal transition and attend review meetings held by the school. They also have a particular focus on young people with SEN but no statement. They should work with your son or daughter on a one-to-one basis – this might be in school, at Connexions centres or they can also visit you at home.

**In Wales**, Careers Wales provides a similar service and works in all secondary schools and further education colleges across Wales.

**In Northern Ireland**, careers advisers based in JobCentres, Jobs and Benefits offices and careers offices provide an all-age advice and guidance service, to help young people and adults make informed choices about their future career paths.

### What next

- Find out more on the Connexions website at [www.connexions.gov.uk](http://www.connexions.gov.uk) or contact your local authority to find out about Connexions services in your area.
- Find out more about support in Wales on the Careers Wales website at [www.careerswales.com](http://www.careerswales.com)
- For support in Northern Ireland, visit the CareersService website at <https://www.careersserviceni.com> or call 028 9044 1781.

## Transition plans and reviews

**If your son or daughter has a statement of SEN you will already be used to the annual review of their statement.**

In **England and Wales**, when your son or daughter is in year 9 (aged 13-14), the annual review is called a transition review. This marks the beginning of the formal transition process. In **Northern Ireland**, transition will be discussed and a plan drawn up at the first annual review after the young person's 14th birthday.

At this meeting, as well as reviewing the last year and whether the statement is still appropriate, the school will help you and your son or daughter to develop a transition plan. This document sets out what you and your son or daughter would like to happen in the future and what support you will receive to achieve this.

**“As a family we knew that the year 9 review would be the start of a very important journey leading up to our son leaving school at 19. It was an exciting time, one that would help us start thinking about his future, a time to reflect on those things he could do and enjoyed doing. It was also a time to explore how we could increase and develop his independence, provide him with new opportunities he would enjoy and increase his confidence.”**

**In England**, the head teacher of your school has the responsibility to call this meeting in partnership with the Connexions service in your area. In reality, the role may be given to someone else such as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in the school, the head of year or a Connexions worker. You will need to find out who takes on this role at your child’s school.

**In Wales**, support and guidance is available from Careers Wales.

**In Northern Ireland**, careers advisers based in JobCentres, Jobs and Benefits offices and careers offices provide an all-age advice and guidance service, to help young people and adults make informed choices about their future career paths.



## Who should attend the transition review?

**It is crucial that you and your son or daughter attend the transition review with key members of school staff.**

A range of other professionals should also be involved.

Before the year 9 school review, children's social care will be informed by your son or daughter's school that the transition process is beginning. If it is felt that your family will need social care support in the future, then social care services will be invited to attend the meeting to discuss how they will be able to meet your son or daughter's needs when they become an adult.

Whilst it is usually someone from the children's social care team that will attend the year 9 review, the structure of children and adult social care teams varies between areas. Some areas have specific transition workers whose job it is to help young people with a learning disability and their families to plan for adult life, and they will attend your son or daughter's reviews instead.

Other professionals and agencies, such as health and housing, should also be invited to contribute to the planning meeting. Parents have told Mencap that these other services do not always attend review meetings and that this can be a source of frustration. It is worth checking who is coming with the school in advance, and if necessary you can phone the other services directly to say that you would like a worker to attend. In England, a Connexions worker must attend the year 9 review.

You can also tell the school if you would like other professionals to attend. For example, there might be a member of staff from an after school club or a short break service that knows your son or daughter particularly well. They can play a role in supporting the planning, particularly if your son or daughter has profound and multiple learning disabilities and is less able to communicate their wishes for the future.

### What next

- Check if you have a transition worker or team in your local area. Some are based in children's services, others in adult services.

## What should a transition plan cover?

**The transition plan should clearly set out your son or daughter's ideas and hopes for the future and cover all aspects of life, not just which college or service they may be moving on to.**

Any health, housing or social care needs should be clearly stated, and the plan should set out what each service will do, and when, in order to meet these needs.

It is important that the plan is based on what the young person thinks is important and does not just focus on existing available services. It is also vital that the transition plan covers money and benefits and ways of funding the services or support that you son or daughter will need as an adult.

**“Ask for a copy of the agreed actions to come out of the transition review. The transition plan should say what needs to happen, the name of the person who will do the action and when it will be done by. This keeps people accountable.”**

## Ongoing transition reviews

**Every year after the year 9 review you should be invited to attend a transition review meeting, where you can review the plan and continue to talk about your son or daughter’s options.**

Services will continue to be invited to every transition review meeting but you may find that some will only come to the year 9 review and then the final year review. It is good practice for all services to be involved – even if they don’t attend every meeting, there should be some contact between meetings or a written report. It is very important that reports cover progress since the last meeting – once you know the date of the review, ask the relevant professionals to provide reports which include updates on actions set from the last transition review.

By the time of the final transition review meeting in your son or daughter's last year of school, you should have a good idea of their plans for the future after school, how it will be funded and what progress they hope to make.

In **Northern Ireland**, transition starts at year 11, after the young person's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## Person-centred transition reviews

**Person-centred transition reviews are a way of running transition review meetings that puts the focus firmly on the young person.**

They are used in many areas, but not all, so you will need to ask your child's school if they run their reviews in this way.

**“Enlist the help of friends, family and people who know your young person well, such as people who support them with short break care, to help you start to think about what could go into a person-centred transition plan.”**

A person-centred approach allows the young person to express what they would like to happen in the future and gets them actively involved before, during and after their review meeting. It should be about listening to the young person and what they want for their life and the future, with family, friends, supporters and professionals working together with them to make this happen.

Person-centred transition reviews should be run in a fun and creative way that really involves the young people and allows them to make their contribution. For those with communication difficulties or profound and multiple learning disabilities this may be done in a variety of ways, for instance by using multi-media to help others see what is important for that young person.

In England, the government says that by 2012 all young people with a statement of Special Educational Needs should have a person-centred transition review from year 9 onwards.

**“My daughter is part of a multi-media profiling project. She can use it to communicate with staff – when they watch it with her they can learn about the things she likes, how she communicates and how she likes to be supported.”**

## What next

- Read Mencap’s factsheet on transition reviews in England at [www.mencap.org.uk/factsheets](http://www.mencap.org.uk/factsheets)
- Find out about Trans-active communication passports, and how they can help you to plan for a person-centred transition at [www.mencap.org.uk/transactive](http://www.mencap.org.uk/transactive)
- Find out more about person-centred transition reviews on the Helen Sanderson Associates website at [www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk](http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk)
- Find out about Families Leading Planning which supports families with person-centred planning at [www.familiesleadingplanning.co.uk](http://www.familiesleadingplanning.co.uk)

## Preparing for the transition process

**Transition into adult life can be a difficult process for both parents and young people.**

Many parents have told Mencap that the best advice they could give to others is to be prepared.

**“The best thing I did was to find out who did what and when. It made the journey so much easier and helped me keep the focus on my son throughout.”**

### Top tips for preparing for the transition process

#### 1. Get as much information as you can

- Ask your local education authority if they have an information pack or any web-based information on transition. You can also ask if they have any accessible information for young people.
- Find out about current post-school options including further education colleges, employment, training placements, housing and day opportunities.
- Find out about other activities that may interest your son or daughter – you may be able to use the funding for their support more flexibly to create new opportunities rather than using existing services.
- Contact local voluntary groups to see if they have any information or offer any support around transition.

## 2. Support your son or daughter to think about what they want from the future

- Find out what's important to your son or daughter.
- Encourage them to think about what they might want to do in the future. Even if you think they may have unrealistic expectations, their views are important and there may be many aspects of their dreams that are achievable with the right support.
- Try to prompt rather than take over.
- Ask other siblings or friends who may know your son or daughter well about their interests and ambitions.
- Use circles of support with key people in your son or daughter's life. A circle of support, sometimes called a circle of friends, is a group of people who know the young person well who can meet together on a regular basis to help them plan their future life and achieve their personal goals.

### What next

- Download our PDF showing the key areas of transition at [www.mencap.org.uk/resources](http://www.mencap.org.uk/resources)  
You can use it to start talking to your son or daughter and helping them plan for the future.
- Find out more about circles of support on the Circles Network website at [www.circlesnetwork.org.uk](http://www.circlesnetwork.org.uk)
- Support your son or daughter to look at accessible websites on the Newham Easy Read website at <http://newhameasyread.org>
- Find out about the information and support that organisations like Mencap can provide.  
Contact the Learning Disability Helpline on **0808 808 1111**.

### 3. Prepare for meetings

It is easy to feel intimidated when you attend meetings with professionals. Planning in advance can help you feel better equipped and more confident about making a contribution to the meeting. Remember, you know your son or daughter best, and you have a valuable contribution to make – your views are important.

- Think about any extra information you need and write down a list of questions you want to ask.
- Think about any extra support your son or daughter might need.
- Ask if you can see any reports before the meeting.
- Take someone with you – a friend or an advocate.
- Make sure any key professional allies attend the meetings. For example, you might have a good relationship with someone who can help you fight your case for the right support.

#### What next

- Find out if there is a transition protocol in your local area – if so, ask to see it, so you know exactly when things are supposed to happen and who will be able to support you.

**“Working through the transition phase takes significant amounts of time and effort. Pace yourself to do at least one thing every week to explore options and prepare for transition to adult services when your son or daughter gets to year 11 onwards.”**

#### **4. Plan between meetings**

It is important to remember that whilst transition meetings are a focus for planning, they are just one part of an ongoing process. Between meetings you can keep working with your son or daughter to find out about their hopes and dreams for the future. It may also be helpful to visit potential activities or services for the future so that they get an idea of what to expect. Some schools are also bringing person-centred planning into school lessons so that young people have a chance to explore options for the future from an early stage.

## **What if my child lives away from home?**

**If your child is living away from home, for example at a residential school or health unit, you may need some extra support with transition and planning for the future.**

The residential school should arrange a transition review, but your home area should also be fully involved in review meetings and plans. If your child is 'looked after' then plans for leaving care should run in parallel to the school transition planning.

If the plan is for your son or daughter to return to your home area, it is particularly important that there is proper planning so that they are well prepared for the changes. However, it can sometimes be difficult to keep your child involved in planning if they live a long way from home.

Many parents have found that representatives from their local area do not attend meetings at a residential school or health unit. Make sure that you contact your local area to check who is going to attend meetings well in advance. Be clear who will take on the different roles in the plan – for example, check if the school will support your son or daughter to visit colleges and adult health and social care services.

## Moving into adult services

**As your son or daughter approaches adulthood, responsibility for their social care will pass from children's services to adult health and social care services.**

This happens when a young person is 18 and legally an adult, although some areas have a period of handover between teams. Social workers may work jointly with you during this time.

The support your son or daughter will be offered as an adult will be determined by a **community care assessment**, or a Unified Assessment in Wales. Alongside this assessment, you as a carer are also entitled to an assessment in your own right – this is called a **carer's assessment**.

Even if your son or daughter hasn't received any social care services as a child, they may need support as an adult, and a community care assessment should be carried out in their final year of school to assess this. In some areas, you might find this assessment referred to as the Disabled Persons Act Assessment or DPA.



**“Make sure that social care services do the assessment in time so that you don't have a gap in support from when your son or daughter is a child and when they turn 18.”**

**In England**, the government has developed 'Fair Access to Services' to allocate services and make sure people get the right support. There may be differences in eligibility for social care services between children and adults so you will need to check this with your local authority. When your son or daughter moves into adulthood, you may be charged for some services – again, ask to see your local area's charging policy.

**In Northern Ireland**, each health and social service trust will have developed eligibility criteria to allocate services – ask to see a copy of your trust's criteria for allocating support.

### **Short breaks**

As well as direct support for your son or daughter, you may also be in need of short break services. These are services that allow you to have a break from your caring role whilst offering your son or daughter a positive experience outside of the family home. This service might be at a specialist centre or out in the community, and it might be in the daytime, evening or involve overnight stays.

Mencap knows that overnight breaks can be especially important for carers with a son or daughter with a severe learning disability. It is therefore important that you try to emphasise this during your son or daughter's assessment and your own carer's assessment. If you have received short break services for your son or daughter when they were a child, then there should be a handover period when they move into adult services so that they can have time to settle in to a new environment.

## Signing your assessment

Once an assessment has been carried out, **don't sign it until you:**

- have read it fully
- have questioned anything that has been written that you are unsure of or worried about
- have met with your social worker or care manager to discuss it
- have changed anything that isn't right, or have added extra information where necessary
- are sure that it is clear how much support you and your family need and how often
- are sure that it has covered all aspects of life: money, work, training, education, housing, health, social care and leisure.

### What next

- Read Mencap's guide to community care assessments at [www.mencap.org.uk/communitycareguide](http://www.mencap.org.uk/communitycareguide)
- Read Mencap's guide to carers assessments at [www.mencap.org.uk/carersassessments](http://www.mencap.org.uk/carersassessments)

## Planning support for health needs

**When young people are at school, therapy and medical support are provided through children's health services.**

Your son or daughter may be receiving a variety of services. They might be linked to a community paediatrician, receive speech and language therapy, have physiotherapy or occupational therapy or be using children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).



As children leave school these health needs should be met by adult health services. The time of the transfer can change depending on the service – for example, for hospital services the transfer to an adult specialist can happen at 16.

Planning health care for adult services with someone with complex health needs can be difficult, as there isn't an adult equivalent of a paediatrician and therefore not a single over-arching doctor responsible for all their care. Therefore, early planning is very important.

### **Health needs and the transition review**

If your son or daughter receives health services, a representative will be asked to submit written information for the year 9 transition review and to attend meetings if possible.

At the transition review there will be a discussion about whether your son or daughter needs any ongoing specialist health support after they leave school. It is important that the whole range of needs is considered, so remember to think about all aspects of health and not just medication and hospital treatment. For example, check if your son or daughter can take any equipment they use at school with them when they move on; if not, find out how you can get replacements.

You also need to consider any speech and language needs your child may have. Find out if there will be a communication passport that can be passed on to adult services which will detail what's important for your young person and how they communicate.

**In England**, part of the transition planning process will include receiving a leaving school health check and a **Health Action Plan** that details their health needs and how these will be met in the future. The Health Action Plan should complement the transition plan. It is very important that your son or daughter gets the right health support at this stage, as this may determine what adult options they are able to take up.

**In Wales**, a Health Action Plan is not part of the transition review. However, when your son or daughter reaches 18 they will become eligible for an Annual Health Check.

### **Young people with complex health needs**

If your son or daughter has complex health needs and requires a lot of support, you may need to speak to the transition worker about how this will be funded when they are an adult. You should ask for an assessment for continuing care funds from the local health authority - this is funding for health care needs for people who have long term health conditions.

**“It was very difficult to know what to plan.**

**We still thought ahead as there was a lot of uncertainty as to what my daughter’s lifespan was going to be, and we felt it was good to be positive and look to the future with her. We wanted her to live life as fully as she could despite failing health.”**

## Young people with life-limiting conditions

If your son or daughter has a life-limiting condition then transition can be a particularly challenging time. You might need to consider support from a hospice, or you might want to look at a package of care to support you with caring for your son or daughter at home if this is more appropriate.

At the same time, you may also need to think about packages of day care activities that are flexible enough to be able to support your son or daughter on their good days when they feel able to do things. You may also want to think about getting advice from professionals to ensure that your son or daughter is given appropriate emotional support.

## Planning for the future: education, employment and daytime activities

**When your son or daughter leaves school there may be a number of options open to them, depending on where you live and the services available in your area.**

Currently, it would be misleading to say that there are lots of choices out there for young people with a learning disability – however, good planning for transition includes talking about what a young person needs to be properly supported to achieve the adult life they want, even if the services don't currently exist.

**“Our son is now 17 years old and over the last three years has grown into a confident young man who loves going out to new places, meeting new people through voluntary work and learning new things through the groups he attends. Some of the keys to success for us have been timely advice, taking gradual small steps and having a choice of support workers.”**

In England, if your son or daughter has a statement of SEN, Connexions must complete an assessment of their education and training needs and produce a written report in the last year of compulsory school (year 11). This is called a **Section 140 assessment**. The assessment may be made up to the age of 25. This should help you and your son or daughter to think about possible education and training options.

### **1. Further education**

Between the ages of 16 and 19, your son or daughter may choose to go on to further education, for example at a local college. They may want to study an academic course or something more work-related.

As a parent, you will need to think about whether it would be better for your son or daughter to take a specialist course for young people with a learning disability, or whether a mainstream course with support could work. Ask your local college what courses they have available and what support they can offer. Many schools also have links with their local colleges, so some students may have a chance to spend time in college whilst they are still at school.

You might think that if your son or daughter has profound and multiple learning disabilities that further education won't be an option – but that doesn't need to be the case. Some colleges have specific courses for young people with PMLD so do check this out in your area.

As well as mainstream colleges, there are also specialist colleges for young people with a learning disability; most of which are residential. If your son or daughter is interested in this option, it is a good idea to start planning early as securing a place and organising funding can be a lengthy process.

### What next

- Contact Skill, an organisation that specialises in access to education after the age of 16, training at work and employment at [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)
- Find out about Mencap's residential colleges for young adults aged 16-25 with a learning disability at [www.mencap.org.uk/mnc](http://www.mencap.org.uk/mnc)
- Search the directory of colleges providing further education and training for students with learning disabilities at [www.natspec.org.uk](http://www.natspec.org.uk)

## 2. Training and work

If your son or daughter is thinking about getting a job, you may want to work with their school to help them organise some work experience or a volunteer placement. This will help them to get an idea of what kind of work they would like to do, what they enjoy and what they find difficult, and what kind of support they may need in the workplace.

There are a range of different training schemes available, including work based training, apprenticeships and volunteering schemes. Even if paid work is not a possibility for your son or daughter, these opportunities may still provide valuable experience and skills.

### What next

- Find out more about the support Mencap can offer to help your son or daughter find work at [www.mencap.org.uk/jobsandtraining](http://www.mencap.org.uk/jobsandtraining)

### 3. Day opportunities

In recent years, day opportunities for adults with a learning disability have changed significantly in many areas. Services are increasingly community-based, and should be centred on an individual plan developed with you and your son or daughter to ensure their activities are based on their interests and what they find enjoyable and meaningful. This could include a leisure activity, time doing a volunteer placement or a part-time placement at college. For young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, many day services offer specialised activities such as sensory rooms, aromatherapy massage and access to hydrotherapy pools.

#### What next

- Find out more about opportunities offered by specialist organisations, such as Mencap at [www.mencap.org.uk/services](http://www.mencap.org.uk/services) and Home Farm Trust (HFT) at [www.hft.org.uk](http://www.hft.org.uk)

Increasingly local areas in England and Wales are now offering personal budgets rather than services, giving you and your son or daughter the flexibility to arrange your own choice of daytime or evening activities. This is a key part of personalisation – the term used to describe new changes in social care services in England (or person-centred approaches in Wales).

Personalised approaches recognise that young people and their families are the best people to say the kind of support they need for adult life, and who they would like to provide it. It means giving young people real choice and control over their adult lives – and this can mean having greater control over funding for support.

## Funding, money and benefits

**During transition, you will need to think carefully about the various forms of financial support you will need to help your son or daughter to achieve their plans for the future.**

**“Don’t be afraid to ask for help in dealing with direct payments or personal budgets. There are people who can advise you.”**

### Direct Payments

Local authorities can now give payments instead of services. This allows people with a learning disability and their families and carers to buy the services they need, giving them more choice and control. Direct payments are paid to the parents of children, but young people can receive direct payments in their own right from the age of 16.

### Personal Budgets

Personal budgets are being introduced in some areas of England and Wales and are part of the government’s personalisation plan for social care services. They go a step further than direct payments, as they enable people to take full control of their social care budgets, manage their support and choose the services that best meet their needs. Personal budgets are also known under other names, such as **individual budgets**.

If you live in Wales, Wrexham is the only local authority currently providing personal budgets. However, Flintshire, Monmouthshire, Cardiff, Swansea, Denbighshire and Powys will all be offering personal budgets soon.

## Benefits

When your son or daughter turns 16 there will be changes in the benefits they receive, and they will start to claim benefits in their own right. If you continue to care for your son or daughter you should be able to continue to claim allowances for yourself as a carer too. Many parents have told Mencap that the benefits system can be confusing, especially as it changes so frequently. However, it is important to find out what benefits your family are entitled to, and what extra support you may be able to receive.

## The Independent Living Fund (ILF)

The ILF is a trust set up and financed by central government to support people to live independently rather than in residential care. If you get higher rate care component Disability Living Allowance then you may be able to apply. In order to qualify for ILF you already need to be receiving a certain amount of support from social care services and your application needs to be made jointly with them, although sometimes there can be flexibility with your local authority about this. If you are eligible the ILF will provide funding for you to pay for a carer to support your son or daughter at home or in the community. If you have a son or daughter in a residential school placement, you can receive ILF to pay for support for your son or daughter when they are not in school but spending time at home with you.

**“We were given an additional two hours of care support just to push us over the threshold of spending from our local authority so that we could apply for ILF.”**

## Wills and trusts

As your son or daughter approaches adulthood, you may become more concerned about planning for their financial future when you are no longer there. One way of getting peace of mind for the future is to make a will or set up a trust for them. This can be a complicated process, so it is always a good idea to seek professional advice from a specialist in the subject, and to talk to your family and friends about your plan.

### What next

- Read Mencap's guide to money and benefits at [www.mencap.org.uk/money](http://www.mencap.org.uk/money)
- Read Mencap's guide to leaving money to someone with a learning disability at [www.mencap.org.uk/willsandtrustsguide](http://www.mencap.org.uk/willsandtrustsguide)
- Find out more about personal budgets on the in Control website at [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)
- Find out more about the Independent Living Fund at [www.ilf.org.uk](http://www.ilf.org.uk)

## Housing

**Transition is a good time for you and your son or daughter to start thinking about their housing options for the future.**

While some young people want to remain living with their families, others may want to move out of home.

It is a good idea to start to get information about what is available as early as you can, and to think about what support or physical adaptations your son or daughter may need. The issue of suitable housing and support should be considered during a community care assessment (or a Unified Assessment in Wales). Start by asking your social worker or care manager what's available in your area.

**“Start thinking early about housing and support options, as it takes time for money to become available to build new properties if you need something purpose built. You could also find out if there are young people who have similar needs to your son or daughter, who could potentially share a place to live in the future.”**

### **What next ?**

- Read Mencap’s factsheet about housing choices at [www.mencap.org.uk/factsheets](http://www.mencap.org.uk/factsheets)
- Visit the Housing Options website at [www.housingoptions.org.uk](http://www.housingoptions.org.uk)
- Find out about Golden Lane Housing at [www.mencap.org.uk/glh](http://www.mencap.org.uk/glh)
- Read the Dimensions report ‘Lost In Transition: A Home of my own’ on the Dimensions website at [www.dimensions-uk.org/ahomeofmyown](http://www.dimensions-uk.org/ahomeofmyown)
- Contact the Learning Disability Helpline on **0808 808 1111** for further information and support.

## **Transport and leisure**

**Whatever your son or daughter has planned for the future, it is vital to think about any travel arrangements they may need and how these will be paid for.**

Social care services may fund some transport costs, for example travel to college or a day centre. You may also receive subsidised transport through Taxi Card or Dial a Ride schemes, or you may be able to use part of a direct payment or personal budget for this.

It is also important that your son or daughter thinks about their own leisure time. They may want to pursue activities away from home, but may need extra support to do this. Here again you may want to think about using a direct payment or part of their personal budget to pay for support.

### What next

- Read Mencap's guide on leisure at [www.mencap.org.uk/leisureguide](http://www.mencap.org.uk/leisureguide)

## Friends and relationships

**Most young people with or without a learning disability will want to develop friendships and may be thinking about sexual relationships at this time.**

As a parent, talking about these issues can be difficult and sometimes embarrassing – and if your son or daughter has a learning disability it is natural that you will be worried about whether they can cope with the emotional and physical aspects of a relationship. You may also feel that they need extra support and information to make sure that they are well informed and feel able to take on the complexities of adult relationships.

## What next

- Read more about sex and relationships in 'ages and stages' on the Mencap website at [www.mencap.org.uk/agesandstages](http://www.mencap.org.uk/agesandstages)
- Contact the Family Planning Association. They have a range of resources to support young people with learning disabilities to understand the key issues around growing up and personal and sexual relationships. Visit the website at [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

## Where else can I go for support?

**There are a number of other services that can offer support to you and your family during the transition process:**

### **Advocacy services**

Advocacy services may help you to get the right transition support for your son or daughter. They may work together with you as a family, or more closely with your son or daughter, as sometimes it can be important for the young person to have a voice separate from you as a parent.

## What next

- Find out more about advocacy on the Action for Advocacy website at [www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk](http://www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk)

**“My advice for other parents preparing for the move from children’s to adult’s services would be to make sure you know what assessments you are entitled to, to find out about direct payments and individual budgets, and to make sure your son or daughter has a health action plan. It’s also a good idea to check whether any equipment your son or daughter uses will be going with them, and to get a contact list of the key agencies you might need at this stage, like Connexions, and the relevant health teams and social care services.”**

### **Parent Partnership Services in England**

Parent Partnership services are local services that offer information, advice and support for parents of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) in England. They can also put parents in touch with other local organisations, such as parent forums.

This service is also available in Wales where the main member is Snap Cymru, although the contact details for several other groups are also available on the Parent Partnership website.

### **What next ?**

- Find out more on the Parent Partnership website at [www.parentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.parentpartnership.org.uk)

**“Team up with other parents who are going through the same stage. Swap ideas and information – it helps a lot, as you can get support from each other”**

### **Other parents**

Many parents have told Mencap that talking to other people going through the same process is a vital form of support. You could speak to other parents through your child’s school, or you may want to join a local parent support group.

Sometimes special schools run sessions for parents about transition or you could try your local voluntary group. Parents’ forums are also operating in some areas under various names – they are a good source of information about what is going on in your area from parents who have already experienced it.

### **What next**

- Share your experiences and ask questions on our families’ forum at [www.mencap.org.uk/forums](http://www.mencap.org.uk/forums)
- Find a local Mencap group in your area at [www.mencap.org.uk/localgroups](http://www.mencap.org.uk/localgroups)

## How can I complain?

**If you disagree with anything that is written in your son or daughter's transition plan, or if they have been refused services that are in this plan, you can consider making a complaint.**

It is important to remember that if you do make a complaint, this won't affect or compromise the services you already receive.

**“Always go to the top!”**

All the services involved in your son or daughter's transition planning will have complaints procedures – you will need to get a copy of these and follow the process. If you are unhappy with the responses you receive then you can ask to take things further. You might want to get a friend or advocate to support you through this process, and it's always a good idea to seek professional advice when making a complaint.

### What next

- Read the step-by-step guide to making a complaint on the Carers UK website at [www.carersuk.org/Information/Helpwithcaring/Challengingdecisionsandcomplaints](http://www.carersuk.org/Information/Helpwithcaring/Challengingdecisionsandcomplaints)
- Get advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

We hope that this guide has given you lots of information, tips and advice on the transition process. Remember that although things might seem daunting at first, if you plan early and explore all the options alongside you son or daughter then you can work towards supporting them to make a successful transition to adult life.

## Further help

### Transition Information Network

The Transition Information Network produces a quarterly magazine for parents, young people and professionals called 'My Future Choices'.

- Visit the Transition Information Network website at [www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk](http://www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk)

### Transition Pathway

A website with information about person-centred transition planning tools.

- Visit the Transition Pathway website at [www.transitionpathway.co.uk](http://www.transitionpathway.co.uk)

### Progress Magazine

Progress Magazine has information about transition including different services and colleges.

- Visit the Progress Magazine website at [www.progressmagazine.co.uk](http://www.progressmagazine.co.uk)

### Move on up

A website offering information for young people from black and minority ethnic communities who are in transition.

- Visit the Move on up website at [www.movingonup.info](http://www.movingonup.info)

### Valuing People

Contains information on the government's programme for learning disability services in England, including transition services.

- Visit the Valuing People website at <http://valuingpeople.gov.uk>

## Contacts

### England

If you live in England and would like more information on learning disability, you can contact:

#### **The Learning Disability Helpline**

Telephone: 0808 800 1111

Typetalk: 18001 0808 808 1111

Email: [help@mencap.org.uk](mailto:help@mencap.org.uk)

If English is not your first language and you would like access to a translation service, please contact the Mencap helpline and ask for Language Line.

### Northern Ireland

If you live in Northern Ireland and would like more information on learning disability, please contact:

#### **Mencap's Information Service**

Telephone: 0808 800 1111

Email: [mencapni@mencap.org.uk](mailto:mencapni@mencap.org.uk)

### Wales

If you live in Wales and would like more information on learning disability, please contact:

#### **Wales Learning Disability Helpline**

Telephone: 0808 800 1111

Email: [information.wales@mencap.org.uk](mailto:information.wales@mencap.org.uk)

### Scotland

If you live in Scotland, and would like more information on learning disability, please contact:

#### **ENABLE Scotland**

Telephone: 0141 226 4541

Email: [info@enable.org.uk](mailto:info@enable.org.uk)

Website: [www.enable.org.uk](http://www.enable.org.uk)



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London EC1Y 0RT  
T: 020 7454 0454  
F: 020 7608 3254  
[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)  
[help@mencap.org.uk](mailto:help@mencap.org.uk)  
Learning Disability  
Helpline 0808 808 1111