

# Calderdale: Information for School Leavers Entering Transition



**THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF CALDERDALE  
& THE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY**

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## Background

'Transition can be an exciting time of new opportunities, choices and increasing independence. It can also be a time of anxiety and confusion for young people and their families as they move on from familiar people and places into the unknown' (Sanderson, Sholl & Jordan)

The latter is particularly prominent for young people with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and this has been documented in a diversity of transition research studies in recent years. The complexities surrounding the transition process for young people with an ASC are varied and will differ from person to person dependent on their personal skills, qualities and attributes in addition to aspects of a person's environment.

The difficulties that some people with an ASC experience leading up to, entering and post transition are often attributed to some of the traits that are commonly believed to be experienced by many people with an ASC.

Some of these potential difficulties are outlined below:

### **Rigidity of established structure and routines**

Many people with Autism have rigid structure and routines in various aspects of their daily lives. Disruption to established structure and routine can result in anxiety and stress arising. Transition can often result in people'

normal structure and routine changing, regardless of preparations and planning, this can still be significantly disruptive to a person's life.

Examples of changes to people's structure and routine include:

- Morning routines
- Travel routines
- Mealtimes routines

Any transition may mean that changes have to be made to the above structure and routines causing anxiety and distress. In addition, any ritualistic behaviour which may accompany these routines will change or have to adapt as the person experiences change.

## **Difficulties in coping with change and unpredictability**

Transition from school can encompass a significant amount of change and unpredictability for people with an ASC. Often, people with Autism are introduced to new and unfamiliar environments and situations where they are expected to adjust and adapt to.

The transition from child to adult services enforces a number of changes that both the young person and their families have to adjust to. It has been evidenced that young people who have received additional support in previous education settings may have to adjust to a reduced or

complete withdrawal of support from others. This is particularly challenging for people with an ASC who may require additional support to help meet their additional and/or complex education, emotional and social needs.

*“The lack of a link between child and adult services for ASC children and young people needs addressing. In our experience there is a lot of support through school for ASC kids but once they are out of education then what next?! If a plan for transition can be working on involving all agencies and families that would be great” (Quote from a local parent of a child with an ASC)*

In addition, responsibility and ownership of the person’s needs will change as the young person approaches and enters adulthood. This may encompass legislative changes around an individual’s rights and responsibilities, changes in an individuals benefit entitlements and the introduction of new professionals and social care systems, policies and procedures.

## **Making Choices and Planning for the Future**

*‘Transition to adulthood is not a journey that happens overnight or in isolation, but it will happen, and it’s best to be prepared’ (autismconsortium.org)*

It is also anticipated that many people with an ASC can experience difficulties in making choices and planning for the future. Whilst people can be supported or facilitated to

make choices which are meaningful and important to them, this can sometimes be a distressing experience for people with an ASC who may not have had to make significant choices prior to this transition, this is particularly prominent as choices become more complex and have greater accountability for a person's future.

Often, people with an ASC may have previously been dependent on others i.e. family members, teachers, social workers, support staff etc to make- or at the very least- support the decisions and choices they make, therefore the increased exposure to independence can be extremely distressing for a person who has been dependent on others for the majority of their lives to inform their choices and decisions.

Furthermore, there remains a growing concern within the health and social care sector around the lack of person centred approaches that agencies of support adopt when enabling people with an ASC to make choices and decisions which impact on their lives. Evidence of this is apparent in a growing number of Autism and learning disabilities literature and examples of this include:

- Poor coordination between agencies responsible for services for children and adults leading to dislocating experiences for young people and their families
- Lack of effective power for young people and their families within transitional planning systems

- Lack of choice and opportunity at school leaving and after for young people with Learning Disabilities

It is essential that people with an ASC are vocal and given the opportunity to exercise their views and wishes, remaining at the centre of their planning at every stage of the transition process.

People with an ASC should be supported:

- To explore options in their local and extended communities
- To explore creative and innovative avenues opposed to only traditional and/or expected options e.g. further education, employment.
- To have opportunities to experience a variety of options e.g. through ‘taster’ sessions, visits to establishments to determine what the best options for them are
- To make choices and decisions in a way that is meaningful and important to them
- To have their interests taken into consideration and maintained through the choices that they make.
- To use their chosen and/or preferred communication method when planning for and/or making choices and decisions

## Difficulties in Social Communication and Social Interaction

Many people with an ASC are said to experience difficulties in social communication and social interaction. These difficulties may be heightened during the planning stages of and entering transition. Many people with an ASC are able to develop functional and meaningful communication partnerships with both their peers, supporters and other professionals who may be present in their lives. These partnerships enable both individuals within the relationship to establish communication boundaries, acknowledge communication styles, preferences and methods and identify communication limitations and ways to overcome these barriers.

Some of the difficulties people with an ASC may experience include:

- Facial expressions
- Tone of voice
- Body language
- Jokes
- Sarcasm
- Commonly accepted phrases and sayings

In new and unfamiliar situations or when introduced to new social situations and people there may be a degree of difficulty attached to some of the above outlined. People with an ASC who experience communication difficulties may need to be supported to establish new communication

partnerships with others and to 'make sense of the (social) world around them' and provisions should be made in the planning stages of any transition.

In addition, many people with an ASC can experience difficulties in social situations and when interacting with others due to an inability or reduced ability to recognise or understand other people's emotions and/or express their own which can make it more difficult for them to fit in socially.

These difficulties can manifest in a variety of ways, including:

- An inability to understand the social rules which govern society e.g. not recognising when someone is disinterested in what they are talking about, not recognising when they are invading someone else's person space etc
- Prefer (or appear to prefer) their own company opposed to that of others
- Appear to behave 'strangely', 'differently' or 'inappropriately' due to the difficulty in expressing emotions, feelings and needs
- Difficulty in developing relationships and friendships with others.

It is therefore assumed that these difficulties may become more prominent when introduced to new and unfamiliar social situations where new friendships and relationships are imminent.

## What Should Have Already Happened? An overview of the different stages of the transition process

The transition process should be a holistic process which occurs at different stages throughout a person's education. However, this can be an extremely distressing experience both for the person and their family if they are not aware of their rights to effective transition planning. This is outlined in the Education Act (2009) which states, anyone who is identified as having 'Additional Support Needs' should have access to appropriate transition planning.

In addition, many people with an ASC have reported that they have not been awarded the opportunity to have focal input during the transition planning stages of their education and post education opportunities. Each stage of the transition process should focus on a person's development in relation to planning for the next stage of their transition. The following points should be considered when transition planning and the individual and those who know them best should be consulted at every stage (Sanderson, Sholl & Jordan):

- What is important to the person now and for the future, and what support they want and need?
- What is the best that could happen- what is possible?
- What is practical and possible for the person?

The Autism (Scotland) Bill (2010) identifies and reports that when there is an absence of providing young people with an ASC with transition support, devastating consequences for the future can emerge. This not only exists in a personal context, directly impacting upon the individual but also a high, and avoidable, societal financial cost as services are often accessed later at a point of crisis when an increased level of support is needed (National Audit Office, 2009).

The National Autistic Society (NAS) have provided an overview of what 'best practice' transition planning should look like and when it should occur (please see table below)

When transition planning should take place	What should be happening
Two weeks before the start of each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities have to provide the local connexions service with a list of all pupils with statements who will be starting in year 9 in September who will have a transition review during the year</li> <li>• Pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) but without a statement who would benefit from</li> </ul>

	<p>transition planning can be included on this list if they agree beforehand.</p>
<p>Two weeks before the start of each term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authorities are required to provide health and social services with a list of all pupils with statements scheduled to have annual reviews during the coming term</li> <li>• Pupils with SEN but without a statement who would benefit from transition planning can be included on the list if it is agreed beforehand</li> </ul>
<p>When the individual is in Year 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Connexions service has an important role to play in ensuring the participation and progression of young people with SEN</li> <li>• Connexions</li> </ul>

	<p>Personal Advisors (PA's) need to be aware of all young people with SEN in year 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They will work with the person to discover their hopes and dreams for the future and assess their future learning and support needs.</li> </ul>
<p>When the individual is in Year 9</p>	<p>If your child has a statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will be invited to attend the annual review meeting as normal</li> <li>• As well as reviewing you child's progress and looking at the statement, time will be allocated to discuss transition planning</li> <li>• A representative of Connexions, usually the persons personal advisor should attend the meeting</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A transition plan will be drawn up if your child does not have a statement</li> <li>• Nothing will happen automatically</li> <li>• You can request a transition planning meeting with the school or your school may suggest that one might be useful</li> </ul>
When the individual is in Year 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this year you will have another annual review meeting, if you have a statement</li> <li>• All people with a transition plan should have this reviewed</li> <li>• Your post 16 options should be much clearer now even if no final decisions have been made.</li> </ul>
When the individual is in Year 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children with a statement of SEN who will be moving</li> </ul>

	<p>on to further education, training or employment must have a learning difficulty assessment (LDA) carried out under s. 139a of the Learning and Skills Act (2000). This will identify their support needs and the provision that will be provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For children without statements of SEN, the statutory guidance suggests that a learning difficulty assessment should be done.</li><li>• Final decisions will be made about what you will do when you leave school</li><li>• Information should be passed on to those who will have responsibility for supporting once you leave school</li></ul>
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It is important that information collated and produced during transition planning remains active in a person's post education to ensure that their plans for the present and the future remain fluid, adaptable and are recognised and identified by people who may not know the person well.

Effective transition planning should essentially inform others who may take on a 'supporting' or 'facilitating' role about the person, what is important to them and what their goals and aspirations are now and in the future. This can then act as a basis for ensuring the person lives the life they choose.

## Helpful Tips for Making a Successful Transition

‘Young people with Autism have dreams and aspirations like anyone else. They have things that they like to do and things that they are good at. But for many young people with autism, their dreams fall by the wayside and their potential lies unrealised as they face the grim reality of trying to access services and support as they reach adulthood’ (Reid, 2007)

Research has identified the differences that people with and without Autism experience when transitioning from childhood to Adulthood (Sanderson, Sholl & Jordan), some of these differences for people with Autism include:

- Fewer opportunities to make choices and decisions
- Information tends to be aimed at parents, through the school and specialist services
- Fewer opportunities to build their confidence
- Discussions happen in meetings, and involve professionals and parents
- Decisions are usually made by parents
- Options are for specialist services only, based on disability and what the person can't do
- There is often only one option to try and it is difficult to change this

Although some of the difficulties that some people with an ASC may experience have been outlined, having a

successful transition is not unachievable with the implementation of effective support.

Below are some suggestions which may help people with an ASC to have a smoother transition:

- Plan for the future in advance- think about what you want to achieve now, in the near future and in the distant future and try to create a plan of how and when this will happen
- Be vocal about what you are good at and how these skills can be utilised in post education options
- Try to incorporate personal interests when making decisions about the future. Transition is more likely to be successful if the person has a invested interest in what they are going to be doing
- Make provisions and utilise resources available in the local and extended community to work on individual limitations and weaknesses
- Challenge decisions that you are unhappy with or that have been made on your behalf or by others
- Explore ways in which making decisions and choices can be made easier for you and decide on a format/method which works for you
- Learn what your rights and responsibilities are around transition
- Be prepared for the differences between child and adult services

- Consider several options that may appeal to you and try to experience them before making a final decision
- Identify key agencies and people who can provide support before, during and after transition has taken place
- Make people aware of your needs in order to access the right support for you
- Implement changes to structure and routine gradually to desensitise the impact of change
- Consider environmental factors which may affect your transition and plan ways these can be minimised
- Ensure that your preferred communication methods are acknowledged and respected by others
- Create a personal profile with information about you that may be useful for others to know

## Personal Perspectives of Transition

*“It would be beneficial for more young Autistic people to talk about their transitions from school to post education options to let children, like my own, know what is available and offer suggestions of what they found useful”(Quote from a local parent of a child with an ASD)*

### Case Study 1

‘I received my diagnosis quite late into my education, around the age of 15 after experiencing a number of difficulties at school. The support I received following my diagnosis in secondary school was minimal and had an affect on my studies, as it was around the time of my GCSE exams.’

‘It was extremely important for me, when planning for my transition and future that I researched all my options in the local community. I eventually got on to a course at Calderdale College and received effective support from tutors who had a good knowledge of Autism and my needs.’

‘I think its really important to find out who can help around transition, there are lots of groups and people in the local community who are dedicated towards helping people have a smoother transition, you just have to look for them and remain knowledgeable of your rights and responsibilities.’

'I think the best advice I can give to others who are due to enter transition is to try and keep as much familiarity as possible. Although change is inevitable, try to ensure that you keep in contact with familiar people, maintain your interests and establish good structure and routines'

## Case Study 2

'Our daughter is due to leave 6<sup>th</sup> form at a local school and start at a local college in September. We have previously found transitions to be an unpleasant experience and generally not enough adjustments are made for young people with an ASC.'

'However, the college have been really helpful; they have let us bring our daughter for individual interviews where we have met her tutor as well as workers from the support team to discuss her individual needs'.

'We looked at colleges last year but didn't go about it the right way and our daughter got very stressed during interviews as they were with lots of other students present.'

'We have found that when transitions are planned and the right support is accessed from the right people the process is much simpler. We are hoping to have some transition visits in June and hopeful that this will help her with the next steps of building a successful future.'

## Useful Contacts

For a full list of services, groups and organisations available to people with an ASD in Calderdale, please see the Calderdale Autism Services Directory.

### Calderdale & Kirklees Careers



The Calderdale and Kirklees Career are a non-profit social enterprise which provide high quality, impartial information, advice and guidance to young people and adults who reside in the Calderdale and Kirklees borough. Calderdale and Kirklees Career's provide careers information, advice and guidance to adults (19+), students (13-19yrs) in school and colleges, young people not in educational employment or training, vulnerable groups and have an allocated LDD lead to support students with Learning Disabilities (13-24yrs) including those with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. They also provide support to employers around recruitment and work experience.

**Phone:** 01484 226700

**Email:** [enquiries@ckcareers.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ckcareers.co.uk)

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

## Specialist Inclusion Services

The Specialist Inclusion Service (SIS) is made up of three services, one being for people with an Autistic Spectrum Condition and their families. This service is provided from 0-19 years and they provide support to children and young people in mainstream and specialist schools within Calderdale. The SIS team is made up of a team of staff which include specialist teachers, resource technicians, learning mentors, speech and language therapists, pre-school workers and support assistants. The service works in partnership with Health and Social Care services across Calderdale and Kirklees Primary Care Trust. They have 'resourced' certain mainstream schools that have heightened support packages for a small group of children / students who need more intensive support.

**Phone:** 01422 394136

**Email:** [jeremy.wright@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:jeremy.wright@calderdale.gov.uk)

## The Shaw Trust



The Shaw Trust is a national charity which supports disabled and disadvantaged people to prepare for work, find jobs and live more independently. They work with local authorities, health and other organisations to deliver

their 'work choice' programme which has been specifically designed to help people with a disability to overcome difficulties in finding and keeping jobs. Work Choice enables people to find and retain work by identifying their needs and providing the necessary support to fit their requirements. This programme is often a stepping stone in to full unsupported employment for many people.

The Shaw Trust work directly with employers to support their recruitment needs and help people to find work which suits them. The Work Choice programme is currently running in Huddersfield.

**Phone:** 01924 374 188

**Website:** [www.shaw-trust.org.uk](http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk)

## NAS Calderdale Branch



The NAS Calderdale Branch provides support, information, training and social activities for families and adults affected by an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These include informal coffee mornings once a month, speakers and training sessions, family days out and social events for children. The Branch also works with local service providers to advise them on the needs of ASD people

**Phone:** 07798 617448

**Email:** [calderdale@nas.org.uk](mailto:calderdale@nas.org.uk)

## NAS Community Care Advice Service



The NAS Community Care Advice Service offers advice and information about community care issues, including finding out what help you can get from your local social services department; how to access help; and how to make a complaint to your social services department if you are not happy about their decisions or the services they offer.

Some of the help that people affected by Autism may be entitled to include Direct Payments, day centres, respite services, or help with housing options. The Community Care Advice Service can be accessed by contacting the Autism helpline, email or by completing a short online application form.

**Phone:** 0808 800 4104 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)

**Email:** [communitycare@nas.org.uk](mailto:communitycare@nas.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.autism.org.uk+Community-care-service.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk+Community-care-service.aspx)

## NAS Transition Support Service



The Transition Support Service is a free email based service to provide information and support to families and young people who have Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) (aged 14-19 years old and 14-25 years old for young people who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or a Learning Difficulty Assessment).

Our aim is to provide a service to engage, inform and support everyone involved in the transition process from school, through to further education and into adult life, so as to ensure that any support that is needed is put in place at a time and in a way that benefits the young people concerned.

We can:

- Offer confidential information and support to parents/carers by email
- Explain parents/carers rights and entitlements and those of their child throughout the transition process
- Help parents/carers to explore their child's options so that they and their child can make informed decisions
- Signpost parent/carers to services that may be able to further support them in the transition process
- Provide information on further education & training that may be suitable and assist

**Email:** [transitionsupport@nas.org.uk](mailto:transitionsupport@nas.org.uk)

## NAS Benefits and Welfare Rights Service (National)



The National Autistic Society offer a free welfare rights service which offers advice and information on all aspects of social security benefit entitlement. This includes advice on benefits you may be entitled to, general advice on completing claim forms, what to do if you think a decision is wrong and how to appeal to a tribunal. Advice can be accessed via email, telephone appointment or by completing an online contact form.

**Phone:** 0808 800 4104

**Email:** [welfare.rights@nas.org.uk](mailto:welfare.rights@nas.org.uk)

**Website:** <http://www.autism.org.uk/benefits>

## Citizens Advice Bureau



The Citizens Advice Bureau currently provides services in Halifax, Elland and Todmorden for people within Calderdale. They offer advice and support around a variety of areas including benefits, work, debt and money, consumer issues, relationships, housing, law and rights,

discrimination, tax, healthcare and education. Advice can be given via email, telephone or through appointment with an advisor. See the website for opening times of your local office.

**Website:** <http://www.calderdalecab.org.uk>

## 'Gateway to Care'



Gateway to Care is the first point of contact for adult social care and advice and help to get back your independence, mobility and confidence after an accident, illness, injury or deterioration in a condition.

The Gateway to Care team now includes dedicated nurses, social workers and trained advisors who are working together to make sure people receive coordinated care, help and advice.

**Phone:** 0845 11 11 103

**Email:** [Gatewaytocare@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:Gatewaytocare@calderdale.gov.uk)

## Useful Links

[www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/page/about\\_autism/support/transition.cfm](http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/page/about_autism/support/transition.cfm)

[www.autism.org.uk/directory.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/directory.aspx)

[www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/benefits-and-community-care/community-care-transition-for-young-people.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/benefits-and-community-care/community-care-transition-for-young-people.aspx)

[www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/education-and-transition.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/education-and-transition.aspx)

[www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources/transition%20toolkit.aspx](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources/transition%20toolkit.aspx)

[www.autismstrategy.dh.gov.uk/](http://www.autismstrategy.dh.gov.uk/)

[www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/wellbeing-hub/](http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/wellbeing-hub/)

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/pdfs/ukpga\\_20090015\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/pdfs/ukpga_20090015_en.pdf)

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/19/data.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/19/data.pdf)

[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/2354/pdfs/uksi\\_20132354\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/2354/pdfs/uksi_20132354_en.pdf)

[www.livingautism.co.uk/article/174-autism-and-your-rights](http://www.livingautism.co.uk/article/174-autism-and-your-rights)

[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Autism/Pages/Thetransitionprocess.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Autism/Pages/Thetransitionprocess.aspx)

[www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/13572/56428/56428.pdf](http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/13572/56428/56428.pdf)

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

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

[www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_113405.pdf](http://www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_113405.pdf)

[www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DfES-0558-2001-2.pdf](http://www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DfES-0558-2001-2.pdf)

[www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DfES%200581%20200MIG2228.pdf](http://www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DfES%200581%20200MIG2228.pdf)

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Sanderson, Sholl & Jordan, Person Centred Transition, [www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk](http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk)

The National Audit Office (2011) Progress in Implementing the 2010 Adult Autism Strategy, [www.nao.org.uk](http://www.nao.org.uk)

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The Scottish Government (2011) The Scottish Strategy for Autism, Crown.