



EDUCATION & SOCIAL CARE
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TEAM

THEMATIC REVIEW
TRANSITIONS

JANUARY 2015

TRANSITIONS

Aim of the review

To evaluate how effective the transition process is across the authority at the key stages in terms of support and progression in learning.

Rationale for the review

The purpose of this report is to capture Moray's experience and evaluate how well we are getting it right for every child at different stages of transition.

Background

Moray Council is committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people so that they have the best start in life and are ready to succeed by following the principles of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Within Curriculum for Excellence, every child and young person is entitled to experience a curriculum which is coherent from 3-18. Those planning the curriculum have a responsibility to work in partnership with others to enable children and young people to move smoothly between key transition points, building on prior learning and achievement in a manner appropriate to the learning needs of the individual. This should ensure that young people are well placed to move into positive destinations and adult life.

Moray 2023 – A Plan for the Future (Moray's Community Planning Partnership Plan) sets the strategic direction and our priorities for the years between 2013 and 2023. Priority 2 'Ambitious and Confident Children and Young People' recognises that through personal support, children and young people will be prepared and supported through changes and choices. The Council aims to ensure that every child and young person benefits from the entitlement to personal support and appropriate challenge. This should enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities that Curriculum for Excellence can provide.

The priority for young people leaving secondary education will be moving into a positive destination, with the skills, competencies and knowledge they will need for learning, life and work helping them to succeed, flourish and thrive in a competitive global jobs market. There is a focus on preparing all young people for employment and active citizenship which forms a core element of Curriculum for Excellence with appropriate dedicated resources to help ensure increasing numbers of young people enter sustained positive destinations.

The GIRFEC agenda recognises the importance of transitions for all young people and in particular, those young people with more complex needs who require support from adult services. Good partnership working between agencies and the young person and their family, should ensure that the appropriate supports are in place at the right time and are proportionate to assessed need as the young person transitions into adulthood.

This thematic review was used to evaluate how well services and agencies are working to support individual children and young people to progress smoothly across key transition points. To inform next steps in advancing continuous progression in learning and support, the focus areas for the thematic review centred on the following key transition stages:

- Pre-school to primary 1.
- Primary 7 to secondary 1.
- Young people into positive destinations beyond school.
- Young people requiring support into adult services.

Theme: Transition at the Early Level

Focus: To evaluate how effective the transition process has been in terms of progression in learning across the early level from pre-school to Primary 1

Scope of the review

The scope of this section of the review focussed on the transitions between nursery and primary education.

The audit comprised:

- Survey of current Primary 1 parents across Moray (75 respondents).
- Survey of current Primary 1 teachers across Moray (24 respondents).
- Survey of health visitors across Moray (4 respondents).
- Focus group of partnership pre-school providers (2 participants).
- Interviews with 2 primary senior managers.
- Interview with Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) with responsibility for early years.

It is recognised that there is a limited evidence base for this section of the review as a result of a restricted representation from partnership and local authority pre-school providers, primary senior managers and early years' specialists in the focus groups. Any conclusions drawn are therefore tentative in light of these gaps.

The current strengths in pre-school to primary 1 transition which can be built on:

Across Moray transition arrangements are in place that generally include the following activities:

- Member of school SMT or P1 teacher visit main feeder pre-schools.
- Parent information session.
- One or more visits to school/classroom by children before starting school.
- School lunch with parent.
- Many schools organise P6/7 buddies that the pupils meet before starting school.
- Written information such as school handbook/transition arrangements/activities and/or relevant forms.
- Meetings between school SMT and health visitors as part of transfer of named person.

There were a number of examples of very good practice evidenced in the review. However it is acknowledged that the good practice in Moray highlighted below is not exclusive. Notable examples are:

- Curricular continuity for the individual pupil, wider curricular planning and pedagogy. This is achieved through close links with the main feeder pre-school providers
- Joint in-service days
- Shared activities/contexts/ideas
- 'Re-connector visit' by pre-school staff to observe new P1s in their learning environment following transition.
- Transition activities where pre-school children are included in several activities within the school throughout the session.
- Parents' transition meetings and parental workshops (e.g. Jolly Phonics)
- Evaluation of transition programmes – e.g. providers evaluate the previous transition and adapt the programme as required, parental feedback specific to the transition experience
- Pre-school partnership provider tracking children's progress and sharing this with parents (this information also feeds into curricular continuity for transition).
- Pre-schools providing pupil transition reports/profiles which feed into curricular planning for individuals.
- Involving parents in their children's learning in Primary 1 e.g. enhanced parental involvement through their regular shared learning sessions.

- Enhanced arrangements and early planning for children with additional support needs is accepted practice. This is often supported by other early year's specialists.
- Health visitors' assessments link to GIRFEC.

The issues and challenges identified in pre-school to primary one transition:

While sources of evidence were restricted in this section of the review, a number of inconsistencies in practice were nevertheless discovered. The main issues identified were:

- Children outwith the main feeder providers did not always have access to the full range of transition activities. Where applicable, additional strategies should be introduced to ensure involvement of all pupils in activities including those pupils not in main feeder providers.
- There was variability in the existence and quality of written information of the children's development which could feed into curricular continuity. Consistent written pupil profiles should be prepared to ensure effective handover.
- There were variations in provision between schools resulting in a significant gap between basic level transition and best practice. Standardised minimum best practice should be outlined in a Moray wide policy framework.
- Staff were not always aware of transition guidance for children with additional support needs. Schools and partner providers should ensure ASN guidance is made available and widely promoted.
- Handover between health visitors and schools for every child should commence or continue.
- In some schools-partner transitions, parental involvement should be strengthened.
- The evaluation of transitions should become standard practice in all schools and partner providers.
- A senior manager should be nominated to be responsible for ensuring adherence to the policy framework and that it is effective.

Theme: Transition at P7 to S1

Focus: To evaluate how effective the transition process is from P7 to S1 in terms of progressing learning

Scope of the review

The evidence for this section of the review was drawn from two ASGs. The following methods of enquiry were undertaken to collect the data upon which the conclusions are based:

- Pupil focus groups – one in each ASG.
- Group discussions - P7 teachers
- Group discussions – Depute Head Teachers and Principal Teachers (Additional Support for Learning)
- Group discussions – Principal Teachers of Guidance
- Group discussions - Primary Head Teachers

Documentation was also provided and used for reference purposes throughout discussions.

The current strengths in P7 to S1 transition which can be built on:

- Effective pastoral transition process and procedures were in place. Comprehensive programmes were well planned and implemented.
- All young people felt they were well prepared for many aspects of life at secondary school.
- Well established processes were in place to support the transition of young people with additional support needs. Through a process of review meetings, pupils with additional support needs are included and receive enhanced opportunities from school and partner agencies.
- Willingness of school staff and partner agencies to work collaboratively to improve current practice was evident.
- Improvement Planning at ASG and school level reflected the beginning of a more coherent approach to establishing effective curricular transition between primary and secondary schools.
- Primary 7 profiles were in place for all learners and have been shared with secondary schools.
- A variety of opportunities were offered to parents to be included and involved in the transition process.

The issues and challenges identified in P7 to S1 transition:

- To address the inconsistency and lack of equal opportunities the Authority should review current practice in terms of support and challenge. Whilst staff are continuing to work more collaboratively, young people are not yet experiencing a coherent curriculum across P7 – S1.
- Although recognising the limited and reduced resources available, the current structure of QIOs and Education Support Officers is not providing a driver for improvement nor a strategic approach by all in implementing an effective transition P7 – S1 for all our young people.
- There are examples of good practice but unfortunately these are not being shared across the Authority.
- Increased involvement of pupils in dialogue about their prior learning would benefit the transition process.
- Effective use of curricular data across both sectors is at an early stage. Although a variety of sources of information is shared with secondary schools, the impact this has on ensuring

curriculum continuity and progression which builds on prior learning is limited. Practices need to be evaluated and guidance provided.

- P7 profiling needs to be developed further to ensure a more consistent approach which enhances progression in learning, skills development and achievement when pupils move to S1.
- The Authority needs to adopt agreed electronic systems to support schools in assessing, tracking, monitoring and reporting pupils' progress in learning.
- The Authority needs to support opportunities for cross sector working, providing leadership in terms of principles and practices to improve outcomes for young people, prioritising raising attainment at transition P7 – S1. Specifically this should support the areas of: agreeing a common understanding of standards through moderation and the use of assessment information to plan young people's progression.

Theme: Transition for young people into positive destinations

Focus: To evaluate how effective the transition process is post school to positive destinations

Scope of the review

The evidence for this section of the review was drawn from individual interviews with the 16+ Learning Choices Development Officer, Principal Teachers of Guidance and Depute Head Teachers in five Moray secondary schools, the Employment Development Manager, the Principal Educational Psychologist, a Senior Social Worker (Fostering and Adoption), the Early Engagement Team Manager, the Associate Director of Curriculum and Quality at Moray College, the Job Centre Plus business support team, the Pinefield PARC Coordinator and an Education Support Officer with responsibility for enterprise. Evidence was also gathered from discussions with young people in five secondary schools and a group of students who formerly attended Moray schools and now attend Moray College.

The current strengths in transition, post school to positive destinations, which can be built on:

- The number of young people entering positive destinations in Moray is increasing.
- Strong school links between Principal Teachers of Guidance and Skills Development Scotland Advisers including the availability of careers advice for all young people and targeted support for those 'at risk'.
- The strategic work of the 16+ Learning Choices Development Officer.
- Good school-college links, particularly the S4-S6 senior phase programme, and the delivery of minority higher and other courses by Moray College. Young people were positive about attending college for one day per week in their final year at school and felt that they were treated as adults and this helped build their confidence and sense of responsibility.
- The role of Moray College in supporting 'at risk' learners including summer holiday transition courses, flexible programmes, 1:1 support and key link person.
- The range and quality of support from external partners including outside speakers representing employers, Skillforce, Aspire North and Aberdeen University.
- Young people's involvement in relevant learning through, for example, 'My World of Work' and 'Participate' course and Careers Fairs.
- Examples of good transition arrangements for vulnerable young people and those with additional support needs including links with the disabilities section at Moray College, Employment Development, links with employers, availability of work experience and courses such as hospitality and interview skills to prepare young people with additional support needs for employment.

The issues and challenges identified in transitions, post school to positive destinations:

- Schools and partners should gather more frequent and in-depth feedback from young people on their experience of careers education and general preparation for the world of work, and life beyond school, in order to create and share a vision for transition and improve the service.
- Improve communication between schools, partners and young people in order to ensure more joined up provision, access to information and sharing of good practice.
- The young people interviewed expressed a general dissatisfaction with the quality and availability of work experience. Young people were often not aware of opportunities around Moray; the focus was on the local area. There were also restrictions on taking up

placements outwith the school catchment area, for example, transport issues were highlighted as a problem. The authority should review work experience arrangements with the aim of improving availability and relevance of placements.

- In the young people's views, there was significant variability, in the quality of guidance support and careers education. Issues highlighted included young people unaware as to why they were targeted for careers advice; lack of follow-up following careers interviews; limited information on courses, job opportunities and areas such as changing employment patterns, social enterprise and entrepreneurship. Opportunities for greater focus on the world of work should be explored, both through Personal and Social Education (PSE) and across curricular areas.
- As PSE was not viewed as being productive for many young people, who felt there was too much emphasis on university applications, in particular, schools should review provision to ensure that it is relevant and useful to all young people. Young people also thought that information was, at times, incomplete; for example a lack of information on tuition fees and student loans. They indicated that there was a lack of support with writing personal statements and improving their interview skills.
- Parents often have anxieties around transition points and the young people agreed that parents would value schools having greater engagement with parents in relation to young people achieving sustained positive destinations.
- Ensure that arrangements, for monitoring and supporting all young people, will identify and assist those who might not be recognised as being at risk of 'slipping through the net'.
- Improve strategies to support young people who are at risk of dropping out of university or college through, for example, lack of organisational, budgeting and social skills.
- Improve arrangements and options for at risk young people, particularly college exceptional entrants whose needs cannot be adequately met by schools, and winter school leavers. Strategies should include improved induction procedures, summer activities, options to return to school if college placement breaks down and better two-way post school tracking of individuals.
- Investigate greater use of the third-sector in supporting young people into positive destinations.
- There are wide ranges of training opportunities for young people, however there need to be mechanisms in place to ensure these all tie up. Young people should have cohesive training programmes that build skills progressively, and develop their interests and needs, to lead to sustained positive destinations.

Theme: Transition for young people into adult services

Focus: To evaluate how effective the transition process is for young people moving into adult services

Scope of the review

The evidence for this section of the review was drawn from seven 1:1 interviews and three focus groups. Participants interviewed were from different aspects of the Moray Council ranging from: Community Care, Child Care Social Work, Housing, Moray Youth Justice, Placement Services and the Reviewing Team.

The current strengths in transition for young people moving into adult services which can be built on:

- There was some evidence of good practice in transitions for those with the most complex needs; however, this is not consistent across the authority.
- There was evidence of developing flexibility within one team in particular that enabled young people to be received back into their service, should independent living for example, prove to be too challenging for the young person.
- There was some evidence that Housing is now playing a more active role in Corporate Parenting and a willingness from them to move to a more joined up approach to planning with regards to meeting young people's needs.
- Most young people are identified, at an early stage, by Education as potentially having a need for adult services in the future.
- There were some good examples of transitions for young people coming back to Moray from out of the area. However, this experience can depend on who the care provider is out with Moray and therefore, good practice is not always consistent across the authority.
- There is a general willingness and acknowledgement among many people, that services need to be more joined up and that pathways need to be clearer to get it right for all children and young people.

The issues and challenges identified in transition for young people moving into adult services:

- The view of adult services is that some assessments are not robust enough with regards to assessing a young person's ability to manage the practicalities of independent living. This can result in some young people entering these services and for example, not having an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to successfully holding down a tenancy.
- There is a disparity in how adult services and childcare services approach risk, impacting on the experience of some young people moving on to adult services.
- There is a lack of evidence of a clear pathway to support young people during this very important transition, which results in some young people experiencing this period ill prepared for the current expectations of adult services.
- There is sometimes too much emphasis placed on the chronological age of 16 and not enough emphasis placed on a pathway to meet the needs of young people through this transition.
- Housing are not always actively involved with young people who are likely to seek housing around aged 18, despite the young person having been open to child care for a number of years. This is more of an issue should the case be closed to child care social workers. This can result in the young person not receiving the right support in preparation for securing a tenancy.

- Sometimes there are a few late referrals to adult services and this can impact negatively on the ability of adult services to build positive relationships with young people in a timely manner and can also mean that budgets may not be readily available to put in the right resource.
- There is an expectation that young people transitioning to adult services up to aged 18 have a single plan where necessary. This currently is challenging, given childcare and adult services do not have a shared pathway, nor shared documents.
- Those young people who lead chaotic lives are more at risk of falling through the gap of adult services. Failure to engage with adult services as expected, may lead to cases being closed. This can result in vulnerable young people not being supported.
- Some childcare workers are not confident in their understanding of the pathway to adult services. This can at times cause a delay to appropriate services.
- Child care services and adult services are not always confident in understanding each other's roles and responsibilities. This can result in young people not being fully prepared for the transition into adult services.
- There is an evident lack of understanding generally in adult services with regards to the GIRFEC agenda. There is not the same emphasis on using wellbeing outcomes in adult services, however, given changes in legislation, there would be an expectation that young people up to aged 18 are assessed using the National Practice Model and the wellbeing indicators and therefore, the two systems currently conflict with each other.

How good is the authority's delivery of services for children?

Issues common to all transitions

Strengths

The review identified the following points as providing positive benefits for children and young people in all of the areas of transition reviewed:

- Joint working with a range of partners to meet the needs of individuals at key transition points.
- Planned and purposeful parental involvement, including good two-way communication, to ensure continuity in young people's learning, care and welfare.
- Enhanced transition arrangements to support children and young people with additional support needs.

Challenges (Areas for development)

The review identified the following as points which, when addressed, should improve the transition experiences of children and young people:

- Greater consistency of practice across all schools and service providers, including better arrangements to share good practice.
- More rigorous strategies to evaluate transition provision, including thorough arrangements to obtain meaningful feedback from young people and parents on their transition experiences.
- Enhanced arrangements for tracking children and young people's progress, including two-way communication across transition stages.
- Greater awareness and understanding, by adult and children's services, of each others' roles, with particular emphasis on the GIRFEC agenda.

Key recommendations

As a result of this review, the following recommendations are given for consideration for further work by the authority:

- Carry out a further review to look at the wider scope of transition from nursery to primary to include the full range of early years providers across ASGs, ensuring GIRFEC is embedded into planning and to look at work of other professionals (e.g. social work, early years' and additional support needs specialists) and also to reflect the experiences of looked after children.
- Consider a further review to look at the wider scope of curricular and pastoral transition from primary 7 to secondary 1 to include all ASGs.
- Consider having one overarching Transitions policy to accommodate different routes with a set of procedures to meet the needs of all.

Conclusions

This report contains summaries of strengths and challenges in a number of key areas of transition. Schools and service providers should consider their current provision against these findings and, where appropriate, use the findings to inform future improvement priorities.