Managing Transitions from Secure Settings

Di Hart
Managing transitions from secure settings

Report and resources

Di Hart
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Published by NCB.

NCB, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE
Tel: 0207 843 6000
Website: www.ncb.org.uk
Registered charity number: 258825

NCB works in partnership with Children in Scotland (www.childreninscotland.org.uk) and Children in Wales (www.childreninwales.org.uk).

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ISBN: 978-1-905818-48-8

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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Typeset by Saxon Graphics Ltd, Derby
Printed in the United Kingdom by Hobbs the Printers Ltd, Totton, Hampshire.

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For a boat to move smoothly through a lock, the water on the other side needs to be at the same level. Does the same principle apply to young people making the transition from a secure setting – that they receive the same level of support on both sides of the gate? The findings of the Managing Transitions Project suggest that this smooth transition is achievable, but is not happening consistently enough.
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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following for their help with this Project:

♦ The establishments that took part in this Project, and the individual staff members who gave up their time to assist me and to reflect openly on the strengths and frustrations of current practice.
♦ The six young people who allowed me to follow them on their journeys from the secure setting to their communities, and who shared their views and experiences.
♦ Their family members, who encouraged the young people to take part in the Project, and who also shared their hopes and anxieties about the future.
♦ The social workers, YOT workers and care staff working with the young people, for contributing their views on the transition process and how it could be improved.
♦ Members of the advisory group and participants in the invited seminar who contributed their expertise, knowledge and ideas.
Managing transitions from secure settings

Foreword

I’ll miss it even though it’s took my freedom away.
(Young person about to leave a secure children’s home)

This resource is designed to support practice with children and young people who are moving on from, or within, the secure estate. A companion resource is available for those managing transitions from adolescent psychiatric in-patient facilities. It is based on the Managing Transitions from Secure and Psychiatric Settings Project funded by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) from April 2007 to March 2008. The aim of that Project was to highlight the needs of young people in these specialist settings and to identify ways to improve transitional planning.

Although secure and psychiatric settings have different processes and operate within different systems, common themes can be identified in terms of the experiences and needs of the children and young people within them as well as in the challenges faced by secure establishment staff as they try to support the transition process. The Managing Transitions from Secure Settings Project aimed to identify these themes and to explore approaches towards improving outcomes, including the transfer of lessons about effective transition planning from other settings.

The legislation and policy framework covered by the briefings was up to date at the time of writing (Spring 2008), but there are a number of new initiatives on the horizon, including the Children and Young Person’s Bill 2008 and the Youth Crime Action Plan 2008.

Part 1 describes the Project: its aims and methodology, the experiences of a number of young people in transition, a summary of the findings and the key messages.

Part 2 provides background information on the legal and policy context within which secure settings operate, and describes the respective planning systems and young people’s entitlements.

Part 3 explores the ingredients for effective transitions, including those identified within the literature, on both resettlement from custodial settings and young people leaving the care system.

Part 4 provides a selection of practice tools designed to support transition planning, including a proposed model for effective transition planning.

Part 5 makes recommendations for policy-makers, researchers, commissioners, inspectors, secure establishments, youth offending teams and children’s services based on the Project’s findings and the priorities identified at an invited seminar. This seminar, held in May 2008, provided an opportunity

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for invited representatives from the above stakeholders to comment on the Project's findings and to contribute their views about how to improve transitions.

**Part 6 offers additional resources, including further reading and a list of useful organisations and websites.**
Part 1: The Managing Transitions from Secure Settings Project

Aim of the Project

The aim of this Project was not to replicate the findings of other projects on resettlement services. The recent work done by both the Reset Project and the Prince’s Trust has already demonstrated the value of providing intensive support to young people following their release from custody as well as the importance of providing suitable housing, and education, training or employment (ETE) opportunities (Reset 2007; Prince’s Trust 2008). Instead, its aim was to illustrate some of the individual challenges faced by young people leaving secure settings in a variety of circumstances. This would serve as a snapshot of current practice in order to identify how well current arrangements are working and to reflect the views of the young people and those trying to support them in their move back into the community or to another secure setting. This resource aims to help practitioners to think about the needs of young people in transition within the secure estate in a way that transcends the focus on systems and services that can be a feature of current practice. Its underlying philosophy is that effective transition planning should be driven by the individual needs of young people, not the services that are available. Although it contains some practical tools and information briefings, these are designed to support reflective practice rather than to offer a formula about how to ‘do’ transition work.

Project methods

The Project worked with three secure establishments in order to represent each type of setting within the secure estate: a young offender institution (YOI), a secure training centre (STC) and a secure children’s home (SCH). A range of key staff from each establishment was invited to contribute their views on the needs of the young people in their care and to comment on existing arrangements for planning to meet those needs. The focus was on the work that is needed to support a smooth transition back to the community or, for some young people, to another setting, and it was recognised that this process should begin as soon as a young person entered the establishment. Transition or ‘resettlement’ planning, as it is commonly referred to within the criminal justice system, relies on a case management approach that is based on an assessment of individual need. Some of the concepts underpinning this approach are considered in more detail in Part 3.

Each establishment identified a number of young people who were due to leave within the next month; they were approached to see if they would be prepared to participate in the Project. For those young people under the age of 16, consent was also sought from a parent. The intention was to include a young person who was in the secure children’s home on ‘welfare’ grounds, under section 25 (s25) of the Children Act 1989, rather than through the criminal justice system, but no suitable young person could be identified during the Project’s timescale. There are very few such children and none of those in...
the SCH at the time the Project was taking place were considered to be suitable because of their level of disturbance. Staff did, however, discuss the respective planning systems that apply to both categories of young people. In terms of the care provided by the establishment, there are no significant differences based on their legal status: the aim is to identify and meet the young people’s needs.

Two young people in each setting agreed to contribute to the learning process. These young people had a range of different ‘care’ statuses: some were subject to care orders, others had been accommodated by the local authority on a voluntary basis prior to admission. All six young people were subject to a Detention and Training Order (DTO). Each young person was interviewed at the start of the Project to elicit their views about the factors that would help them to make a positive transition back into the community. The young person’s records were also examined. Where possible, the pre-release meeting – and for one young person, his Looking after Children (LAC) review – were observed. The career of the young person during their time in placement and following their release into the community was tracked. A further interview was conducted with each young person between one and three months after their release. Key people within the professional networks supporting the young person were interviewed, including YOT (youth offending team) workers, social workers and care staff.

An advisory group was convened to support both the secure and psychiatric strands of the Project. The group provided advice on additional sources of information, commented on emerging themes and engaged in discussion about how transition planning could be improved. Participants also made suggestions for materials to include in this resource.

In May 2008, an invited seminar of policy-makers, relevant inspectorates, national stakeholders and representatives from the participating establishments was convened in order to consider the Project’s findings.

The objectives were to:

✦ feed back the findings of the Managing Transitions Project
✦ hear about the proposals regarding the resettlement of young offenders in the forthcoming Youth Crime Action Plan from the Joint Youth Justice Unit
✦ share thoughts and ideas on the critical issues to be tackled in policy, research and practice.

The young people

The names of the young people have been changed to protect their identities.

Michael

Michael was 14 years old and serving an eight-month DTO. He had been accommodated on a voluntary basis since the age of seven, along with his siblings, because of his mother’s abandonment of the family. After a relatively settled period in foster care, and following his mother’s reappearance and contact with his older brothers, Michael began to display disturbed and disruptive behaviour. With the foster placement disrupted, Michael became
increasingly out of control: he absconded from a variety of placements and went missing for days on end, abused alcohol and committed offences. He was considered to be vulnerable and the local authority had considered making an application to place him in an SCH on welfare grounds, but he was sentenced to a DTO before this could happen. The local authority did initiate care proceedings and Michael was subject to an interim care order. The final hearing was due to be held a few days before his release date. Michael’s mother contested the order: she wanted him to be cared for by a family member whereas the local authority wanted to place him in a residential children’s home where he would have access to therapeutic support. This meant that firm plans could not be made for Michael’s discharge.

Michael settled extremely well in the secure setting. Having been out of school before his sentence, he enjoyed the educational opportunities and cooperated with the regime.

The Family Proceedings Court postponed Michael’s final hearing for six months so that the suitability of the family placement could be assessed. He was released on an interim care order to a small children’s home many miles from the family home. However, with support, his mother was able to visit frequently. At the follow-up interview, Michael was doing well. He had not re-offended or absconded, was complying with his licence and was attending education on the premises.

Hannah

Hannah was 16 years old and serving a DTO. She was also a looked after child, having been on a full care order since the age of 12. She had extremely complex needs, including gender dysmorphia, learning difficulties, ADHD and a history of self-harm. Before sentence, she had been living in a children’s home where her behaviour had become increasingly disturbed and disruptive. Hannah also enjoyed her time in the secure setting and her behaviour was much calmer and more under control. She forged strong relationships with staff and was apprehensive about leaving the establishment. The plan was for her to move to a different children’s home from the one she had been in previously, with a view to transferring back when they had a vacancy. Hannah was 16 at the time of her release and keen to work until she could obtain a place at college.

At the follow-up interview, Hannah was living in the new children’s home and no longer wished to move back to her previous placement. She had committed some minor breaches of her licence through returning late to the children’s home, but these had not been considered serious enough to warrant her being recalled. There had been some minor incidents of self-harm, but no offences, and it was generally acknowledged that Hannah was calmer than she had been before her sentence.

Hannah had been unable to secure work or a college placement, and was unhappy about the fact that her placement was not in her home town and therefore not near to her family. The plan was to move her towards semi-independent accommodation in her home town.
Managing transitions from secure settings

John

John was 14 and serving a 12-month DTO. John’s father had a residence order, but had been unable to cope with his behaviour and had returned him to his mother. She too found it difficult to cope and had asked for help from children’s social care services. John had been in the secure establishment before on remand, but settled much better during this stay, modelling himself on some of the better behaved trainees. He engaged well with education in the secure setting and was determined to stay out of trouble when he was released. The plan was for him to live with his mother in her new boyfriend’s flat and to attend a pupil referral unit (PRU) on a part-time basis. He was to be released early, subject to a curfew.

At the follow-up interview, it was found that John had been returned to the same setting for breaching the terms of his licence. He had also been arrested for a new offence and was waiting to go to court. John said that he had lost the timetable given to him by his YOT worker; he had tried to remember his appointments but had got the time or venue wrong on two occasions. He had also missed school once because he was ill, but had not phoned them. John felt that these infringements were his responsibility. He felt that everything had been ‘okay’ when he was out, and that his behaviour and school attendance had been much better than before. He had also complied with his curfew. A social worker had visited the family but said there was no need for ongoing involvement. John seemed lower in mood and was less optimistic about his future than he had been when he was first interviewed.

Chelsea

Chelsea was 16 and serving 10 months in total for a breach of a previous DTO and a new sentence. She had been in care since the age of 15, which she felt was her own responsibility for ‘ruining her family’. Chelsea wanted to return home to her mother, but was unclear whether this could happen. She had been living in independent accommodation provided by children’s social care services before her sentence, but was unsure where she would be placed on her release. There was a possibility of bed and breakfast (B+B) accommodation, but Chelsea said that her YOT worker was arguing against this. Shortly before she was due for release, and having reached the age of 17, Chelsea was transferred to a YOI because of behavioural problems.

At the follow-up interview, Chelsea was back in the YOI. She had initially had her own flat, provided by children’s social care services. Because this placement was in a different local authority, she had been transferred to a new YOT supervisor. The placement was identified less than two days before her release and the planned Intensive Support and Supervision Programme (ISSP) was not available so she was offered support from a Resettlement and After Care Programme (RAP). The conditions of her licence required her to be electronically tagged and to observe a curfew. Chelsea lost the flat following complaints from neighbours and was moved to B+B where she felt unhappy. She found it difficult to comply with the tag and curfew because it meant she had to stay in, alone, in an environment she found unpleasant. She broke her curfew on New Year’s Eve and was arrested for a new offence. Chelsea had been on an ETE scheme and was hoping for a performing arts placement. She
was unsure what would happen as a result of the new charges against her, or what the plans would be following her eventual release.

**Darren**

Darren was 15 and serving an 18-month DTO when first seen. He was to turn 16 before his release. He had been in voluntary care for a year prior to sentence because of conflict with his father and had been living in a children’s home. He had been permanently excluded from school and was due to start at a PRU, but was sentenced before he could take up the place. In spite of the fact that he was not technically looked after while in custody, his local authority were continuing to plan for him as if he were and had agreed to resume care of him on his release, although no placement had been identified. The children’s home and PRU also maintained contact with him. Darren had re-engaged with education in the secure setting and wanted to take GCSEs. The PRU were liaising with the establishment and were sending work in for him. Darren’s behaviour had been excellent throughout his sentence and it was planned that he would be released early and placed on an ISSP.

At the follow-up interview, Darren was doing well. He had returned to his previous children's home and was supported by ISSP staff, a YOT worker and social worker, all of whom he already had an established relationship with. Darren had found it difficult to adjust to being back in the community, feeling ‘spaced out’ and unable to sleep, but he had managed to overcome this and was engaged in the detailed programme of activities provided for him. Relationships with both parents and his girlfriend were positive, and he was not finding it difficult to stay out of trouble. He felt this was partly due to being more settled and partly because he was ‘growing out of it’.

**Mark**

Mark was 17 and serving a six-month DTO. He had several previous sentences – this was his fourth DTO – and he was considered to be a persistent and prolific offender. He had missed most of his secondary education because of exclusions and periods in custody. Mark came from a large and close family, but his mother had difficulty in controlling his behaviour. He had never been a looked after child, but shortly before his last sentence it had been arranged that he would live with a family friend. This had been working well and it was planned that he would return there on his release. Mark had participated well in the regime and presented no problems while in custody. He was keen to work and was disappointed that his application for temporary release to attend a fork-lift truck course had been turned down as he felt that work was key to staying out of trouble.

At the follow-up interview, Mark was living with the family friend and it appeared to be going well. His YOT worker had fought for him to access the fork-lift truck course and he had just started that. In spite of his history of prolific offending, Mark had managed to stay out of trouble and to comply with his licence. There was a sense of optimism that he may, to some extent, have outgrown his offending.
Summary

It is clear that some of the young people had achieved more successful outcomes than others. Two young people had been ‘breached’ and returned to custody; two were doing well and there was a sense of optimism about the future; two were somewhere in-between: they were doing alright, but were not completely settled. Although it is impossible to draw any firm conclusions from such a small sample of young people, participants contributed their views about the factors that can influence outcomes. These will now be described.

Project findings

The Youth Justice Board Framework (YJB 2006a) identifies the following as the pathways for effective resettlement:

✦ case management and transitions
✦ accommodation
✦ education, training and employment
✦ health
✦ substance misuse
✦ families
✦ finance, benefits and debt.

Case management is the process that coordinates all aspects of the work. The elements are described as:

✦ a thorough assessment of the risk factors associated with offending and the individual needs of each young person
✦ a single-sentence plan tailored to address the identified risks and needs of each young person that is focused from the outset on promoting their sustainable and safe return to the community
✦ continuity of overseeing and support from the YOT
✦ coordination of the contributions of the different agencies, ensuring that services are sustained beyond the end of the licence
✦ timely exchange of information.

How was this framework applied in respect of the six young people within the Project?

An integrated approach to case management

Involvement of external agencies

Current children’s policies, whether in the youth justice or welfare sphere, emphasise the importance of a coordinated and multi-agency approach to meeting children and young people’s needs. Participants in this Project were invited to comment on the way this worked generally and in relation to the six young people involved in the Project. Opinions were mixed, but no-one...
thought the system was working seamlessly in the way envisaged by the Framework for Resettlement. Staff working in secure settings in particular experience huge frustration in engaging external agencies, whether this is to provide information when young people arrive, to meet their needs during their stay or to plan for their transition from the establishment:

Some are good, some are awful. Distance plays a part in it. Education don’t come in – it’s hard to find out if they still have a role – they don’t get back to you. Local CAMHS – if they’re already involved, might do...

It’s really, really difficult. It has happened where the placement will come in but they won’t continue intervention work – particularly if they have started work with CAMHS – they won’t come in – and they won’t pay for it. Do we refer to our psychiatrist and start again?

Considerable energy had to be expended to provide a coordinated plan, particularly where the young person was looked after and different systems were therefore in operation. The secure children’s home had designated a specific resettlement post to undertake this coordination role and it was clearly working well. Apart from the intended consequence of achieving more effective planning, the postholder was also perceived by the young people as a bridge to the outside world. The importance of this will be discussed later in this document. Staff within the other settings also took on a casework function, but it does seem that this essential role cannot be fulfilled without being formally designated.

Nature of the plans
Even with active case management, there are limits to how much secure settings can influence the quality of the plans that are made. The notion that every young person has an individualised plan based on their assessed needs is not fully realised. Staff from the establishments said:

We try to make it as individualised as possible here – but there are limited resources. When they’re released, they slot them into whatever is going.

It depends – we can recommend this, this and this but it comes down to what they’ve prepared.

This is reflected in other comments made by staff in the establishments about the lack of specificity within many release plans:

They’re mixed – you can get basic plans done very easily, e.g. home, reporting to YOT – but the interventions and details are not there.

A ‘good plan’ would:

Let the young person know exactly what is in place for them and the timescales and accountability: who’s going to make sure it happens.
Contribution of secure setting

There was some frustration among staff in the secure settings about their lack of influence over the young people’s plans once they were released. This did seem to be a wasted opportunity, particularly where they had gained a good understanding about the young person’s needs. One of the residential workers who was caring for a young person after his release said:

*I would have liked more information from the establishment about what helps/hinders/kicks him off.*

There appears to be a gap in the assessment and planning systems in relation to the contribution that can be made by the secure setting, within both the welfare and youth justice systems. Not only do external assessments not necessarily follow the young people into the setting, but the work undertaken by the establishment does not necessarily inform what happens to the young people next. In theory, secure settings will feed into the updating of Asset (the assessment and planning system for young offenders), but the process for this is not entirely clear. Most establishments have devised their own assessment and care-planning documentation to keep track of the work they are doing but, again, it is unclear how this is communicated to external agencies. At worst, this can mean that the gains made by young people are not taken into account. Those who have re-engaged with education and caught up are not returned to mainstream education because their plan is based on how they were before.

*There could be more done on updating Asset.*

(Staff member, STC)

*There’s no real continuity in interventions – there’s not really the information there.*

(YOT worker)

Transition within the secure estate

Transition planning is focused almost entirely on the young person’s release into the community, yet a significant number of young people move within the secure estate. This may be a planned move, e.g. because they have reached the age to transfer to a facility for young adults or older young people, or because they require input from a specialist unit. Where this was the case, staff in the settings made real efforts to get information about the new placement – but it is not always available:

*There’s not a great deal of information – particularly from YOIs. I’m in the process of visiting [specialist unit] to get information – to see what they actually do.*

Most moves are unplanned, however, and may happen very quickly for reasons such as population pressures rather than the young person’s needs. Although placement stability is recognised as a crucial factor in the welfare of looked after children, it seems to carry little weight within the youth justice
system. Within the Project, one young person was moved to a YOI just before she was due for release with no preparation.

**Services**

**Accommodation**

Four of the young people had been looked after prior to their time in the secure setting. Of these, two were on care orders and two had been in voluntary care, but all their local authorities had accepted responsibility for finding them a placement on their release. Previous placements were not retained and the young people and their networks expressed considerable anxiety about where they would go and how suitable the placement would be. This was a major theme and a major source of frustration. The uncertainty made it difficult for the remaining elements of the release plan to be put into place:

*It’s sometimes fraught and at the last meeting. With Chelsea, we only knew two days before where she’d be going. We’d brought up our concerns about B+B – the social worker was trying to get in contact with mum who was saying that she might have her – it was difficult to see what was happening…*  

(YOT worker)

This is not uncommon and the uncertainty can contribute to feelings of powerlessness by the young person:

*They’re arguing about where I’ll go – they didn’t listen to me.*

Of the four looked after young people, three went to unfamiliar placements and the fourth was fortunate because his previous children’s home happened to have a vacancy:

*Darren came out to a placement he’d been to before – the children’s home had established a good relationship with him. He’d pulled himself together there. You can’t keep a placement. It was two weeks before release when the placement was confirmed – it might well have been different if the placement didn’t want him or there was no vacancy.*

(Social worker)

The remaining two young people who were not looked after returned to live with family and friends, but these arrangements were relatively unsettled. One young person went to an informal placement with a family friend and the other returned to the care of his mother who had moved in with her new boyfriend while he was in custody. The YOT workers had not been instrumental in making these arrangements; they identified housing for those without any entitlements through the care system as a major problem:

*Housing services are a nightmare – they have to go through a central gateway. If the young person has messed up in a hostel then they’re called ‘intentionally homeless’ – even if it was unsuitable and they might be OK somewhere else.*
Education, training and employment

All the young people were positive about the educational or vocational opportunities provided by the secure setting and saw these as important in enabling them to have a positive future. None of them had been attending a mainstream school at the point at which they entered the establishment and they had all missed significant amounts of education. For those whose lives had been particularly chaotic, the realisation that they could engage in education – and achieve – was a source of pride:

*The school came in to my last review and were shocked and impressed about what the teachers said about me.*

They managed to catch up on some of the learning they had missed and wanted to continue on release. The prospect of losing what they had gained was mentioned by one young person:

*Education – they should phase you out, don’t stop suddenly. On the out, I’ll only get mornings but I think it will be okay…*

Three of the young people were still of statutory school age on their release. None returned to mainstream schooling: two were offered provision in a PRU and the other was placed in a children’s home that offered education. At the follow-up interviews, the young people were reasonably positive about this provision, however. One of the PRUs had maintained contact with the young person while he was in custody, visiting him, sending work in and generally taking an interest in his progress. Even though the provision was only for two days a week, this foundation enabled him to settle well on release, and he was able to talk about his plans for a college course in a way that showed he had hopes for a successful future. The other young person attending a PRU did so for 18 hours a week and was proud of the fact that his attendance had improved dramatically. Despite being returned to custody, he still had some hope that he could remain involved in education.

The three young people above school-leaving age received more patchy provision: one attended a RAP that involved a work placement, one got a place on a vocational course arranged by his YOT worker and one was doing nothing at the point of the follow-up interview. Their YOT workers expressed some frustration about the difficulties they had experienced in arranging suitable provision and felt that the young people had been let down: they were all keen to work or to be occupied and shared their YOT worker’s view that this was essential in keeping them out of trouble:

*The problem arose because of the [care] placement – it meant a different YOT team. She would have been on an ISSP here – she went to RAP instead because that was what was available there – it was just twice a week, the rest was voluntary.*

(YOT worker)
Term times are a problem. There are ETE courses, but they don’t cater for those higher risk young people.

(YOT worker)

Other services

In relation to the other services that have been identified as important within resettlement, the young people were offered a range of interventions and support. One young person who was subject to an ISSP described a timetable that provided him with something to do every day. This included ‘some alright stuff’: a mixture of formal education, vocational workshops, substance misuse work, key work sessions and reporting to the police station. For another young person, however, this structured timetable proved problematic:

I lost the piece of paper with the times on it so I tried to remember but got it wrong – I didn’t know where I was meant to go.

He was ‘breached’ for two missed appointments with his YOT worker and returned to custody.

Attempts were made to meet other identified needs through group work or individual counselling, but the young people’s engagement was limited. For one particularly vulnerable young person, social care services had provided daily support, but she and her YOT worker were critical that the details had not been negotiated with her:

She had social care input – they were with her all day, every day – she found it intrusive – but they were not there in the evening.

(YOT worker)

An intervention that did seem to be lacking within the youth justice system was that of work with the young person’s family. Where the young person was looked after, this was seen as the responsibility of the social worker, some of whom were having regular sessions with the young person’s parents in order to rebuild their relationship. There had also been an attempt to involve children’s social care in another family because of welfare concerns, but there was little sense of family-focused interventions being consistently on offer as part of the plan to prevent re-offending.

A social worker did a check on the house. She came about three times and said there was no need to be involved. Mum was happy with that.

(Young person)

There should be family mediation. Her relationship with mum should come into it – her mum doesn’t engage and says one thing to Chelsea, another thing to professionals. It would be useful to have a meeting with Chelsea, mum and us – and support for mum as an individual.

(YOT worker)
Preparation for release

The experience of living in a highly structured setting was acknowledged to be a powerful one. Many young people come from chaotic backgrounds and are moving on to settings with much less structure. Although they were reluctant to admit it, some of the young people had enjoyed their time in the secure establishment and were worried about how they could sustain the gains they had made:

Here – you’ve got your structure – wake up, brush your teeth, go to the toilet, go to education, go to your room for lunch, education, dinner. It’s easy. It’s hard to go from that. I’ll try to do the same things – carry on the same things – I’m a nice hygienic boy.
(Young person talking about his imminent release)

The establishments attempted to prepare the young people for their release, but admitted it was difficult. On a practical level, there are real difficulties in arranging visits to placements or education/work opportunities because of the rigidity of the Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) scheme. The SCH described how much easier it was to make such arrangements for young people on welfare placements where they had the discretion to arrange a mobility programme. The young people admitted to some anxiety about the suddenness of the change:

I might panic – everything’s done in here. There should be mobility whether a child is a risk or not – it could be a drive with escorts.

There should be like – in a kid’s home – you do semi-independence then independence – there should be stages.

Two of the establishments were keen to replicate this phased approach. The STC had opened a children’s home to which young people could move after their release while maintaining links with the STC, but found that local authorities were reluctant to fund placements. The YOI was planning to open a similar provision in the community and was also in the process of designating one of its wings for use by young people at the end of their sentence so they could be supported to become increasingly independent within a more relaxed regime. One young person thought that would be a good idea:

You wouldn’t have people with five years holding a grudge against people with a couple of days left. There’s such a thing as ‘leaving beats’ – if you’re leaving you get digs and punches.

On the other hand, he also felt this was all part of the experience; a more phased release:

...might ruin the excitement of getting out – but then that’s what gets you into trouble...

The STC and SCH tried to work with young people in key worker sessions to talk through these issues to prepare them:
We’ve got moving on packs – the young people setting future goals and giving them something to work towards. There are life skills key work packs if they are going to [be] independent. If we get information on the placement, we’ll go through it with them – get the new unit to send information. It’s easier with a planned move.

(Staff member, STC)

The importance of having an identified placement and a planned move were confirmed by one young person who said, ‘we don’t know what’s happening so they can’t really prepare me...’.

The psychological impact of release was described by a couple of young people at their follow-up interview:

Mum collected me and took me shopping, then to the YOT, then the children’s home. I was spaced out for about a week. It was hard to sleep.

They took me to Tesco’s on the way home. I was hanging on to my social worker’s arm – just putting anything in the basket.

This reaction is unsurprising, but it appears not to be taken into account within the planning system. Young people are expected to adapt to a huge amount of change at this point: new placements, new practitioners, new ETE arrangements, renegotiating family relationships and complying with often complex licence conditions. One of the practitioners recognised the psychological distress that a young person had experienced on release and felt that there was a gap in the support arrangements:

When he was struggling I was aware there wasn’t anyone we could contact. Maybe there should be a pre-release session. ‘You might feel like this’ – give them a number to ring. Training for staff maybe – what could we do to help other than just be supportive?

(YOT worker)

Other factors

This is a reminder that that there is more to successful transition than the provision of appropriate services. The young people made it clear both before and after release that the factors they thought would help them were much more to do with relationships:

My mum – cos when I used to get in trouble, my mum used to get upset. She fell out with her boyfriend. I’ve promised her I’ll be good – I’ve talked to her.

I’m looking forward to seeing my mum, my little brother and shopping. I’m looking forward to giving them presents.
These relationships were not only with their personal network but also with professionals they were involved with. It was clear that it was not always the service that mattered, but who would be providing it. Spoken to the day before her release, one young person was very concerned about who would accompany her to her placement: ‘it’s important who comes with me’.

It was both the quality and continuity of relationships, however tenuous, that mattered. Another young person said before his release:

_I liked the children’s home. I was there for 10 months – although there were some problems – I was abusive. The people from the children’s home haven’t been in to see me but they wrote a letter._

The importance of relationships was emphasised in relation to both external agencies and staff from the secure setting:

_The staff are nice to you. It gives you reasons to turn things around. When you first come in, you can’t be bothered but then it makes you think…_  
(Young person)

This was a persistent theme, and appeared to have an effect on the young people’s outcomes. The following quotes are from young people who returned to custody:

_My social worker – I liked her at first but she hasn’t really built up a relationship with me – not the kind of relationship I should have had._

_If I was with [previous YOT worker], I don’t think I would have breached – I listen to her more._

_I just don’t like her…_

Conversely, the young people who had consistent and positive relationships with professionals appeared to be doing the best.

_I’d go to my YOT worker if I felt I was slipping._  
(Young person)

Young people experience very frequent fracturing of their relationships with practitioners. With high staff turnover rates, particularly among social workers, some of this is inevitable, but some is a feature of the system. Although a young person’s home local authority will remain responsible for providing services to looked after children and care-leavers, responsibility is transferred across geographical boundaries for other agencies, including the YOT. This often means that young people leaving secure settings are faced with an entirely new network of people at a particularly vulnerable point in their lives. YOT workers do not necessarily agree with this system:
Before and after would be better to ensure continuity. If the young person is going to a different YOT area, you should keep on the case – even if only for once a week contact – you don’t have to close the case...

This fracturing of relationships applied not only to agencies in the community but to practitioners from the secure setting. In relation to a community review meeting, one young person said:

No-one from [the secure establishment] came – you’d think it would have been nice for them to see how I was doing on the out.

The nature of the relationship between staff in the establishments and the young people following their release was an issue for the staff as well:

A lot of young people want to ring in – we occasionally get letters. We can reply but need to be taking a step back at that point – it’s about closure.

We could do more work in the community – such as weekly follow-up sessions. We’re taught to disengage – a couple of visits, then phone calls, then a letter. It would be of more benefit to the child if we could be more proactive – if the young person wants us to.

The licence period

Young people on DTOs serve the second half of their sentence in the community on licence. Except for those on the shortest orders, if they are considered suitable they can be released before the halfway point, but will be subject to an electronic tag and curfew. Some young people decline their early release because they feel unable to cope with the added pressure of complying with this condition. Other licence conditions include where they must live and the expectations regarding supervision by the YOT worker. If the licence conditions are breached, the young person can be returned to custody to serve the remainder of the DTO period. This happened to two of the young people who took part in the Project. Interestingly, the young people took full responsibility for this, saying ‘it’s down to me to try to get it right’ and ‘I think they had no choice’. Some practitioners, however, questioned the fact that young people are held firmly to account, but that services are not. For example, one young person was felt by a worker to have been subject to inadequate support, ‘curfewed into an unsuitable environment’ and let down by the arrangements for ETE. Staff in secure settings expressed their frustration about this lack of accountability:

YOT see it as success if the young person doesn’t offend – not whether the young person has a job/flat, etc. They should be held to account.

It’s disheartening – the YOT worker has had three months but you go out to community reviews and it hasn’t happened...
The notion of contingency planning is part of the care planning system for looked after children, but seems less embedded in the youth justice system. Some practitioners felt this could be a useful development, particularly given the tenuous nature of some of the arrangements that are put into place. In general, there was a feeling that the release plan and licence could be improved, particularly in relation to the young person’s understanding and involvement.

*Young people need to be more involved – ask them what they want, what they’d like to happen, not just what’s there. Make sure the young person understands it and is happy with it. It would help to have a more child-friendly licence…*

(Staff member, STC)

The pressures were described by Chelsea:

*The B+B – that’s when things started to go wrong – I didn’t want to stay in. It was New Year – the whole area was promoting this fab night out...*

A more intangible factor in the ongoing work with young people after their release is the quality of their interaction with practitioners. The importance of these relationships has already been highlighted; this is manifested in the ways in which practitioners convey their interest and commitment to the young people. The resettlement worker at the SCH clearly managed to convey to the young people and their professional network that she cared what happened to them and was willing to fight for it. Practitioners talked about staff who would ‘go the extra mile’ and young people talked about staff having faith in them. A positive belief that the young person could and would succeed in the end, sometimes in spite of considerable evidence to the contrary, seemed important. Conversely, one worker managed to convey her view that the young person would fail in spite of the considerable progress he had made in the secure placement. The sample of young people in this Project is much too small to draw any firm conclusions, but these expectations did seem to have an impact on the young people’s outcomes.

To summarise, the following are the key messages drawn from the views and experiences of all participants in the Project, including staff, young people and their families. Most of them are not new.
Key messages

- It is difficult to engage services from the young person’s home local authority in transition planning from secure settings for young offenders. Even where they are engaged, there appears to be an inability to commit to firm plans until the last minute.
- Expectations about the purpose of the young person’s time in a secure setting are not usually made explicit. The secure settings develop a sound knowledge of the young people and the approaches that are helpful to them, but these are not fully utilised within the current planning arrangements.
- Young people have multiple assessments and plans that are not effectively joined up, such as an establishment care plan, LAC plan, remand or sentence plan, and they tend to be more service- than needs-led.
- The transition for young people serving sentences is obstructed by the difficulty of arranging external visits, whereas young people in welfare placements can have a mobility plan that helps to prepare them for release.
- There is a significant gap in mechanisms for preparing young people for transition to another secure setting, such as an STC or YOI. These moves may be sudden, unplanned and based on population pressures rather than the young person’s needs.
- There is a gap in the facilities that are there to help prepare young people — both practically and psychologically — for moving from a secure to an open setting, and an identified need for a phased approach.
- Considerable demands are placed on young people immediately after their release when they are likely to be struggling with the psychological effects of de-institutionalisation.
- Although there are clear consequences for young people who do not comply with the plan made for them on their release (in that large numbers are ‘breached’), there are no parallel mechanisms for holding agencies to account when services are deficient.
- The importance of relationships with family and practitioners is insufficiently recognised in the plans that are made for young people in secure settings. Relationships are fractured at a time when young people are at their most vulnerable, and some of this could be avoided.
- The quality of the interactions between practitioners and young people is also important, including the ability to convey a sense that the young person is valued and can succeed.
Part 2: Assessment and planning

The systems for planning to meet young people’s needs are not yet fully integrated.

A. Young people who are at risk of offending or who have offended are assessed by staff within the youth justice system using the models established by the YJB. These models are:
- **Onset** for young people aged 8 to 13 who are at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour.
- **Asset** for young people aged 10 to 17 who have committed an offence.

B. Children and young people who are thought to be ‘in need’ within the terms of the Children Act 1989 are entitled to an assessment by their local authority children’s social care service. These terms are that: (a) the child or young person is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local authority; (b) his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or (c) he is disabled (section 17).

This definition also includes children and young people who are at risk of significant harm and children and young people who are looked after by the local authority, whether that is through a care order (section 31) or by voluntary agreement (section 20).
- All such assessments are conducted using the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (Department of Health 2000).
- The Framework for Assessment is part of a wider system known as the *Integrated Children’s System*, which contains detailed formats for the assessment and planning for children and young people in need in a range of circumstances.

C. Children and young people who may need additional help in order to meet the five priority outcomes set out in Every Child Matters can be assessed by practitioners in any agency.
- Such assessments should be undertaken using the *Common Assessment Framework* (CAF).

Youth justice and children in need assessments (A and B above) are considered to be ‘specialist’ assessments and have not been replaced by the *Common Assessment Framework* (C above), although there need to be links between them (YJB 2006b).

The systems relevant to young people in the secure estate will now be considered in more detail.
Briefing: The secure estate

This briefing is aimed at professionals who are unfamiliar with the types of establishment settings that are described as the ‘secure estate’ or the legal justifications for placing a child in such a setting. It is unlawful to restrict the liberty of a child without the order of a criminal or family proceedings court, with the exception of children subject to an order under the Mental Health Act 2007, authorising their placement in a psychiatric hospital (see Managing the Transitions from Adolescent Psychiatric In-Patient Care, NCB 2008).

There are three types of settings within the secure estate in England and Wales: young offender institutions (YOIs), secure training centres (STCs) and secure children’s homes (SCHs). YOIs and STCs only take children and young people who have been remanded or sentenced through the youth justice system, while SCHs may also take those who are considered to need a secure placement on ‘welfare’ grounds. Most SCHs will take children and young people in both of these categories, but some specialise in one or the other. The vast majority of children are in a secure placement because of their offending behaviour. The most recent published statistics for England and Wales are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SCHs</th>
<th>STCs</th>
<th>YOIs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children detained for youth justice reasons (July 2008)</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>2480</td>
<td>2938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children detained for welfare reasons (March 2008)</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>2480</td>
<td>3218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this shows, most young people placed in a secure setting because of their offending behaviour are detained in YOIs, which are run by the Prison Service. These take young people between the ages of 15 and 17, although girls are usually only placed in YOIs at the age of 17 and are held in dedicated units within larger female prison establishments. Some of the boys’ units are situated within establishments that also cater for 18–21 year olds (who are designated as ‘young adults’). These are referred to as ‘split sites’ and boys placed here must be detained separately.

STCs and SCHs are specifically designated for children and young people although STCs now take some young people older than their originally intended population of 12 to 15 year olds. The YJB placement team aims to place younger and more vulnerable young people in these settings rather than in YOIs.

At the time of writing, within the prison service resources, there were six dedicated YOIs for boys, nine boys’ units within split sites and four girls’ units. There were four STCs and 14 SCHs that take youth justice placements and a further five that take only welfare placements. The estimated average monthly cost of keeping a young person in the different types of provision is as follows:

- YOI: £4,426
- STC: £14,355
- SCH: £15,461.
This is an important contextual factor in terms of the resources that are available to care for these young people, including the ratio of staff to young people and the quality of accommodation.

The planning system for children and young people in secure settings will vary according to the reasons for placing them there.

**Youth Justice planning system**

Those young people placed within the youth justice system are subject to an Asset assessment that aims to identify the factors associated with their offending behaviour, with a view to determining their risk of further offending and to put plans into place that will reduce that risk. All young people in secure settings should have either a remand or a sentence plan based on the Asset assessment, which will describe the work that will be done with them in custody and beyond. The format for these is prescribed by the YJB in what is known as the ‘T forms’. These provide a structure for assessing young people in custody and managing the training, planning and review process, including the management of vulnerability. There are 11 forms to complete and some practitioners suggest that the system is overly bureaucratic and not young-person friendly. The form that sets out the young person’s plan for release is the T1:FR.

Regular meetings must be held to make and review plans while young people are in the secure setting. Although the timing of planning meetings and the nature of the plans will vary according to the young person’s legal status, the underlying approach is the same: to ensure a seamless approach to tackling the young person’s offending behaviour based on the identified risks so that interventions are delivered before, during and after their time in the secure setting. YJB guidance (2006a) indicates that planning for release should take place from the start of the young person’s time in custody, and not be left until the final review meeting.

The planning system is particularly complex for remanded young people, i.e. where the court wishes to determine where the young person will live before their case comes to court. Young people who are remanded to the care of the local authority may be placed at home, with relatives, in foster care or in another setting that is considered suitable by the local authority. There the young person will be considered to be a looked after child during that time. If the court thinks it necessary, the remand to the care of the local authority will be accompanied by a ‘secure requirement’ (normally referred to as Court Ordered Secure Remand or COSR). In this case the young person will be placed in a SCH or STC and, again, automatically becomes looked after. The home local authority is therefore responsible for assessment and planning, using the Integrated Children’s System for children and young people in all such placements.

Conversely, children and young people who are remanded to custody are placed in YOIs and do **not** become looked after. Although it is usually younger children who are made the subject of a COSR and boys of 15 or above who are remanded to custody, this does not necessarily reflect their level of vulnerability. It is essentially arbitrary that some remanded children and young people acquire looked after status and some do not (see NACRO 2008).
Managing transitions from secure settings

Children and young people also lose looked after status if and when they are convicted and sentenced. All 17 year olds are currently remanded under adult legislation and are placed in YOIs regardless of their level of vulnerability, although this is being reviewed.

Each young person placed in a secure setting through the youth justice system must be assigned a worker from the Youth Offending Team (YOT) in their home authority to oversee the planning process, particularly in relation to the arrangements for their release. Local YOTs operate different systems, with some young people retaining contact with the YOT worker who completed their assessment and others being transferred to a specialist worker for young people in custody.

The secure establishment will also participate in the planning process, setting objectives for the young person based on their assessed needs and providing suitable interventions. Other people may also be invited to planning meetings, such as the young person's social worker or other involved professionals and key family members.

Young people on a DTO – the most common type of custodial sentence for young people – will serve the second half of their sentence in the community under the supervision of the YOT worker. The conditions that the young person is expected to comply with – known as the ‘licence’ – are agreed before release and if the young person ‘breaches’ the licence by failing to comply, the YOT worker can return the matter to court, with the possibility that the young person will serve the rest of their sentence in custody. Licence conditions will always set out the expectations about where the young person will live and the arrangements that have been made for them to report to their YOT worker. They may also include curfews, electronic tagging or attendance at specified programmes such as an Intensive Surveillance and Supervision Programme (ISSP).

Welfare planning system

There is a provision within the Children Act 1989 (s25) that authorises children to be placed, by order of the family proceedings court, in an establishment that restricts their liberty in the following circumstances. For children under the age of 13, permission is also required from the Secretary of State.

The child:

(i) has a history of absconding and is likely to abscond from any other description of accommodation; and

(ii) if he absconds, he is likely to suffer significant harm; or

(iii) that if he is kept in any other description of accommodation he is likely to injure himself or other persons.
A ‘secure order’ will be issued for a specified maximum period. If the above criteria no longer apply, the child or young person must be released sooner. If the local authority wishes to detain the child or young person for a further period, the case must be returned to court before the order expires.

Such children or young people will be placed in a secure children’s home with the expectation that they will be detained for only as long as the risk continues. The use of s25 has been declining in England, although the reasons for this are unclear. Possibilities raised by local authorities are that:

✦ Such provision is seen as a last resort after every other possibility has been tried.
✦ Specialist one-person children’s homes are seen as an alternative.
✦ There is concern about the ability of SCHs to meet the complex mental health needs of some children and young people (Held 2006).

Children and young people placed within SCHs on such grounds become looked after children and plans must be made for them using the Looking After Children System (which has been incorporated into the Integrated Children’s System). Such children and young people should have a care plan that sets out the aims and objectives of their time in care (see Briefing: Care planning for looked after children pp. 30–36), and it must be reviewed according to the statutory timescales. The local authority that applied for the s25 order will be responsible for this plan. They should also prepare a placement plan that sets out the agreement with the secure establishment. Many SCHs have also developed their own assessment and planning tools.

An additional requirement for children and young people in SCHs is that a secure review must take place to establish whether the conditions that required their loss of liberty still apply. There has been some controversy over whether young people remanded to an SCH through youth justice legislation are also entitled to a secure review because the Children Act 1989 was not specific on this point.

More information about the care planning system for looked after children is provided in the next briefing.
Briefing: Care planning for looked after children

The following briefing is aimed at those who work outside local authority children’s services, particularly secure settings or YOT staff who may be working with someone who was looked after by a local authority prior to admission. The term ‘child’ is used to denote anyone under the age of 18.

This briefing describes the planning process for the generic looked after population, but does not cover the additional processes for children and young people with disabilities.

When a child becomes looked after by the local authority, the Looking After Children System must be applied. This describes the processes that will ensure that the child’s needs are identified and that plans are put in place to meet those needs. The LAC system is part of the wider social care assessment and planning system for all children and young people ‘in need’, known as the Integrated Children’s System.

For every looked after child, the following plans should be in place:

✦ a care plan
✦ a personal education plan (PEP)
✦ a health plan.

When the child turns 16, the care plan becomes a pathway plan. (For further details on pathway planning, see Briefing: Leaving care services, pp. 37–38.)

What is a care plan?

Each looked after child will have a care plan which is their overarching plan. It is the responsibility of the local authority social worker. All other plans must fit within it.

The following is a definition of the LAC care plan:

This determines why it is in the child’s best interest to become looked after or whether other support services would be able to meet their needs; it identifies their assessed needs and the services to meet those needs, and sets out the framework for the services provided to the child and family to enable the desired goals and outcomes to be achieved.

(Williams and McCann 2006)

The care plan includes the long-term plan for the child and how permanence is going to be achieved.
**Definition of permanence**

This is a framework providing children with a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity – a sense of belonging for each child. The objective is to ensure children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond. However where the birth family might not be able to provide this, it can also be achieved through placement with a substitute family through adoption or long term fostering.  
(Williams and McCann 2006)

Williams and McCann (2006) state that:

*The care plan is built upon a holistic specialist assessment which identifies developmental need, the capacity to meet need (parenting capacity and family and environmental factors) and an evaluation of what has happened to the child (history and chronology). The assessment must be continually updated and feed into revisions of the care plan and into the review process.*

The following diagram shows the framework, drawn from *The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (Department of Health 2000), that children’s social care agencies must use when undertaking assessments of children and young people in need and their families. It provides a:

*... systematic way of analysing, understanding and recording what is happening to children and young people within their families and the wider context of the community in which they live.*
Horwath (2001) described the framework as providing a:

...conceptual map for undertaking assessments of children in need and their families, which ensures that practitioners, managers and policymakers maintain a child focus, irrespective of how the world of the child changes and develops over time.

The care plan must be based on this assessment of need and should include the following:

✦ the child or young person’s needs and how their needs might be met
✦ what services are to be provided
✦ the type and detail of the proposed placement
✦ support in placement
✦ arrangements for contact and/or reunification
✦ arrangements for health care and education
✦ the aims, desired outcomes and timescales
✦ action to be taken and by whom
✦ contingency plans.

The views of the child, their parents or guardians and other professionals working with the child should be integral to the creation of the care plan. The local authority care plan should take into consideration any other plans made for the child, including remand or sentence plans. It should record all the needs of the child, even those that cannot be met immediately by the local authority or any other agency. All those involved, including the child, their family and the professionals, should be given a copy of the care plan.

**Personal education plan (PEP)**

All looked after children should have a personal education plan (PEP). This:

...ensures access to services and support; contributes to stability, minimises disruption and broken schooling; signals particular and special needs; establishes clear goals and acts as a record of progress and achievement.

(Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health 2000)

Social workers are responsible for initiating a PEP in partnership with the child, a designated teacher, parent and/or family member, carer and any other person who may be relevant. The PEP should be agreed as soon as possible and within 20 school days of entering care or of joining a new school. It should detail the child’s needs and the support that is already being provided.
For children with a statement of special educational needs, Williams and McCann (2006) clearly state that ‘care planning, the review of their statement and their transitional plan should come together and all should be clear about their individual and collective responsibilities’. This is a particular concern for children and young people in custodial settings, where statements of special educational needs do not currently apply.

**Health plans**

All looked after children should have health assessments carried out by a qualified medical practitioner to formulate the health plan. All aspects of health should be considered and addressed, such as dental and optical health, immunisations and sexual health.

Health assessments and plans are extremely important to ensure continuity of health care if a child has a medical condition or an ongoing health problem. Some children’s experience prior to coming into care may have meant that their health needs were overlooked or neglected.

It is important that the local authority health plan is linked with the plans made within the secure setting so as to avoid duplication and unnecessary health assessments.

**Statutory child care reviews**

*What are review meetings for?*

It is a legal requirement that the plans for looked after children are reviewed regularly for as long as the child is looked after by the local authority. This is done through a process known as a LAC review. This usually takes the form of a formal review meeting.

The aim of the review is to consider and update the care plan, including whether the child should remain in care. This will involve looking at what has happened since the last review meeting, how the child is progressing in all aspects of their development and to decide what action needs to be taken to continue to best meet the needs of the child. By the time a child reaches 16, the plan should include preparation for independence.

*What happens before the review meeting?*

The local authority children’s social worker should meet with the child before the review meeting and discuss the following:

- the purpose of the review meeting
- who will be at the meeting, including those who the child would like to invite
- what will be discussed, including any additional issues the child would like to add to the agenda
- how the child would like to contribute their views and if they need help in doing so
Managing transitions from secure settings

✦ whether the child would like to have an advocate present; if so, the child should be given the opportunity to meet with the advocate before the meeting
✦ the social worker’s report to address any questions or concerns.

The chair of the review meeting should also meet with the child as part of the preparation for the meeting, to address any concerns or questions and to ensure that the child or young person’s views and wishes are heard.

To ensure that the care plan is coordinated effectively and is being implemented, regular contact between the social worker, the child and secure establishment staff is extremely important.

Who chairs the meeting?
LAC review meetings are chaired by an independent reviewing officer (IRO).

Independent reviewing officers (IROs)
IROs are registered social workers who operate independently of the line management arrangements for the case. The role of the independent reviewing officer is to:

✦ review the care plan and make recommendations as required
✦ ensure that child’s views and wishes are understood and taken into account
✦ ensure that children know their rights and help them to access the complaints procedure if required
✦ identify persons responsible for implementing review recommendations
✦ ensure that any failure to review cases in accordance with the regulations or to make arrangements to implement any aspect of the care plan is brought to the attention of the accountable managers
✦ as a last resort, if the child’s needs are not being met or their human rights are being breached, to refer the case to the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) for review, with the possibility of placing the matter before the court.

Who else should be at the meeting?
All those involved in the LAC care plan, including the child, the carers and the local authority social worker, should attend the meeting. Parents should also be invited, unless this would not be in the best interests of the child. The child may also wish an advocate to be present. Depending on the child’s circumstances and wishes, other people may also be invited to attend all or some of the meeting, but it is important not to make the meeting overly bureaucratic or intimidating. For example, the IRO can check the PEP and health plan outside the meeting rather than invite teachers and health professionals to attend.
**Timetable for review meetings**

There is a clear timetable of when reviews should take place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First review</td>
<td>This should take place within four weeks of the child first being looked after or when there has been a change in their circumstances, such as a change of placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second review</td>
<td>This should take place within three months of the first review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews thereafter</td>
<td>These should take place every six months or earlier if the circumstances warrant it and changes need to be made to the care plan. A child can ask for the meeting to be brought forward or an IRO may set an earlier date to check on progress if necessary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Following the review meeting**

The child, the carers and any other representative present at the meeting should be provided with a written record of the discussion and decisions that were made at the meeting.

**Care planning for looked after children in secure settings**

The looked after status of children in secure settings is complicated and contains a number of anomalies. All children in SCHs on welfare grounds are looked after children and the care planning process should be implemented as it would be for any other placement. For those who are remanded or sentenced to a secure setting through the youth justice system, their looked after status will vary on the basis of:

- the nature of the establishment
- the child’s previous looked after status
- the legal justification for their detention.

For more detailed information, see NACRO (2008) and Hart (2006).

**Children who were not looked after prior to entering a secure setting**

Some children who are not looked after become so if they are remanded to local authority accommodation, with or without a secure requirement (see p27). Their home local authority is therefore responsible for assessment and planning using the Integrated Children’s System.

**Children who were looked after at the point of remand or sentence to a secure setting**

When a child is being looked after at the point of remand or sentence, those subject to a care order (s31 of the Children Act 1989) will continue to be looked after and the care planning and review process should continue throughout their time in the secure setting. The local authority has parental responsibility and should continue to exercise it, including assessing the child’s needs and continuing to provide services. They are also responsible for arranging the child’s placement in readiness for their release.
The situation is more complicated for children who are looked after on a voluntary basis, which is sometimes referred to as being 'accommodated' (s20 of the Children Act 1989). With the exception of the specific remand arrangements described above, because the placement has not been made by the local authority, these children are no longer considered to be looked after during their time in the secure setting. This does not mean that the local authority has no responsibility for them at all. They should assess their needs and plan for their release, and the Children and Young Person's Bill 2008 confers a duty on the local authority to visit them.

Where a looked after child enters a secure setting, it is reasonable to expect that a review meeting will be convened. This move constitutes a significant change in their circumstances, and their care or pathway plan will need to be updated.
Briefing: Leaving care services

Legislation

The legislation that covers the duties and responsibilities towards care leavers is the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. It does not replace the Children Act 1989 but builds on and extends the duties and powers included in the leaving care and after care provisions of that Act.

The purpose of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is to improve the life chances of young people who are looked after and leaving care. Its main aims are to:

✦ delay young people’s discharge from care until they are ready and prepared to leave
✦ improve assessment, preparation and planning for leaving care
✦ provide better personal support for young people after they leave care
✦ improve the financial arrangements for care leavers.

Young people entitled to leaving care services:

✦ **Eligible children:** children aged 16 to 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who are still looked after (or in custody) on their sixteenth birthday.*

✦ **Relevant children:** children aged 16 to 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who have left care.

✦ **Former relevant:** children aged 18 to 21 who have either been eligible or relevant or both. A young person continues to remain ‘former relevant’ after the age of 21 if they are still in education or training: support will continue until their twenty-fourth birthday or until the end of the agreed programme of education or training if it continues beyond that age.

✦ **Qualifying children:** children aged 16 to 18 who leave care but have not been looked after for more than 13 weeks since the age of 14. They are entitled to an assessment of their needs but support for them is discretionary rather than a duty.

Needs assessment and pathway planning

For young people over 16, the pathway plan builds on their existing care plan and other associated plans and becomes the main plan for the young person when they attain leaving care status as defined above. All eligible young people should have a pathway plan based on an assessment of their needs.

* If a young person is subject to a care order they remain eligible until the order is discharged by the court or expires when they turn 18.
Managing transitions from secure settings

Needs assessment

A needs assessment should be completed within three months of a young person acquiring leaving care status. Young people should be actively involved in their assessment and pathway plan. The needs assessment should consider the:

✦ young person’s health and development
✦ young person’s need for education, training or employment
✦ support available to the young person from members of their family and other people
✦ young person’s financial needs
✦ extent to which the young person possesses the practical and other skills necessary for independent living
✦ young person’s needs for care, support and accommodation.

Pathway plan

The pathway plan should detail how the needs identified in the assessment are going to be met, the timescales for meeting them and who is responsible for carrying out the required actions.

The pathway plan should also identify the desired outcomes and the progress that must be achieved by the next review or another specified date. Within the pathway plan, there should be a contingency plan to determine what will happen in the event that the original plan cannot be implemented.

The pathway plan is not static. It should change as the young person moves towards adulthood. It should be reviewed at least every six months until they reach 21 or beyond if they continue to receive support and services from the local authority.

Entitlement to services

There are considerable benefits to being a care leaver. For example, the local authority has a duty to provide financial support for eligible and relevant children until they turn 18 and ensure that they have accommodation. After that age, the authority still has a duty to maintain contact with care leavers until they are at least 21, to provide them with support through a personal adviser and to assist with the costs of education, employment and training. Those who continue in education or training beyond the age of 21 are entitled to continued support until the age of 24 or until they complete their programme of study. This may include the provision of accommodation during vacations from higher education as well as personal support and advice. For further details on pathway planning and young people’s entitlements when they become care leavers, go to http://www.leavingcare.org
Part 3: What is an effective transition?

Towards a conceptual framework

There are a number of bodies of literature concerned with the various transitions faced by children and young people, such as the transition to adult services for chronically sick or disabled young people. The following summary of some of these concepts and approaches is not intended to be a comprehensive literature review, but instead is provided to challenge assumptions about what is ‘best practice’. It aims to promote greater transference of ideas across agency barriers and to promote better congruence between systems.

Resettlement

‘Resettlement’ is the term used within criminal justice agencies to describe the transition of young people back into the community following a period in a custodial setting. A great deal has been written about resettling young people leaving custodial settings and there is considerable consensus about effective approaches, as described in the NCB Highlight reviewing the literature on Resettlement on pp.49–56. The following elements have been described as constituting a ‘good’ resettlement package. It should:

✦ be ‘end to end’ – before, during, after custody
✦ be based on an assessment of needs
✦ deliver flexible interventions tailored to meet those needs
✦ offer fast access to continuing services and support on release
✦ engage with the young people and their families
✦ offer multi-agency involvement, with clear roles and responsibilities.

In its Youth Resettlement: A framework for action (2006a), the YJB sets out the service pathways that need to be in place for all those leaving a custodial setting. It has added the requirement that there must be active case management and transition planning for young people to coordinate and plan the delivery of services. This is because the YJB recognises that custody can have a disruptive effect on relationships, services and the flow of information, and the process needs to be managed so that young people receive ‘effective, end-to-end service provision based on a thorough assessment of need and risk in order to reintegrate them into the community’ (p.10). The Framework acknowledges that more must be done to make this a reality. The quality of some Asset assessments, and the transfer of information from YOTs to secure settings, need to be improved, and the contributions of other children’s services need to be strengthened.

Resilience

Similar work has been undertaken on the factors that enable children and young people to achieve independence from residential or fostering placements within the care system. The key concept here is ‘resilience’ and a
fuller paper is available on page 44. In contrast to the above elements of resettlement, the factors that have been suggested as being key in determining whether young people leaving care will be able to develop the resilience they need to succeed as independent adults are:

✦ stability of placement: disrupted attachments lead to difficulty in using help
✦ a positive sense of identity: feeling able to plan and be in control
✦ positive experience of school, including continuity and acceptance
✦ provision of turning points: participation in a range of activities that allow for change
✦ preparation for leaving care: practical, emotional and interpersonal.
(Stein 2008)

Attachment

The concept of attachment is closely linked with that of resilience. It is based on the idea that all babies need a secure relationship with their primary care givers, characterised by the ability to rely on the care giver to meet their needs lovingly and consistently. Only if this secure attachment is available to them can children explore and make sense of their surroundings. If it is lacking, the world can seem a dangerous and unpredictable place. Where care givers consistently fail to respond to a child’s needs or are uneven in their responses, the child is likely to develop an insecure attachment. As a child with secure attachment grows, they develop a ‘theory of mind’ whereby they can understand and empathise with the feelings of others. On the other hand, children who have experienced unpredictable care are less likely to be able to understand the reactions of others. If a father is sometimes loving and at other times violent, without any obvious triggers, the child becomes confused and cannot link feelings to actions (Howe and others 1999; Prior and Glaser 2006).

Many children and young people in the care and youth justice system are likely to have unmet attachment needs. They may have difficulty in understanding the consequences of their actions or be unable to empathise with their victims’ pain. Recent work has suggested that there are links between being victimised or maltreated as a child and going on to commit offences against others (Smith and Ecob 2007; Stewart and others 2008). Neurologists are increasingly able to map the effect of abuse or neglect on children’s brain development (Gerhardt 2004; Glaser 2000).

There are two reasons why these concepts are important for children in secure settings:

✦ unless the underlying neurological and emotional causes of problematic behaviour are recognised, interventions may be ineffective or even damaging
✦ the relationships that children and young people have with alternative carers and practitioners need to be understood in the context of their previous attachment patterns.
Many young people leaving secure settings are likely to have had damaging relationships that affect their ability to engage with those who are trying to help them. The Revolving Doors Project provides these young people with a mentor whose role it is to provide them with unconditional support in the belief that they need a trusting relationship to support them if they are to take advantage of the opportunities and services that are available to them (Revolving Doors 2005).

**Rehabilitation**

A further body of literature that may be relevant is that relating to the transition undergone by those seeking rehabilitation from problematic substance use. The Cycle of Change was developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1986) to illustrate the stages that a user goes through, sometimes many times, before they manage to stop using.

The notion that people will need repeated opportunities to change and that interventions should be determined by their stage in the cycle is in contrast to the approach within the youth justice system. In the youth justice system, failures and lapses are perceived as a negative choice rather than an understandable process and may elicit a punitive response. Substance misuse workers frequently use a model of ‘motivational interviewing’ to support service users in developing their readiness to change (Forrester and others 2008; Miller and Rollnick 2002).

**Desistance**

Work has been done on looking at the factors that enable people to desist from offending rather than on the services that support their ‘resettlement’.
This suggests that systems and services are less important than the person’s sense of agency. This concept is also recognised within the literature on resilience, but it has received little direct attention within youth justice interventions. The presence of hope has been suggested as an important precursor to success:

*Whereas active offenders…seemed to have little vision of what the future might hold, desisting interviewees had a plan and were optimistic that they could make it work.*

(Maruna 2000)

There are similarities in this approach to those found within the Cycle for Change in that desistance is seen as a process, not an event, and that a focus on the person’s motivation to change is a key factor in their success. This is not to deny that socio-economic and other factors, such as financial security and accommodation, are important, but that they may be the necessary conditions to bring about change rather than sufficient in themselves.

**Change management**

Finally, although aimed at a very different audience, work has been done on the factors that support organisational change. Again, it is acknowledged that transition is a psychological process that people go through to come to terms with a new situation and is not the same as change itself. Change is external, whereas transition is internal. The following model developed by William Bridges (2003) illustrates the stages in this process:
De-institutionalisation

In the UK the term ‘de-institutionalisation’ is usually used to describe the transition of people from long stays in psychiatric or learning disability hospitals to the community. There have also been studies of children who have been cared for from an early age in institutions, particularly in Eastern Europe (Gudbrandsson 2006). In these studies the psychological impact of having to readjust to life in the community has been acknowledged to be a major challenge. Even a short time in a closed and structured setting may have an adverse psychological impact on those who have been placed there, however, and is worth further examination.

Conclusion

Has there been sufficient exchange of ideas between those advocating these approaches? The following paper and Highlight explore in more depth the concepts of resilience for care leavers, and the literature on the resettlement of young offenders. Although these two ways of interpreting an essentially similar task are not incompatible, they illustrate a difference in emphasis that has an impact on the way in which practitioners direct their energies.

The needs of children moving on from a secure setting and those moving to independence from a residential or foster home will contain psychological, emotional, cognitive and practical elements and there is likely to be much common ground between them. The focus within resettlement has tended to be on the cognitive and practical elements, with an expectation that the young people will make positive choices and comply with the conditions of their licence. This is not to say that they are expected to do so without support: a good resettlement package will ensure that suitable accommodation is provided and that education, training and employment are on offer. There is a danger, however, that if the young people’s psychological and emotional needs are insufficiently recognised, they may be unable to take full advantage of these opportunities. Practitioners may adopt a mechanistic style of practice whereby planning becomes a ‘tick box’ exercise and every young person receives an essentially identical plan, regardless of their unique needs. It must be acknowledged that this can also be the case within leaving care services, but the child welfare system does appear to have a stronger awareness of children and young people’s emotional and psychological needs.

The experiences of the young people who took part in this Project would suggest that a twin-track approach is needed. A good plan would ensure that the practical building blocks are in place to enable the young people to succeed, including somewhere suitable to live and constructive activities, but within a framework of supportive relationships that take account of the psychological and emotional challenges they face.
Paper: Promoting resilience: messages from research

Mike Stein*

What is resilience?

Resilience can be defined as the quality that enables some young people to find fulfilment in their lives despite their disadvantaged backgrounds, the problems or adversity they may have undergone, or the pressures they may experience. Resilience is about overcoming the odds, coping and recovery. But it is only relative to different risk experiences – relative resistance as distinct from invulnerability – as well as age and cultural contexts, and is likely to develop over time. In the UK the resilience of young people from very disadvantaged family backgrounds has been found to be associated with: a redeeming and warm relationship with at least one person in the family – or a secure attachment to at least one unconditionally supportive parent or parent substitute; positive school experiences; feeling able to plan and be in control; being given the chance of a ‘turning point’, such as a new opportunity or break from a high-risk area; higher childhood IQ scores; lower rates of temperamental risk; and having positive peer influences.

A research review of the international literature on resilience factors in relation to the key transitions made by children and young people during their life cycle has added to this picture. As well as the first three factors identified above, the review concludes that children and young people who are best equipped to overcome adversities will have: strong social support networks; a committed mentor or person from outside the family; a range of extra-curricular activities that promote the learning of competencies and emotional maturity; the capacity to re-frame adversities so that the beneficial as well as the damaging effects are recognised; the ability – or opportunity – to make a difference, for example, by helping others through volunteering, or undertaking part-time work; and exposure to challenging situations which provide opportunities to develop both problem-solving abilities and emotional coping skills.

But what of young people from care backgrounds, including those young people living in, and leaving, secure and psychiatric settings? What can we learn from bringing together two sets of findings: research studies on the resilience of young people from disadvantaged family backgrounds with research studies on young people leaving care, and applying these findings to young people’s lives, whilst living in care, at the time of leaving care, and their lives after care?

Promoting resilience: implications for practice

Stability

Young people who experience stable placements providing good quality care are more likely to have positive outcomes than those who have experienced further movement and disruption during their time in care. Stability has the potential to promote resilience in two respects. First, by providing the young person with a warm and redeeming relationship with a carer – or a

* For a fuller version of this paper, including references, see Stein, M (2008) ‘Resilience and Young People Leaving Care’, Child Care in Practice, 14, 1, 35–44.
compensatory secure attachment which may in itself reduce the likelihood of placement breakdown, and contribute to wellbeing. Second, and not necessarily dependent on the first, stability may provide continuity of care in young people’s lives, which may give them security and contribute to positive educational and career outcomes.

**A positive sense of identity**

Helping young people develop a positive sense of identity, including their self-knowledge, their self-esteem and self-efficacy, may also promote their resilience. And although not explicitly recognised as a variable in the research literature on resilience, identity could be seen as connected to, as well as a component of, key associations: feeling able to plan and be in control; and the capacity to re-frame adversities so that the beneficial as well as the damaging effects are recognised. Helping care leavers develop a positive identity is linked to, first, the quality of care and attachments experienced by looked-after young people – a significant resilience promoting factor discussed above; second, to their knowledge and understanding of their background and personal history; third, to their experience of how other people perceive and respond to them; and finally, how they see themselves and the opportunities they have to influence and shape their own biography.

**Education and turning points**

Having a positive experience of school, including achieving educational success, is associated with the resilience of young people from disadvantaged family backgrounds and young people living in care: research studies on young people leaving care consistently show lower levels of educational attainment, and participation beyond the minimum school leaving age, in comparison to other young people. Good educational outcomes are associated with placement stability, gender (young women do better than young men, as reflected in national data), a carer highly committed to helping the young person with their education, and a supportive and encouraging environment for study. This may also include the foster families’ own children providing help and acting as role models. There is also evidence that young people who have had several placements can achieve educational success if they remain in the same school, maintaining positive friendships and contacts with helpful teachers. School or care itself may also provide turning points – opening the door for participation in a range of leisure or extra-curricular activities that may lead to new friends and opportunities, including the learning of competencies and the development of emotional maturity – and thus promote their resilience. Indeed, resilient young people have often been able to turn their negative experiences at home, or in care, into opportunities, with the help of others.

**Preparation for leaving**

Preparation for leaving care may also provide young people with opportunities for planning, problem solving and the learning of new competencies – all resilience promoting factors. This may include the development of self-care skills – personal hygiene, diet and health, including sexual health; practical skills – budgeting, shopping cooking and cleaning; and interpersonal skills – managing a range of formal and informal relationships. Preparation should be holistic in approach, attaching equal importance to practical, emotional and
interpersonal skills – not just, as in the past, ‘domestic combat courses’ for young people, to manage on their own from 16 plus.

**Young people’s transitions from care**

In comparison to their peers in the general population, most young people leaving care have to cope with the challenges and responsibilities of major changes in their lives, in leaving foster care or residential care and setting-up home, in leaving school and entering the world of work, or post-16 education or training, or being parents, at a far younger age. In short, many have compressed and accelerated transitions to adulthood. This represents a barrier to promoting their resilience in that they are denied the psychological opportunity and space to focus – to deal with issues over time, which is how most young people cope with the challenges of transition. However, there are two related dimensions of transition that impact upon young people leaving care and which also need to be considered.

First, during the last 20 years patterns of transition into adulthood have been changing fast, resulting in young people being more dependent on their families for emotional, financial and practical support, often into their early twenties. In today’s ‘risk’ society, parents, grandparents and other relatives are increasingly occupying a central role at different life stages, yet young people leaving care, who are the most likely to lack the range and depth of help given by families, are expected to cope at a far younger age than young people living with their families. Second, the process of social transition has traditionally included three distinct, but related stages: leaving or disengagement; transition itself; and integration into a new or different social state. However, due to changes in youth transitions – especially in relation to education, employment and housing – for many young people the overall process is becoming more extended, connected and permeable. For example, further and higher education taking place over a longer period of time, young people returning home after higher education, and the growth in temporary and short-term employment markets.

The second stage, transition itself, is critical to this process, preparing young people for the ‘risk’ society – an opportunity to ‘space out’ provides a time for freedom, exploration, reflection, risk taking and identity search. For a majority of young people today this is gained through the experience of further and higher education. Yet, as discussed above, many care leavers, as a consequence of their pre-care and care experiences, are unable to take advantage of educational opportunities. Instead, there is too often the expectation of instant adulthood on leaving care, a conflating of the three distinct stages of social transition into the final stage.

Promoting resilience during transition will be assisted by: giving young people the opportunity for more gradual transitions from care; providing them with the emotional and practical support they will need into their early twenties; giving them the psychological space to cope with changes over time; and recognising the different stages of transition, including the significance of the middle stage.

**Young people’s lives after care**

The resilience of young people after leaving care is closely associated with their care experience and the support they may receive. Drawing upon studies
Managing transitions from secure settings

of care leavers completed during the past 20 years suggests three ‘outcome groups’.

The first group, those young people ‘moving on’ successfully from care, are likely to have had stability and continuity in their lives, including a secure attachment relationship; made sense of their family relationships so they could psychologically move on from them; and have achieved some educational success before leaving care. Their preparation had been gradual, they had left care later and their moving on was likely to have been planned. Participating in further or higher education, having a job they liked or being a parent themselves, played a significant part in ‘feeling normal’. The ‘moving on’ group welcomed the challenge of independent living and gaining more control over their lives. They saw this as improving their confidence and self-esteem. In general, their resilience had been enhanced by their experiences whilst living in, leaving and after care. They had been able to make good use of the help they have been offered, often maintaining contact and support from former carers.

The second group, the ‘survivors’, had experienced more instability, movement and disruption while living in care than the ‘moving on’ group. They were also likely to leave care younger, with few or no qualifications, and often following a breakdown in foster care or a sudden exit from their children’s home. They were likely to experience further movement and problems after leaving care, including periods of homelessness, low-paid casual or short-term, unfulfilling work and unemployment. What made the difference to their lives, or promoted their resilience, was the personal and professional support they received after leaving care. Specialist leaving care workers and key workers could assist these young people. Also, mentoring, including mentoring by ex-care young people, may assist young people during their journey to adulthood, and offer them a different type of relationship from professional support or troubled family relationships.

The third group of care leavers, ‘the strugglers’, was the most disadvantaged. They had the most damaging pre-care family experiences and, in the main, care was unable to compensate them, or to help them overcome their past difficulties. Their lives in care were likely to include many further placement moves, and the associated disruption to their lives, especially in relation to their personal relationships and education. They were also likely to have a cluster of difficulties while in care that often began earlier, including emotional and behavioural difficulties, problems at school and getting into trouble. Aftercare support was unlikely to be able to help them overcome their very poor starting points. But it could assist them and it was very important to these young people that somebody was there for them.

Conclusion

International research has shown that care leavers as a group are likely to be among the most socially excluded young people in society. However, the application of a resilience framework also suggests that there are differences in outcomes between those ‘moving on’, those ‘surviving’ and those ‘struggling’. In general terms, the evidence shows that these different pathways are associated with the quality of care they experience, their transitions from care and the support they receive after care. Promoting the
resilience of these young people will require more comprehensive responses across their life-course: by ensuring high quality care to compensate them for their damaging pre-care experiences through stability and continuity, helping them develop a positive sense of identity, as well as assistance to overcome educational deficits; by providing young people with opportunities for more gradual transitions from care, more akin to normative transitions; and by providing ongoing, longer term support to those young people who need it, including specialist help for those young people with mental health problems and complex needs.
Managing transitions from secure settings

NCB Highlight 235: Resettlement of young people leaving custodial establishments

**Steve Howell** (November 2007)

Outcomes for care leavers remain relatively poor, despite considerable focus on planning and support for them in recent years. *Care Matters* recognises that to effect ‘independent’ adult life in a gradual, phased and prepared way, children in care require additional resettlement support compared to their peers. The difficulties experienced by care leavers in finding a safe, supported and purposeful place in society, with access to secure housing, education, training or employment, are writ large for those leaving secure settings, many of whom will also have been in care. Resettlement arguably ‘implies restoration of a condition that never was’, for example, life in a stable and supportive home and consistent access to health care and education. Instead many will have led chaotic lives characterised by instability, rejection and uncertainty, rendering the challenges of ‘resettlement’ all the more acute. ‘In many cases, a serious resettlement effort after the first custodial sentence may be the first time that anyone has really tried to engage these young people or socially include them.’

**Statistics**

According to the Youth Justice Board about 6,500 children pass through young offender institutions (YOIs), secure training centres (STCs) and secure children’s homes (SCHs) in England and Wales each year, with about 3,000 held in custody at any one time. Some 40 to 49 per cent have been in local authority care at some point, with 18 per cent still subject to care orders. These young people have high rates of mental health problems (31 per cent), very poor educational skills (50 per cent), substance misuse issues (45.4 per cent) and often histories of domestic violence (40 per cent of females and 25 per cent of males) and sexual abuse (33 per cent of females and 5 per cent of males). This makes resettlement ‘a significant challenge’.

**Entitlements**

The Youth Justice Board’s *National Standards for Youth Justice Services* state that a sentence planning meeting must be convened within 10 working days of admission to custody. The offender’s parent(s) or carer(s) should be encouraged to attend this meeting, as well as the local authority social worker if the young person is a looked after child. Independent visitors appointed under the *Children Act 1989* are to be invited as appropriate. A month before the discharge date a resettlement review meeting is to be held to confirm arrangements for discharge, including arrangements for education, training, employment, offending behaviour work, accommodation, health provision ‘and other relevant issues’.

The Munby judgement clarified that children and young people in custody retain entitlements under the *Children Act 1989*. Those with care histories may also have entitlements under the *Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000*, depending on their age and care history. Obligations to safeguard young people and promote their welfare do not cease during custody or when they leave it. Moreover, even if a young person in a secure setting has not actually spent

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time in the care system, they will often be ‘children in need’ under the terms of Section 17 of the Children Act, whether or not this has ever been formally acknowledged. The Department for Education and Skills produced guidance that outlines the responsibilities of social services departments to young people in custody, including those on remand. This requires local authorities to agree protocols with any juvenile custodial institution in their area including procedures for referral and assessment of children in need or in need of safeguarding. If the local authority has parental responsibility it should maintain contact with the child while they are in custody. If the child was formerly accommodated, then the responsible local authority is required to establish arrangements for the child’s care upon release, necessitating an assessment of need. If the child was formerly in receipt of services under Part III of the Children Act 1989 the YOT worker should discuss with the home authority what services will be provided on release.

Resettlement planning

Complex personal needs, including unresolved bereavement issues, poor attachments and managing ongoing health concerns, such as drug dependency, add to practical issues of housing or employment for these young people. Planning for resettlement needs to begin early, at or prior to the point of intervention/admission. The ‘before, during and after’ prescription, familiar in the literature on leaving care planning in relation to children’s residential homes, has equal application in custodial settings. However, the 2007 Annual Inspection of Youth Offending Teams noted that in reality there is often a lack of contact between YOTs and children’s social care services in planning for children in custody and little contact with the young people themselves.

Interventions must be based on a clear analysis of the underlying problems and a thorough assessment of need. The planning process should involve the young person, their families or significant carers, and community service providers. Central to any resettlement-related assessment and planning is the young person. Without their ownership of plans and interventions, compliance is unlikely. Children and young people need to feel that there is a point to resisting re-offending. The windows of opportunity for positive change for some young people are very brief and unless plans are timely, including fallback plans, at the critical transition points, especially in the early days of release, dangers of relapse are high.

The YJB’s Key Elements of Effective Practice: Resettlement emphasises a four-stage model reflecting the ‘before, during and after’ model of leaving care planning:

- pre-court
- custody
- community
- after the end of the licence.

Most practitioners agree the necessary resettlement package needs to include the following:

- carefully planned release
- assertive and proactive engagement strategies
varied and flexible support programmes
✦ non-judgemental, motivational approaches
✦ fast access to clinical services, stable housing, leisure and employment opportunities, and responsive, trained and experienced drug workers.17

Planning priorities
The YJB’s National Standards for Youth Justice Services assert that resettlement planning is something that should begin at the start of a young person’s sentence and address the key areas of post-release life. It should help them to lead more settled, socially integrated lives, avoiding the causes of previous offending and problems.8 The Road to Resettlement: It starts with you18 aims to give young offenders ownership of their resettlement and thus make planning more effective. Outlining a ‘young people’s checklist’ developed in collaboration with young offenders, it covers attitudinal change and motivation, keeping in touch with family and friends, health, drugs and alcohol, housing, leisure, money, work and ‘staying crime free’. The YJB comes up with a similar list of priorities in its Key Elements of Effective Practice: Resettlement and Youth Resettlement: A framework for action.4,19

Housing
Young people need to know where they will be going well before their release. They need stable accommodation, ideally within the family home or another supportive setting. Inadequate or insecure accommodation increases the incidence of re-offending and can prevent early release. Where possible, pre-existing accommodation and positive relationships should be maintained. The YJB’s Sustainable Accommodation strategy20 emphasises the need to support parents and carers in continuing to accommodate young people. Bed and breakfast accommodation is unsuitable for young people needing support and encouragement. The Howard League notes the ‘paucity of appropriate accommodation’ for young offenders and a ‘lack of creative thinking’ or willingness to use other measures to address this.8

Child protection
Young people need to feel safe both while in custody and upon release. Any concerns in this respect need to be addressed.

Identifying those with care orders or who have previously been accommodated by their local authority
If a young person on a care order comes into custody then the responsible local authority has a continuing responsibility for assessment, planning, intervention and review.21 Young people who have been in care will almost certainly have entitlements, although, as Hart argues, the ASSET (a young offender assessment profile22) system does not always identify the care status of young people.2

Education, training and employment
Recent research identified employment as the most important thing likely to prevent re-offending (66 per cent), followed by ‘going to college’ (48 per cent) and ‘having something to do that is not crime’ (47 per cent).23 This confirmed the findings of an earlier study for Barnardo’s.24 An American study found less than
half (47 per cent) of young people leaving care settings were engaged in work or school six months after release and only 31 per cent at 12 months, but those who continued to be involved in such activities after six months tended ‘not to return to the juvenile correctional system’. The authors suggest that timely interventions focused on work or educational placements immediately after release make re-offending less likely, but support must be there immediately.

Health
All young people in custody need to have access to suitable and sustainable general and specialist healthcare services with a thorough assessment of any health issues or needs, including mental health issues and substance misuse problems. Risks to self or others need assessment, with referral and exchange of information ‘on a need-to-know basis’ between custodial and community health services.

Family
Families and other social and community support systems play an important role in the successful resettlement of young people in the community. Custody can mean loss of accommodation, and damage otherwise potentially supportive family relationships. There is a need to mitigate damage and to maintain supportive relationships, encouraging visits and keeping in touch, which are obviously easier if the secure setting is close to home.

Finance, benefits and debt
According to the YJB ‘finance, benefit and debt issues are particularly significant, as lack of adequate financial support may cause additional challenges in achieving resettlement’. Even those returning to a family home need help in sorting out the benefits and tax credits available.

Multi-agency working
Young Prisoners: A thematic review stated that incarceration is an expensive and potentially corrupting intervention which, to have rational justification, other than preventing further offending for the duration of sentence, must attempt to address the causes of offending. In collaboration with external agencies it should prepare the young person for release with reduced risk of re-offending. This necessarily involves a thorough assessment and interagency work to address problems such as drug and mental health problems, and educational and employment deficits, in preparation for release. The YJB launched a resettlement and aftercare programme (RAP) in 2005 to give support to vulnerable children and young people with mental health and substance misuse problems when leaving custody.

An early report from the YJB acknowledged gaps and barriers between secure establishments, YOTs and other agencies. Noting some indications of interagency collaboration, it observed that competing pressures limited such developments. Hagell comments that despite general agreement on the importance of multi-agency working, there is little evidence of how to achieve it in the UK. Practical and resource limitations, and cultural differences between criminal and welfare-oriented agencies present difficulties.

Multi-agency cooperation between custodial and community agencies is ‘the crucial starting point for thinking about resettlement’, with a central
accountable worker to coordinate services, secure funding to meet demand over a sustained period, and make contingency plans for when things go wrong. The YJB, acknowledging that its *Strategy for the Secure Estate for Children and Young People* is ‘aspirational’, states that institutions should foster links between offenders and their ‘parents/carers in the community, and the community-based agencies that dealt with them prior to their incarceration with whom they will have to deal following their release’. This ‘aspirational’ strategy intends that sentence and resettlement planning will offer a better prospect that young people will be released with firm arrangements for their education, training and employment, with suitable support and accommodation in place.

Practice often falls short of the ideal. *Secure Treatment Outcomes* commented on the lack of interagency cooperation, leaving young people reliant on the uncertain assistance of relatives. The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee makes the same points, stressing the importance of maintaining strong family, community and voluntary agency links, and of resourcing these adequately.

Hart found practice was at best patchy regarding involvement of parents, carers and social workers, and sentence planning was ‘a service-driven rather than needs-led system’. She outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of professionals involved in providing assessment, planning, information and support in resettlement. Noting fragmented planning and poor outcomes, she says:

- Information systems do not always effectively capture children’s care status, especially entitlement to services under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Legal definitions concerning different types of care status are ‘confusing and poorly understood’ (for example, children accommodated by agreement are not considered as ‘looked after’ when in prison)
- Information about a child’s care status and therefore any entitlements is often inaccurate, partial and inconsistently shared
- There is no ‘comprehensive collation of data at local or national level’ and significant gaps/contradictions between the information and planning systems of different agencies.

Social care agencies must remain involved as the primary agency for looked after children, even when in custody, with a ‘better fit’ and balance between sentence plans and care/pathway plans. ‘Children’s services are those that should be providing looked after children with holistic support into adulthood, long after the youth justice system has bowed out’. The transition from children’s to adult services is particularly problematic and young people need help to navigate the system if they are to engage effectively with the agencies that are intended to support them.

**Conclusion**

Literature on resettlement repeatedly stresses the need for ‘seamless’ interventions and ‘timely’ supports lest the opportunity for change is lost. In...
Reaching the Hardest to Reach, an ex-offender who has successfully changed his life writes: ‘There isn’t enough help for people leaving prison. One knock they can feel the world’s against them.’

Resettlement planning and support is critical if the ‘revolving door’ cycle of re-offending is to be broken. The YJB acknowledges that resettlement practice is fraught with difficulties, requiring interagency cooperation, coordination and planning sustained by a long-term commitment and financial investment for success. Reset maintains that a proven nine-month resettlement package, including a support worker, education or training, specialist family support, with mediation if needed, volunteer mentoring, supported accommodation, and help with substance abuse, would still be significantly cheaper than the costs of re-offending. This cost-benefit analysis suggests a likely saving of £20,407 per young person sentenced to custody per annum, or more than £80 million per annum at current youth custody levels, if the provision of good quality resettlement prevented re-offending. Other research has suggested that one of the keys to success is having allocated workers/volunteers who are able to do some of the basics with young people when they are released – i.e. take them to appointments to sort out benefits, housing, training and employment, and to be there for them. Ideally this is a relationship that should start while they are in custody.

Young offenders do not enjoy much public or even professional sympathy, often being seen as the authors of their own problems and undeserving of help or services. Yet, as the Howard League argues, they are invariably also vulnerable young people who have hitherto led chaotic, neglected and brutalising lives. Acknowledging that many of the children the League represents are serious or persistent offenders, it argues that if society cannot bring itself to help them because of informed human sympathy and legal obligation, arguably it should do so pragmatically out of simple self-interest:

... these children have a right to be cared for properly, but if they are not, they will continue to wreak mayhem in their communities and put themselves at risk. They absolutely must be given appropriate support for their sakes and for the sake of all of us.

References


© NCB 2009


Managing transitions from secure settings


28 Youth Justice Board; http://www.yjb.gov.uk


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Part 4: Practice tools

Briefing: Conceptual model – needs, outcomes, services and review

This briefing is aimed at practitioners and managers who work with children and young people, whatever their circumstances, and offers a conceptual model for looking at the cycle of their needs and outcomes, services available and review.

A key to effective transition is a thorough assessment of the young person’s needs that is then used to formulate plans to meet those needs. Even if a need cannot be met in the immediate or short-term future, it should still be identified. It may be that there are alternative options that can be explored.

The model offers a tool to developing professional confidence in identifying needs and devising effective plans. It can be used by any agency, including secure settings, and is compatible with the range of other planning systems in operation such as Asset and the Integrated Children’s System because it provides a way of thinking about the young person’s needs rather than providing a format for recording information.

The model

The model places the young person’s needs at the centre. It is surprisingly easy to confuse needs with services through statements such as ‘this young person needs an offending behaviour course’. An offending behaviour course is a service, not a need. The need might be to develop empathy or to control impulsive behaviour. This is an easy trap to fall into, but it does not support an outcome-focused approach. If the needs and outcomes are not identified, how will you know whether the service has been successful in helping to address the problem? If needs are not defined, the outcome becomes an output: ‘Was an offending behaviour course provided?’ rather than ‘Did it help the young person to address their reasons for offending?’.

Needs – outcome – service model

(adapted from the work of the NCB Care Planning for Looked After Children Project 2004)
Need
Think about what this young person requires in order to thrive, to be healthy and to reach their full developmental potential. The focus should be on what needs to change.

Outcome
In order to formulate a plan to address the identified needs, it is necessary to be specific about the outcome to be achieved. ‘Happiness’ would be too vague, and it is not a realistic outcome as no human being is happy all the time. And how would you know if it was your intervention that had achieved it? Outcomes need to be SMART:

S  Specific
M  Measurable
A  Achievable
R  Realistic
T  Time limited

Service
Think about the intervention or service that would achieve the outcomes that have been described. Who will provide these and what is the timescale? It may not be possible to address all the identified needs at once and some may have to be given priority over others. A service can be one person doing a particular task or a more general resource. These services will be the basis for the child's plan.

Review
This is when you look at whether the service that has been provided has achieved the desired outcome. The timetable and mechanism for review should be specified in the young person’s plan. If the need has not been met, then another service may have to be put in place. The child’s plan should be updated in light of the review.

Unmet need
It is important to record needs that have been identified but have not or cannot be met and the reasons for this. This information is important for the individual child, but it will also highlight gaps in services to those responsible for strategic planning and commissioning.
Exercise: Identifying need

Below is a description of the circumstances of four young people. Although the information is limited, please identify as far as you can the young people’s needs and the outcomes you would like to achieve for them by the end of their remand or sentence.

Joe is 14 and has been remanded into the care of the local authority with a secure requirement following a sexual assault on a six-year-old boy. He is withdrawn and afraid of the other residents. Joe denies the assault, and staff feel that he has both cognitive and emotional problems. His family have been known to social services for years because of concerns about neglect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joe needs...</th>
<th>The outcomes for Joe should be...</th>
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<tr>
<td>e.g. to feel safe</td>
<td>e.g. to participate freely in activities with his peers.</td>
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</table>

Marie is 17. She has received an eight-month DTO for street robbery. The offence was motivated by her need to raise money for heroin. Her life has been chaotic since the age of 13 and she has been in and out of the care system. She was said to be of no fixed abode when sentenced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marie needs...</th>
<th>The outcomes for Marie should be...</th>
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Marcus is 15 and has ADHD. He usually lives with his mother and two younger sisters. He has been given an indeterminate sentence for a series of violent assaults, including a stabbing. He is finding the uncertainty difficult to cope with and his behaviour is challenging, and there have been frequent episodes of physical restraint.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marcus needs…</th>
<th>The outcomes for Marcus should be…</th>
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Jade is 16. She is serving a DTO for credit card fraud. Jade has a history of self-harm, mainly through cutting herself, but she has also been found with a ligature. She finds it difficult to talk to staff but has a number of intense relationships with her peers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jade needs…</th>
<th>The outcomes for Jade should be…</th>
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Once you have a clear profile of each young person’s needs, map the services that you think will meet those needs. Try to base this on the nature of their needs, not on what is available. There may be some needs that you are unable to meet at this point. The following example is offered as a guide:
Joe is 14 and has been remanded into the care of the local authority with a secure requirement following a sexual assault on a six-year-old boy. He is withdrawn and afraid of the other residents. Joe denies the assault, and staff feel that he has both cognitive and emotional problems. His family have been known to social services for years because of concerns about neglect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joe needs…</th>
<th>The outcomes for Joe should be…</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>The services that will be provided are…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To feel safe</td>
<td>To be able to participate freely in and enjoy activities with his peers.</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>✦ Peer mentoring.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>✦ Close supervision by staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity to learn in accordance with his academic potential</td>
<td>Evidence that Joe is making progress and attaining academically.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>✦ An educational assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✦ The initiation of a statement of SEN if necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>✦ An individualised programme of education suitable to his needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand his sexuality and appropriate sexual behaviour</td>
<td>To be able to manage his sexual feelings in a way that is not harmful.</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>✦ Psychological assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>✦ Possible specialist intervention by CAMHs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel cared for and valued by his family</td>
<td>To have regular and positive contact with his family.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>✦ Family sessions with the support of family liaison worker.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✦ Practical support to facilitate visits/phone calls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To receive good enough care</td>
<td>To leave the secure establishment to live in a setting where he will be properly cared for.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>✦ Assessment by children’s social care of Joe’s home circumstances.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✦ Intervention to improve the level of care within the home or to make alternative care arrangements.</td>
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Exercise: Auditing transition plans

Purpose
Given the concerns about young people’s effective transition from secure settings, it may be useful to undertake internal audits to look at the nature and quality of the work being undertaken. This could be done by looking at a sample of cases within teams, or multi-agency meetings such as LSCB (local safeguarding children boards) sub-groups, or within individual supervision.

Process
It will be important to establish the process for undertaking the audit and responding to the findings, and link in with other arrangements for quality assurance and accountability. This is likely to include specialist staff, such as YJB monitors or independent reviewing officers. It is important that the exercise is not used to criticise the practice of individual practitioners but to identify any general areas for improvement. The exercise will therefore work best if it is undertaken in a climate of openness and self-reflection. It will be particularly important to establish what will happen as a result of the audit:

✦ Who will report on the findings?
✦ Who will the report go to?
✦ Will individual cases or practitioners be identified (or be identifiable)?
✦ Will the worker concerned have an opportunity to contribute their views or comment on the accuracy of the conclusions drawn?
✦ How will any need for action be taken forward?

It must be remembered that the audit will provide only one dimension: what has been recorded in planning documents. This may not fully reflect the work that has been done. It will be important to seek other information by talking to the young people, their families and staff directly involved to gain a full picture.

Method
The following audit form can be used to review all – or a sample of – cases files concerning young people as they move from or between secure settings. It is important to complete a separate form for each young person to ensure that their individual needs have been considered.

Most of the questions require the auditor/s to exercise their subjective judgement about the quality of the work undertaken, but prompts are included to help inform the judgements they make.

Several people working together should ideally undertake the audit, so that judgements can be shared and checked for consistency. The exercise can be a learning experience in itself as it may highlight aspects of the work that can be overlooked when considering cases in isolation.
Case audit tool: Young people in transition from secure settings

**FAMILY COMPOSITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>DOB</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Relationship to child</th>
<th>Living with child?</th>
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</table>

**DETAILS OF MOST RECENT PERIOD IN SECURE SETTING**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date of admission</th>
<th>Date of release</th>
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Reason for admission

Brief description of background, including previous admissions

**WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE ASSESSMENT/PLANNING?**

| YOT worker | Psychiatrist |
| Social worker | Psychologist |
| Personal officer | Chaplain |
| Education staff | Parent/s |
| Substance misuse worker | Young person |
| Health staff | Other – specify |

Comment
Were all relevant agencies involved in the assessment planning process? If not, how could this be improved?
QUALITY OF ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

Is there a thorough description of the young person’s individual needs?  
Is this information evidence based? Does the assessment give you a sense of the child as an individual?

Is it clear what the desired outcomes are for the young person?

Do services appear to have been identified that are directed towards achieving those outcomes (as opposed to being chosen because of availability)?

Is the plan SMART (i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time limited)?

Is there a clear process for reviewing outcomes?

Is there any mention of contingency arrangements if aspects of the plan cannot be achieved?

Comment
WHAT HAPPENED?

a) Were the plans implemented in full? *If not, why not?*

b) Were identified outcomes achieved?

c) Was the young person adequately protected and their welfare promoted?

d) Did the young person re-offend? *If so, what was the extent/nature of their offending?*

e) Did the young person comply with the terms of their licence?

Comment
Are there any lessons to be learned from the success/failure of the plan?
**FUTURE ACTION**

Is there any action required in relation to:

a) the child or their family?

b) staff knowledge and skills?

c) management and supervision?

d) policy and procedures?

e) resources?

**Auditors**

Signed ................................................................. ..................................................

................................................................. ..................................................

Date .................................................................
Flow chart: A model for joint planning and practice
(from Hart 2006)

Child commits offence

Check Children’s Services Authority involvement

YOT

Share information and negotiate intervention package

Children’s Services Authority

Discuss and, if possible, agree content and recommendations of reports, in particular pre-sentencing report (PSR)

YOI/STC/SCH

Child is looked after or a care leaver

Contact secure establishment to provide essential information

YOT

Contact secure establishment to provide essential information (see information record)

Children’s Services Authority

Visit to child and assessment of needs

YOI/STC/SCH

Interim Custody Plan to meet needs agreed by designated manager

Child remanded or sentenced to custody

Develop remand/sentence plan with secure establishment. Invite/involve social worker

YOT

Communicate plans

Negotiate compatibility of plans and clarify roles/responsibilities

Review plans and develop integrated release plan

Joint work to ensure child is supported in community

Plans are made to meet the child’s needs

Provide information about regime and procedures

Provide link person with Children’s Services Authority – allowing the child some choice if possible

Child is released

YOI/STC/SCH

YOI/STC/SCH

YOI/STC/SCH

YOI/STC/SCH
Part 5: Conclusion and recommendations

For a boat to move smoothly along a canal, the water on the other side of the lock gates needs to be at the same level as that within it. Does the same principle apply to young people making the transition from a secure setting? And if so, is that smooth transition being achieved at the moment? The findings of the Managing Transitions Project suggest that it is achievable, but that it is not happening consistently.

*Everything stayed the same – I wouldn’t have had it any other way – I couldn’t have said ‘see you in six months’.*

(Social worker for looked after child in custody)

*I used to work with a kid. The kid was like a shrivelled flower – batting between social services and mum – no-one will take them. It’s a relief when they go into secure – they’ve got a stack of cases like that – and then they just think they’ll do it all at the last minute: ‘… we’ve got till December’.*

(Residential worker)

The following recommendations are drawn from the Project’s findings, the examination of other concepts about effective transition as well as the literature and the seminar of key stakeholders. Some are reflected in the *Youth Crime Action Plan* and may lead to legislative change; others are to do with the quality of individual practice and the way in which services interact with individual young people and their families.

1. Mechanisms need to be put into place to ensure that external statutory agencies, particularly social care, education and health, are involved in meeting the needs of young people before, during and after their time in a secure setting.

2. Suitable accommodation for the young person on their release must be identified at an early point in the young person’s stay in the secure setting and a phased approach should be taken to the move. Where possible, this could involve overnight stays, but – at a minimum – should include visits, contact with the staff and the provision of information to the young person.

3. Expectations regarding the provision of education, training and employment should be raised. Firm arrangements should be put into place before the young person’s release and visits, contact with staff and information should have been offered to the young person. Practical measures such as flexible term times should be explored to ensure there are no delays in placements being immediately available.

4. An integrated assessment and planning framework should be developed across all services for young people in secure settings. It should be based on the young person’s needs rather than the services that are available and must include contributions from all key stakeholders, including the young person and their family.
5. The secure setting’s contribution to improving the young person’s outcomes needs to be incorporated more effectively into the planning process. This should include the purpose of the young person’s stay, the progress they make, and their advice or involvement in aftercare. A postholder within the establishment, who can act as a bridge with external agencies is particularly helpful.

6. There should be greater recognition of the importance of placement stability and young people should not be subjected to unplanned moves within the secure estate that are driven by the needs of the service rather than the needs of the young people.

7. The importance of relationships also needs to be given greater recognition and young people should not be subjected to unnecessary changes of worker for service or geographical reasons. Again, the needs of the young person should be the prime concern. Consideration should be given to maintaining links with staff in the secure setting if this would be helpful to the young person.

8. More effective ways need to be found for working with the young person’s family both during their time in the secure setting and on their release in recognition of the importance of attachment and identity.

9. The psychological impact of transition from a secure to an open setting needs to be recognised and incorporated more effectively in the plans that are made. Children, families and practitioners need to be given more information about what to expect and strategies for dealing with any adverse reactions.

10. The importance of adopting a motivational approach towards young people needs to be recognised. They should be given opportunities to achieve, and progress should be acknowledged and rewarded. Regardless of their achievements, young people should be supported in feeling that they are valued and can have a positive future.

11. The expectations placed on young people immediately after their release need to be realistic so that they are not set up to fail. Complex reporting arrangements may be difficult to comply with when these young people are coping with the psychological impact of release as well as new placements, practitioners and ETE arrangements. The impulsiveness and disorganised nature of adolescence are also important considerations. Expectations need to be explicit, child-friendly and achievable, and young people should be offered intensive mentoring support and nurturing.

12. Agencies responsible for providing support to young people during their time in secure settings and after release should be held to account for the quality of their input, including audit and inspection arrangements and sanctions for poor standards.
A twin-track approach to managing the transition of children from secure settings

The following model suggests how the provision of good services can be strengthened by an awareness of the factors that support young people in making good use of such services.

**Assessment of child’s needs**

- Minimise moves and maintain relationships
- Identify suitable accommodation as soon as possible
- Make learning a positive experience
- Arrange education, employment or training placement
- Provide turning points
- Address health and substance misuse needs
- Promote a positive sense of identity
- Work with the child’s family
- Prepare child for leaving – emotionally and practically
- Resolve financial problems

**Outcomes to be achieved for child**
Part 6: Resources

References and further reading


Useful organisations and websites

Mental health

Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health
Works to improve the quality of life for people with mental health problems and has a focus on criminal justice.
www.scmh.org.uk/
contact@scmh.org.uk
0207 840 7200

Young Minds
Young Minds is a national charity committed to improving the mental health of all children and young people. They have a comprehensive website with a range of materials.
www.youngminds.org.uk
0207 336 8445

Self-harm

National Self-Harm Network
Provides support and advice to people who self-harm, their friends and families.
http://www.nshn.co.uk
info@nshn.co.uk

Papyrus
A campaigning organisation concerned with the prevention of young suicide. Information for parents, teachers and healthcare professionals. Also provides contact with support groups for those who have been recently bereaved.
http://www.papyrus-uk.org/
admin@papyrus-uk.org
01282 432555 (office);
HOPELineUK 08000 68 41 41 (helpline)

Young people and self-harm
Information resource for young people who self-harm, their friends, families and for professionals working with them.
http://www.selfharm.org.uk/

Learning disabilities and learning difficulties

Mencap: guidance on making information accessible
Mencap has produced guidance on how to make information accessible which is available from their website.
http://www.mencap.org.uk/
help@mencap.org.uk  
0207 454 0454  
Helpline 0808 808 1111

**National Attention Deficit Disorder and Information and Support Services (ADDISS)**  
Provides information and resources about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.  
www.addiss.co.uk  
info@addiss.co.uk  
0208 906 9068

**National Autistic Society**  
Help, support and services for those affected by autism, including families and professionals.  
www.nas.org.uk  
Helpline 0845 070 4004

**Tizard Centre**  
Provides research and development in community care, particularly in the area of learning disabilities and challenging behaviour.  
http://www.kent.ac.uk/tizard

**Bereavement**

**Childhood Bereavement Network**  
The Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) is a national, multi-professional federation of organisations and individuals working with bereaved children and young people. They have a range of resources and guidance.  
http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk  
chb@ncb.org.uk  
0207 843 6309

**Winston’s Wish**  
Helps children rebuild their lives after the death of a parent or sibling. Offers practical support and guidance to families, professionals and anyone concerned about a grieving child.  
www.winstonswish.org.uk/  
info@winstonswish.org.uk  
01242 515157  
Helpline 08452 03 04 05
Bullying

Anti-Bullying Alliance
The Alliance brings together over 50 organisations into one network with the aim of reducing bullying and creating safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.
http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/
aba@ncb.org.uk

Anti-bullying Network
The Network supports anti-bullying work in schools, operates a website providing information about bullying and how it can be tackled, and operates an anti-bullying service which will include the provision of training, publications and consultancy services.
http://www.antibullying.net
info@antibullying.net

Substance misuse

Addaction
A UK-based alcohol and drug treatment agency which helps those affected by drug and alcohol misuse. They have produced a booklet aimed at children whose parents or a relative have a substance misuse problem: How Do I Cope? Worried that someone you care about is taking drugs or drinking too much?
www.addaction.org.uk/
0207 251 5860

Adfam
Information, advice, counselling. National helpline for families and friends of drug users. Adfam produce a number of resources for children and family members, including a publication When Parents Take Drugs for use by anyone talking with young people about a parent or carer’s drug use.
www.adfam.org.uk
publications@adfam.org.uk
Helpline 0207 928 8898

Alcohol Concern
Alcohol Concern is the national agency on alcohol misuse working to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm.
http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
contact@alcoholconcern.org.uk
0207 264 0510

Drugscope
Information on drugs, library, news, services directory.
www.drugscope.org.uk
0207 520 7550
Managing transitions from secure settings

FRANK
Drug advice for young people.
www.talktofrank.com
0800 77 66 00

National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse
NTA work in partnership with other parts of the health service, including public health and social services, as well as criminal justice agencies, including the probation and prison services, providing information and guidance to drug treatment workers.
http://www.nta.nhs.uk/
nta.enquiries@nta-nhs.org.uk
0207 972 2226

Social Work, Alcohol and Drugs
Website to provide social workers with accessible information on substance use that is geared specifically towards the social work profession, its roles, values and responsibilities.
www.swalcdrugs.com
s.a.galvani@bham.ac.uk
0121 414 2941

STARS Project
Hosted by the Children’s Society, the STARS Project has a website for children affected by parental drug misuse. The site also includes information for adults and team development packs for professionals working with children in need because of parental drug misuse.
www.parentsusingdrugs.org.uk

Looked after children and care leavers

A National Voice
An organisation run for and by young people who are or have been in care.
http://www.anationalvoice.org
info@anationalvoice.org
0161 237 5577

Family Rights Group
Independent advice and support for families whose children are involved with Social Services. Advice sheets about the legal and financial aspects of substitute care within the family.
www.frg.org.uk.
Advice line advice@frg.org.uk or 0800 731 1696

National Leaving Care Advisory Service (NLCAS)
Provides advice, information and support on leaving care issues.
http://leavingcare.org
nlcas@nlcas.org
Advocacy and mentoring

Barnardo’s
Provides a number of services, including advocacy for children in custody.
http://www.barnardos.org.uk
0208 550 8822

National Youth Advocacy Service
Provides information, legal advice, representation and advocacy, including custody.
http://www.nyas.net
info@nyas.net
help@nyas.net
0151 6498 700
Helpline 0800 616 101

Prince’s Trust
Aims to help young people overcome barriers, including young offenders.
http://www.princes-trust.org.uk
Freephone 0800 842842

Revolving Doors
Aims to improve the lives of people caught up in a cycle of crisis, crime and mental illness, including mentoring support.
www.revolving-doors.co.uk
0207 253 4038

Voice
Provides advocacy and advice to children in care or custody in England.
http://www.voiceyp.org
info@voice.uk.org
0207 833 5792

Youth organisations

ArtsWork
An independent national youth arts development agency committed to generating creative opportunities for young people 12–25.
http://artswork.org.uk/
info@artswork.org.uk
02380 630 960

English National Youth Arts Network (ENYAN)
Aims to create more opportunities for the creative and personal development of young people, especially young people at risk.
http://www.enyan.co.uk/category/show/5
hello@enyan.co.uk
023 8063 0960
UK Youth
Helps young people to raise their aspirations, realise their potential and have their achievements recognised via non-formal, accredited education programmes and activities.
http://www.ukyouth.org/
info@ukyouth.org
01425 672347

YMCA
Provides housing, training and community health and fitness facilities to support young people and their families.
http://www.ymca.org.uk

Asylum seekers and refugees

Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children: NCB website
Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children Developing Good Practice website. This online resource provides essential information and resources for all those working with or for separated or unaccompanied refugee children and young people.
www.ncb.org.uk/arc

British Red Cross Family Tracing Service
Refugee Services and International Tracing and Message Services.
http://www.redcross.org.uk/TLC.asp?id=76239
itms2@redcross.org.uk
0845 053 2004

The Children’s Legal Centre: The Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children’s Project
The Project’s website is aimed at non-immigration specialist professionals working with asylum seeking and refugee children. Provides up-to-date information on rights, entitlements and issues affecting asylum seeking and refugee children.
www.childrenslegalcentre.com
clc@essex.ac.uk
0845 345 4345

Refugee Council Panel of Advisers
The Panel of Advisers is a service offered by the Refugee Council providing advice and information to unaccompanied refugee children.
http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/howwehelp/directly/children/
Advice line 0207 346 1134

Refugee Action – Choices Project
Offers confidential, impartial information and advice to those considering a return to their country of origin – Voluntary Returns.
www.refugee-action.org.uk/ourwork/choices/
choices@refugee-action.org.uk
0207 654 7718/9
IOM (International Organisation for Migration)
Offers help and advice to asylum seekers who wish to return home and provides information and research on migration and immigration issues.
http://www.iomlondon.org
0800 783 2332

Support for the families of people in prison

Action for Prisoners’ Families
www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk
info@actionpf.org.uk
Advice line number 0808 808 2003

Outmates
A support group to help families, partners and friends of prisoners.
24-hour helpline 08456 121 585

Prisoners’ Families and Friends
Prisoners’ Families and Friends Service is an independent voluntary agency which aims to provide families and friends of anyone sentenced to imprisonment or remanded in custody with: advice and information; support and assistance at court; support and friendship.
www.prisonersfamiliesandfriends.org.uk
info@prisonersfamiliesandfriends.org.uk
Advice line 0808 808 3444

Prison Reform Trust (PRT)
PRT offers advice and also supplies information handbooks for prisoners and families free of charge.
www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk
Advice line 0207 251 5070

Other

Childline
A free helpline for children and young people in the UK.
www.childline.org.uk
0800 1111

RESET
Resources developed to support the resettlement of young people, including materials for young people, their families and practitioners. Also materials to facilitate the development of mentoring schemes.
www.equal-works.com
The Howard League for Penal Reform
Charity that works generally for penal reform but also takes on individual cases, advising and representing children in custody. Provides legal advice and assistance to professionals.
www.howardleague.org
Advice line (freephone) 0808 801 0308. For use by under 18s in custody.

NACRO
Crime reduction charity providing direct services to offenders as well as support to practitioners, including briefings and advice.
www.nacro.org.uk
helpline@nacro.org.uk
020 7840 7200; Resettlement Plus Helpline 020 7840 6464, (freephone) 0800 0181 259

Turning Point
Turning Point provides services for people with complex needs, including those affected by drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and those with a learning disability.
http://www.turning-point.co.uk/
info@turning-point.co.uk
0207 481 7600
Managing Transitions from Secure Settings was a year-long project funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Running from 2007 to 2008, it looked at the transitional planning for young people leaving secure settings and suggested that although smooth transition is achievable, it is not happening consistently enough.

This resource illustrates some of the individual challenges faced by young people leaving secure settings in a variety of circumstances. It serves as a snapshot of current practice, identifies how well current arrangements are working and reflects the views of young people and those trying to support them in their move back into the community or to another secure setting.

*Managing Transitions from Secure Settings* helps practitioners to think about the needs of young people in a way that transcends the focus on systems and services that can be a feature of current practice. Its underlying philosophy is that effective transition planning should be driven by the individual needs of young people, not the services that are available.

**It features:**
- background information on the legal and policy context
- suggested ingredients for effective transitions
- a selection of practice tools designed to support transition planning, including a proposed model for effective transition planning
- recommendations for policy-makers, researchers, commissioners, inspectors, secure settings, youth offending teams and children’s services.