

**Learning Disabilities Service**

# **Transition**



## **Moving On From School**

**For People with Autism and a Learning Disability**



## What is this leaflet about?



This leaflet tells you and your family some information about how support is provided to people with learning disabilities and autism as they move into adulthood.

Moving into adulthood can be difficult for everyone but people with autism often find change particularly stressful. As well as leaving school you will experience other changes e.g. in your body and how you feel about things. We aim to support you and your family through the change to adult services so that things go as smoothly as possible.

This leaflet will explain how the Community Learning Disabilities Team can help and also where else you can get support and information.

You can find out more information on [www.signpostsheffield.gov.uk](http://www.signpostsheffield.gov.uk)

## Transition Process (Social Services)

A **Social Worker** from the **Transitions Team** will contact you when you are coming up to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. They can be contacted at Redvers House, Union St. S1 2JQ Tel: 0114 2735368.

They will assess you and your needs using the **Assessment Questionnaire (AQ)** and come up with an **Individual Budget** which you and your parents can use to get the care and support you need.

They will also advise if you are eligible for **Continuing Healthcare Funding (CHC)**. Information on this is available on [www.sheffield.nhs.uk/chcfnf](http://www.sheffield.nhs.uk/chcfnf)

Once you have a budget you will need to make a **Support Plan** that tells people what you want to spend your budget on. It will say what **care** and **support** you need to do the activities you want to do. Information on agencies that can help with this is available on [www.sheffieldhelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldhelpyourself.org.uk)

You can also use an agency to help you to manage your budget through a 'managed account'.

You will be assessed as to whether you will contribute towards the cost of your care package, based on your benefits and savings.

This process is called **Self Directed Support (SDS)**. More information on this can be found in the leaflet "Your life, your choice, your support" and on the website [www.sheffield.gov.uk/sds](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sds) or by telephoning 0114 2736837

If you have been in the care of the local authority you can get help from the Leaving Care Team based at 92 Queen Street, Sheffield.

## Transition Process (Health)

You may have had regular appointments with a paediatrician and the team at **Ryegate** or the **CAMHS** Team who dealt with all your health needs.

You may need help from a wider range of people as you become an adult but **DON'T WORRY!** Your health needs will still be met.

Your **physical health** needs may be met by your **GP**. If you need more specialist help you will be referred to the appropriate person e.g. dietician, continence nurse.

Our **Consultant Psychiatrist** and **Specialist Nurses** can help with **mental health** needs or medication to manage your **mood and behaviour**.

The hospital **Neurologist** and specialist **Epilepsy Nurses** will help with controlling you seizures.

**Specialist Dentists** are available throughout the area. If you have been seen by them at school they will meet with you and refer you on to adult services. Alternatively, you can request a referral by any member of the Community Learning Disabilities Team.

If you need to go to hospital you can get information about what happens in the booklet "**Moving on to Adult Services**". This is available on

[www.signpostsheffield.gov.uk](http://www.signpostsheffield.gov.uk)

## What is the Community Learning Disability Team?

Lots of different people work in the CLDT:

Occupational  
Therapists



Speech and Language  
Therapists



Physiotherapists



Clinical  
Psychologists



Development  
Workers



Community  
Nurses



Consultant  
Psychiatrist



Social  
Workers



Carers Development  
Workers



### Autism Practice Development Group

This group is made up of some of the professionals above who have a particular interest in and knowledge of autism. The group looks at how to provide the best possible services for people with a learning disability and autism and also provides training and advice on autism to other members of the team.

There is a Strategy for People with a Learning Disability and Autism in Sheffield which outlines standards of care that are expected from different services.

## What can we help with?

We know that the support needs of people with autism can be many and varied and no two people are the same. We will always treat you and your family as individuals with your own strengths and needs. People with autism can have the same problems as other people but often need a more creative approach to resolve them.

Some of the issues we have helped people with in the past are:

Help with sensory processing difficulties

Making sense of their day

Purchasing direct support (PAs)

Improving communication

Managing difficult behaviour

Understanding appropriate behaviour in different situations

Fulfilling activities

Help with healthy eating and weight loss

Help with understanding death and dying

We might work directly with you to help with some of the above or we might work with your families and others who care for you.

Over the page are some stories about people we have worked with.

### Ben's Story

Ben was able to do quite a lot of activities of daily living. He could make his breakfast, have a shower and do several cleaning jobs around the house. However, because of his autism he was unable to do them on his own. Carers had to verbally prompt him to do each step which was annoying for them and for Ben.

We made **visual timetables** for each of these activities – including a waterproof one for the shower! Ben was able to follow these easily, and so was much more independent. Later we were able to introduce pictures at the end of each timetable which linked it on to the next activity; this meant carers did not have to constantly remind him about his next 'job'.

Ben also responds well to **social stories**. When there is a potentially difficult situation coming up we write a simple story illustrated with pictures or photos. The stories explain a situation, other people's perspective, what is going to happen and how Ben should respond. This means Ben is able to prepare for these situations in advance and learn coping strategies. He is then able to deal with the situation in a much calmer way.

### Tom's Story

Tom's behaviour changed as he reached his **late teens**. He had previously been calm and amenable and able to go out and about and cope with most situations. At 17 he started screaming and hitting himself; sometimes with obvious triggers but at times with no apparent cause. He found getting on public transport hard and stopped enjoying his short breaks at Mulberry Lodge (which gave his parents some respite). As he approached his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday he had an Assessment (AQ) as part of the **Self Directed Support** (SDS) process. This gave Tom and his parents a budget which they used to purchase short breaks and respite care in the school holidays. They also employed **Personal Assistants** (PAs) who could come and look after Tom in his house so that he didn't have to go out into unfamiliar surroundings which were stressful for him.

His self-injury became less frequent but was still a problem. A **sensory processing assessment** highlighted his need for regular exercise and regular quiet times. This was incorporated into his day which helped him to be calmer during the day and on the bus home.

The **consultant psychiatrist** also prescribed some **medication** which helped to calm him.

His parents now feel that they are able to continue to care for him at home and realise that the change in his behaviour is due to hormonal and developmental changes experienced by boys of this age. It is hoped that he will pass through this stage and be able to come off the medication and be able to enjoy some of the activities he did as a boy.

### Sam's Story

Sam liked to empty bottles of bubble bath over the floor and rub it in; he would go into his sisters' bedrooms and destroy all their make-up and would empty jars of coffee all over the floor. He also talked non-stop and sometimes hit his mother when he was out shopping or walking.

We completed a **sensory processing assessment** and held an **autism workshop** with his parents and sisters.

Following these interventions, Sam's parents realised that his behaviours were due to his **sensory needs** and his **anxiety around uncertainty**. They were able to plan his day so that he could **predict** what was going to happen and include opportunities for appropriate 'messy play' so that he didn't need to use the bubble bath etc. When going shopping he was told in advance exactly what they were going to buy and encouraged to help. If Sam did occasionally hit out at mum she knew it was because he was distressed and was able to reassure him and stay in control of the situation.

Sam's mum expressed how useful these interventions were in helping her understand her son and to make life better for him.

### Ishmael's Story

Ishmael's behaviour was becoming difficult to manage at his day service and he was at risk of losing his placement. He had pushed staff and thrown things at staff and other service users. His mum was very worried about the situation.

We held an **autism workshop** for the day service workers. We ran it twice so that all the people who worked with Ishmael could attend. Ishmael's mum also came and gave lots of useful information about strategies she used at home.

The workshop helped the day service workers to understand how autism affected Ishmael and what triggered his difficult behaviour. They learned that he needed to be clear about what was happening throughout the day and needed all the staff to support him in a **consistent** way. He also needed a lot of attention from staff who knew him well. He liked staff to read particular stories but they had to all read it in the same way or he would get upset. He liked to be given responsibility to do certain jobs and to be given enough time to do them. The day service workers learned about **Intensive Interaction** and were able to focus on Ishmael's attempts at communication; by joining in and copying his words and movements they were able to let him feel in control of interactions. Staff were able to recognise the signs that Ishmael was getting agitated and knew to get him to a quiet place and give him time to calm down.

The workshops enabled staff to understand Ishmael and to agree together how best to support him.

Ishmael's outbursts lessened dramatically and he was able to stay at his day service and the staff enjoyed spending time with him.

### Anna's story

Anna was a young woman who experienced a time in her life after leaving school when her anxiety reached very high levels. She told people that she didn't want to live anymore and often picked her skin until it was very sore. When she was out and about her anxiety meant that she might hit out at her Mum or shout and scream to try to get herself away from the situation that was frightening to her. Lots of situations frightened Anna, like busy places or when things in her routines were changed unexpectedly.

We worked with Anna to help her understand what anxiety was, starting to recognise what it feels like in our bodies, and to find different ways of coping with it. She learnt to use a variety of **anxiety management** techniques to keep her anxiety levels down and to cope with the times when her senses were overloaded. People who support her learnt to use **distraction** to help her focus on something else and **active listening** to let her know they understood how she was feeling. We helped Anna to learn some ways of thinking differently about things she worried about, using ideas from **cognitive behaviour therapy**.

A big part of Anna's plan was to work with **Personal Assistants (PAs)** jointly funded by CHC and Social Care. They have gradually helped her to become more independent and feel able to go out without her Mum, with whom she felt most safe. This was something both Anna and her Mum wanted. Anna's day was structured to be more **predictable** and the **regular routines** helped Anna to feel more in control of her day.



## **How do I get help from the Community Learning Disabilities Team (CLDT)?**

If you have any needs which can be met by the Community Learning Disabilities Team, you can be referred to us.

This can be done by anyone who knows you. They will need to contact the team on **0114 2262900** and ask to make a referral.

If they are not sure what help you need they can ask to speak to a member of the **Autism Practice Development Group**, who are based at:

33 Love Street, Sheffield S3 8NW

## Decision Making

### Mental Capacity Act

When you were a child all the big decisions about your life were probably made by your parents. When you reach 16 the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) affects how decisions are made by you or for you. We all have problems making decisions and some are very complicated and difficult to make. If a (difficult) decision has to be made about you e.g. whether to have an operation or not people will try very hard to help you make the decision for yourself. If it is decided that you cannot make the decision then a group of people including your parents/carers and other people who know you well will meet to decide what is to be done in your Best Interests.

You can find more information about this on [www.dca.gov.uk/MCA](http://www.dca.gov.uk/MCA)

### Carers Support

There is also a **Carers Charter** for carers of people with a learning disability and autism. This is available on [www.signpostsheffield.org.uk](http://www.signpostsheffield.org.uk)

### Benefits

You may be entitled to some different benefits as you leave school. You can get advice on this from [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk) or [www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk)

The following advice centres have had training in learning disabilities:

#### **Sheaf Citizens Advice Bureau**

0114 275 4578

#### **Firth Park**

0114 296 0005

#### **Foxhill and Parson Cross**

0114 245 0287

#### **Hillsborough & Area Advice Service**

0114 234 8989

#### **Pitsmoor CAB**

0114 273 8838

General advice line and contact:

Tel: 0844 411 3111 (Lines are open Monday to Friday 10am-4pm)

<http://www.advisesheffield.org.uk/>

## Contact Us

We will attend **Open Evenings** at your school during your final year.

You or your family can ask us any questions then.

If you would like further information at any other time you or your family can telephone us on **0114 2262900** and ask for **Sharon Brooks** or **Ruth McFall** from the **Autism Practice Development Group**.

If we are not available leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Some websites you might find useful are:

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

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

[www.sheffield.gov.uk/sds](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sds)

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