

Leaving school and moving into adulthood

A guide for parents and teachers

Leaving school is one of the most important experiences in life. It can also be a stressful time for carers and the young person involved. Good forward planning is essential.

Young people with learning disabilities will require a transition plan. This will involve regular informal and formal meetings between the young person, carers, professionals and other agencies.

The plan must include:

- **The name of the person who will be coordinating the process.**
- **Identification of an appropriate curriculum covering academic qualifications and alternative accreditations.**
- **How to develop independent living skills such as financial advice, travel, friendship, leisure, moving away from home and budgeting.**
- **Information about the young person's interests, preferred learning styles and abilities.**

During S2:

- Continue communication between home and school.
- Develop the young person's independence by providing opportunities and choices for them to make decisions.
- Support the development of friendships with systems such as buddying and circle of friends.
- Identify activities or groups that the young person can participate in.
- Reinforce basic skills that will increase the independence of the young person.
- Identify and record additional skills required such as social and self help skills.

Young people will require support to identify courses that they will be able to work towards. These may include:

- Access level courses.
- Standard grades.
- Alternative vocational courses.
- College courses.

Ongoing support can include the use of a scribe, tapes and differentiated materials.

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During S3:

- A wide variety of work placements should be made available.
- Opportunities to experience this range of work placements should be structured and ongoing throughout the year.
- Support must be established in both the school and the work placement.

S4 onwards:

- Provide alternative academic and vocational qualifications.
- Provide access to college as often as possible. Young people with learning disabilities will need more time than their peers to learn about their chosen college placement.
- Provide access to a variety of work placements as often as possible.
- Special arrangements need to be applied for in advance of certificated exams. This may mean providing additional time or the support of a scribe.

Leaving School:

- Young people with learning disabilities may choose to leave school at 16 or continue on until they are 19 years old, depending on their date of birth. The decision to remain at school until 19 should only be made if this is in the best interest of the young person concerned.
- Support for the young person in their vocational or educational choice needs to be identified.
- Their choice should then be visited at least twice before they leave school.
- Create a folder to prepare the young person for their transition. Include information, pictures and photographs of the environment they will be moving to.

Down's Syndrome

SCOTLAND helping people realise their potential

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