

**Wayne Francis Charitable Trust  
Transition Project for Disabled Students:**

**Preliminary Findings of the Stocktake of Transition of  
Disabled Students in Canterbury**



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## **1. Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank and acknowledge all of the disabled students, parents, primary caregivers, staff from schools and other stakeholders involved with transition, who attended the focus groups and provided their personal information and ideas for this project. It is this feedback that has made this report so valuable.

We would also like to thank the staff and board of the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust and the Advisory Group, who are responsible for this project, for all of their generous assistance.

Our thanks also go to:

- Caroline Todd who spent many hours writing up the feedback from the focus groups and providing administrative support.
- Jonathan Mackie, from CCS Disability Action, who was the Graphic Illustrator for all of the disabled student focus groups.

## **2. Statement of Limitation**

This report acknowledges the importance of the perspectives of all of the participants in this project. The writers realise that there is always a range of opinions or views about the transition of disabled students when they leave school.

This project represents a particular set of experiences of people involved with transition in Canterbury – disabled students, parents/primary caregivers, school staff, disability support agency staff involved with supporting transition and other stakeholders.

The limitations of this project are as follows:

1. We have only heard from people who registered for the focus groups and who are mostly from Christchurch. There are many more people involved with transition.
2. The aims of the consultation meant that potentially we only heard from people who have concerns about transition of disabled students and/or have a desire to actively discuss transition.
3. The majority of disabled students and parents/primary caregivers in focus groups were involved in schools providing special units. However, the focus groups did also include feedback from students in mainstreamed classes and their support networks.
4. We have had limited feedback from Maori and Pacific Island people.

**Grant Cleland**  
**Creative Solutions**

**Colin Gladstone**  
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### **3. Introduction**

The Wayne Francis Charitable Trust is seeking to enhance the effective transition of disabled students from secondary school into further education, employment and other community settings.

In 2005/2006 the Trust commissioned a group of experienced youth workers to scope the youth work sector in Christchurch and make recommendations about where the Trust should be targeting its funding over the next five years. One of their recommendations was supporting the successful transition of disabled young people, particularly focusing on advocacy.

Grant Cleland, from Creative Solutions Disability Consultancy, was commissioned by the Trust to facilitate a process to identify these solutions. Deciding which stakeholders need to be involved, consulted or could be potential funding partners for future initiatives; is also part of this process.

In May 2007 an Advisory Group, consisting of various stakeholders involved with transition of disabled students in Christchurch, was established. The primary role of this valuable group is to identify and support the development of future transition initiatives.

This Advisory Group along with the trust staff have defined the key directions for this project. This consists of the following steps:

1. Seek, review and summarise key written information about transition of disabled students, which will inform the process and assist with the development of best practice ideas.
2. Complete a stocktake of what is currently happening with transition of disabled students in Canterbury and identify possible solutions to meet the needs of disabled students and their parents/primary caregivers.
3. Establish what projects are already occurring at a national level in relation to transition of disabled students, which could inform and have an impact on what we do with this project.
4. Determine if there are any existing transition initiatives in Christchurch or other areas to build on.
5. Develop options to meet the transition needs of disabled students and their parents/primary caregivers, for the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust and other funding partners to consider.
6. Develop a process for evaluating the outcomes of these options.
7. Determine how these initiatives could be linked into and inform transition initiatives occurring at a national level and potentially be sustained long-term.

Some of these steps are already underway. For example a project plan has been developed, the review of literature has been completed and we have now completed the stocktake.

In March/April 2008, 77 people participated in focus groups about transition of disabled students. Feedback was received from people associated with a wide range of schools and with various support needs, including those involved with special units and high schools. Many themes have been consistent across the focus groups and we now have a real sense of what would enhance transition.

The report provides an overview of preliminary findings from these focus groups. Further analysis still needs to occur to complete the outcomes from this process.

#### 4. Methodology

The aim of the focus groups was to allow disabled students, parents, primary caregivers, staff from schools and other stakeholders involved with transition, the opportunity to provide feedback about:

1. What disabled students need to help them prepare for life when they leave school.
2. Options for making this the best possible experience for students and families.

Prior to hosting the focus groups, the following tasks were completed by Grant Cleland and Caroline Todd from Creative Solutions in association with Colin Gladstone, Jeremy Tumoana and Jonathan Mackie:

1. Grant Cleland liaised and met with the MoE and other stakeholders to get the contact details of schools and key people to invite to the focus groups.
2. An Access Database and Excel file of contact names was created for mail merging and sending focus group invitations and registration forms.
3. We developed letters, an invitation and registration form for the following focus group participants:
  - Disabled students within Special Units and High Schools.
  - The parents or primary caregivers of disabled students.
  - School staff.
  - Agencies supporting transition.
  - Other key stakeholders.

The invitation included some background information about the project and the focus groups. It also included a page to complete and return with contact details, the specific focus group people were interested in attending and their support needs to be taken into consideration and some information about their involvement with transition.

We mailed and emailed letters, invitations and registration forms:

- For disabled students and parents/primary caregivers, to 45 transition coordinators within schools and 15 other schools where a transition coordinator could not be identified.
- To 45 transition coordinators within schools and 15 other schools to invite them to the focus group for school staff.
- To 30 agency staff involved with supporting schools and families with transition. This was to invite them to a focus group specifically for agency staff and included disability support agencies, MoE, disability support staff within the tertiary sector, Seabrook McKenzie Centre, CCC, most Advisory Group members, Standards and Monitoring Services, Principals Association, etc.
- To the 45 transition coordinators within schools and 15 other schools to identify disabled people to attend a focus group for those who have graduated from school and have already been through transition.

This proved very successful with a large number of people making contact. Those receiving the registration forms were encouraged to complete this and we asked those emailed to forward the invitation and registration form on to any of their own networks who may have been interested. This generated a number of inquiries and as a result further registration forms were sent on to other people.

4. We developed an Access Database/Excel file of those who registered for focus groups.
5. We drafted a confirmation letter and consent form to be sent to those who registered for focus groups, prior to them attending.
6. We developed plain language information for the disabled students – invitations, registration forms, confirmation letter and consent form, focus group questions and PowerPoint presentation.

7. We developed a schedule of information presented at the focus groups.
8. We emailed reminders to people to get their registrations forms in.
9. We followed up on a number of inquiries in relation to the focus groups.
10. We completed pilot focus groups. These included :
  - An interview with a manager from a disability support agency involved with transition, to pilot the questions for agencies and school staff.
  - A pilot with 13 disabled students from Allenvale School where we tested the questions and process for disabled students. These students were in addition to the people who registered for the focus groups.
  - Meetings to discuss the process and modifications for these and other focus groups.
11. Other organisational tasks included – printing off up to 10 invitations and registration forms for each school, liaising with Karen Rickerby about Council venues, booking other venues, arranging the sound equipment and data projector, downloading the digital files for each focus group onto our computers for analysis, arranging the equipment for the graphic illustrator, confirming the catering arrangements, liaising with the Trust staff and other people in relation to the focus groups.

Most of the focus groups were held at either Christchurch City Council venues or the St. John of God Waipuna Trust. Eight focus groups were held on the following dates:

Focus Groups for Disabled Students:

- Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> of March, 10am – 12 noon.
- Monday 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 9:15am – 11:45am.
- Monday 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 4pm – 6:30pm.

Focus Groups for Parents/Caregivers:

- Monday 7th of April, 9:30 am – 12 Noon.
- Tuesday 8th of April, 9:30 am – 12 Noon.
- Tuesday 8th of April, 4pm – 6:30pm.

Focus Group for Agency Staff:

- Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 9:30 am – 12 Noon.

Focus Groups for School Staff:

- Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 4pm – 6:30pm.

77 people participated in these focus groups. This included 26 disabled students, 30 parents/primary caregivers, 13 agency staff and 8 staff from schools. There were also some people who registered, who weren't able to attend a focus group, but provided individual feedback. Two people were also individually interviewed; one as part of the pilot and the other interview was with Ruth Jones, who is the National Manager of Maori Strategy and Policy for CCS Disability Action. This provided an opportunity to hear about the transition needs of Maori. An analysis of these interviews is yet to be completed.

All of the focus groups were co-facilitated by Grant Cleland, from Creative Solutions, and Colin Gladstone from Allenvale School. Caroline Todd, from Creative Solutions, completed the notetaking for each focus group and Jonathan Mackie, from CCS Disability Action, was the Graphic Illustrator for the disabled student focus groups. Jonathan's role was to draw pictures of what people were saying in each group, for

those participants who had difficulty with reading text and following the flow of the meeting. 2-14 people attended each focus group.

To prevent the student's voice being lost in the hierarchy of influence, the disabled students were interviewed first. The feedback from the disabled student focus groups was also discussed at the start of each focus group with parents/primary caregivers, school and agency staff. This provided a framework to focus discussion.

All focus group participants were asked to sign the consent form to be involved in the focus groups. Once people had given us permission to use a digital recorder, this was used as a backup to the notetaking. At the completion of the focus groups the notes were typed out and where required checked against the tape recording. These records have provided the basis of the analysis for this report.

With each focus group we used a fairly standard format and set of questions. Rather than breaking participants into small groups we found it easier to keep participants in the large group. The questions we had developed were used as a guide only as we found participants often answered more than one question when providing feedback. To ensure that all participants had an opportunity to provide feedback, we tended to ask a question and then work our way around the group getting feedback. The questions that we asked were divided up into specific areas - current services and the ideal future.

After the focus groups had been completed, a summary of feedback from each focus group was posted out to each person who had registered for a particular one. They were asked to complete and return a standard form that asked them whether the summary was an accurate record of the focus group and whether they wanted to make changes or add anything to the summary.

For the disabled students, we also sent out a graphic illustration of feedback from the focus group. This included the questions and photographs of what Jonathan Mackie had drawn.

## **5. Profile of the Focus Groups Registrations**

77 people participated in 8 focus groups about transition of disabled students. They included:

- 26 disabled students
- 30 parents/primary caregivers
- 13 agency staff
- 8 staff from schools.

The profile of people who registered for the focus groups was as follows:

### **Students Focus Groups**

Age Range = 13 – 20 years

Average Age = 18 years

Disability types identified:

Intellectual Disability	50%
Physical Disability	37.5%
Multiple Disability	37.5%
Learning Disability	18.75%
Autism	18.75%
Blind/Vision Impaired	6.25%
Other	6.25%

Gender:

Male	68.8%
Female	31.2%

### **Young People Associated With Those Registering For a Focus Group for Parents/Caregivers**

Age range = 12 - 21 years

Average age = 17 years

Gender of the Young People:

Male	55%
Female	45%

Disability types identified:

Intellectual Disability	41.4%
Physical Disability	41.4%
Multiple Disability	41.4%
Learning Disability	24.1%
Autism	13.8%
Blind/Vision Impaired	6.9%
Other	6.9%

Gender of Parents/Caregivers:

Female	74.3%
Male	25.7%

**The students, parents and school staff were involved with 15 schools:**

- Allenvale School
- Ashburton College
- Burnside High School
- Cashmere High School
- Ferndale School
- Halswell Residential School
- Linwood College
- Mairehau High School
- Papanui High School
- Rangiora High School
- Riccarton High School
- Rudolph Steiner School
- St. Bedes
- Upland Unit, Hillmorton High School
- Waimate High School

These schools provide transition services for an age range of 13 – 21 years. Most schools cater for all disability types identified, except Halswell Residential who only cater for students with intellectual disability, challenging behaviours, autism and learning disabilities.

**Agencies supporting transition:**

These agencies provided transition services for an age range of 15 - 21 years. All of these agencies cater for a range of disabilities except for the NZ Spinal Trust which only caters for those with physical disability and Helen Anderson Trust which only caters for those with intellectual disability, autism and learning disability.

## 6. Key Themes from the Different Focus Groups

This chapter provides an overview of key feedback from focus group participants.

### i Focus Groups with Disabled Students

Here are the important themes from the three focus groups with disabled students:

#### 1. **What would you like to do when you leave school?**

- Most wanted jobs in open employment - gardening, a forestry job, car mechanic, car sales, clerical and reception duties, childcare, hospitality, work in library, checkout/trolleys in supermarket, write books, retail, work at Mitre 10, Police, fire station, pilot, plane engineer, be a personal trainer.
- Many also wanted to live independently and to do other things - travel overseas, have income to do things, buy a house, have friends, get married, have children, further study, etc.
- It was clear that many of the students wanted a 'valued role in society' and saw that employment would give them this.
- Some wanted to do further study to get more skills – be a personal trainer, a hospitality course, develop computer skills, learn reading/writing and work skills, etc. However, it appeared that only a few of the disabled students had NCEA Units Standards, most of these people were in mainstream settings and were more likely to have a specific study and career path.
- Students also talked about re-visiting school and the importance of continuing their school friendships, once they left school.

#### 2. **What do you imagine your life will be like when you leave school?**

- Many were eager to leave school and saw this as a real opportunity to get a job, start a career, be an adult, live independently, get money to do the things they want and develop other skills (eg. budgeting, use buses, CPIT courses).
- Some students felt it would be boring if they weren't employed and work would allow them to buy things, make new friends, have a challenge and to do tasks they were good at.
- There were also some who had real concerns about leaving school – *"it will be very different, changing support people, losing contact with school teachers and friends, it is too hard to think about it, it will be a big change, school is very social and I have friends at school - I'm afraid I will lose touch with them, change is scary"*.
- A few disabled students stated that it was important that they took some responsibility for planning and implementing the next stage – *"If you make it good then it will be good"*.

#### 3. **What have you done so far?**

- Some had done work experience – recycling, library work, Paper Plus, cleaning cars, Mitre 10, Kilmarnock Enterprises, Countdown, 10 weeks at Centennial Leisure Centre through a Gateway Course, weekend jobs.
- Mostly the students really liked work experience and those with work experience appeared to have more of an idea of what is involved with getting and having a job – *"It is harder than I thought it would be"*.
- Some had completed specific study for their transition - computer course, work skills, food technology, public health course, reception tasks, office tasks, learnt about punctuality and appropriate clothing for work, personal training, reading books/listening to audiotapes of motivational speakers
- Community participation – practising bus routes.
- Developed leisure and social skill (eg. horse-riding, art, walking to keep fit and healthy, participate in school plays to help memory/gain confidence, Brighton Buddies, friendship building).
- Worked with Catapult Employment Services.
- A few had completed a Gateway Course (eg. personal training), NCEA, the Young Enterprise Scheme, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, got a car and licence.
- A few spoke about being ready to leave school. For example a student who is 21 said – *"I want to take everything out of my desk and leave school"*.

#### 4. Who has been involved?

- Frequent Involvement: Parents, the student, teachers, transition coordinators at school, agencies (eg. Catapult Employment Services, WINZ), employers.
- Less Frequent Involvement: Friends, doctors, clubs/organisations (eg. Parafed, Special Olympics), carers or support people, gateway teacher.

#### 5. Tell us about what has worked well?

- Overall, work experience was popular with many of the students.
- Other areas included setting realistic/small goals, having a role model, developing skills (eg. catching a bus, budgeting), trying different things, moving away from home to residential services.

#### 6. What support was most useful for you?

- Parents, school transition staff, employers for jobs/work experience, workplace support - job coaches.

#### 7. What successes have you had?

- Courses, positive feedback, work experience, school awards, developing sports skills, having a girlfriend, meeting people through clubs and learning new skills (eg. teamwork, how to follow instructions), Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

#### 8. What other support would have been helpful?

- Many of the students struggled with thinking about the additional support they needed to prepare and the barriers they faced with this preparation – *“I don’t know what else there is”*.
- Some struggled with these abstract concepts, while others who did understand these questions still appeared to have difficulty giving feedback because *“you don’t know what you don’t know”*.
- The ideas that were suggested included career days or expo, trying jobs to see if I have the ability to do it, mentoring to help make suggestions about jobs, someone to match my ability with jobs, support people for school and work.
- One student spoke about having *“heaps of support from school - all the information has been there – but I haven’t really taken help before, but I’m accepting it now”*. He spoke of the need for him to take responsibility for planning and implementing his preparation for leaving school and the fact that this was made easier now he had an aim and career direction.

#### 9. What makes this preparation hard?

- The unknown – *“how will it work, will it work?”*
- *“It’s complicated leaving school”* – it is important to plan for the future while still at school.
- Making new friends – hard to leave existing friends – *“I’m afraid that I might lose them”*.
- The lack of support for community participation:  
*“Hard getting help with finding a job – too many people want jobs – competition”*.  
*“If you need a drivers licence then you need someone to teach/support you to drive - this support is not always available”*.

#### 10. Is the current support good?

This question was asked in the second disabled student group. Ironically this was answered mainly by support people at the group. They made the following points:

- Students need more one on one matching to ensure their ability is suitable for the job.
- The community is not very supportive – big companies are the least helpful.
- Often facilities are not suitable for the needs of students with high/very high support needs.
- Attitudes towards disability need to improve.
- Employers need support to learn about disability – have a liaison officer.
- Disabled students need support groups to talk about their experiences.

**11. At what age should you start to prepare for life when you leave school?**

- The disabled students had a range of views in relation to this question.
- At least seven students suggested somewhere between 15-17 and made comments like – *“As early as possible, the longer you have to prepare the better prepared you will be, at 16 when you are old enough to leave school, I’m 20 and would have liked to have left school at 16 or 17, important to be on time - start transition earlier than 20, a benefit of starting earlier is picking future courses and knowing what you want to do, if you started earlier it would get more people out of school quicker, if you start planning later then you leave school later”*.
- Three students said, *“don’t leave school early, not sure, don’t want to think about it now – I can do that later”*. These students tended to suggest starting transition planning much later (eg. 20-25).

**12. What would the ideal preparation for leaving school look like?**

- Employment Support - lots of jobs available, preparation for work, read newspaper, different options for finding work, working part-time outside of school, getting help from people who are already employed.
- Planning which involves knowing your interests, communication and support with the people you trust, thinking well before you leave school

**13. How can we build higher expectations for or of students in schools?**

- Make sure the students are important!
- Form good relationships with the school staff so that they want to help.
- Take the initiative yourself – help develop the skills that allow this to occur.
- Have disabled role models that show disabled students, parents/primary caregivers and school staff how successful transition can occur and what’s possible – *“so not so unprepared and frightening”*.
- One student in a mainstream setting said teachers already have high expectations.

**14. Who would be the best person to help students prepare?**

- Teachers and transition coordinators at school and parents/primary caregivers.
- Some students felt this should be someone you get on well with, with experience and not just theory. They also suggested they should be linked into people who can talk about their experiences, so you are not afraid to try new things.
- There were some students who didn’t know.

**15. Name the one thing that would really help you prepare to leave school?**

- Employment Support - help to find and learn a job, apprenticeships, funding for support.
- Support with community participation - help with budgeting, health, education, self confidence, getting friends; the ability to talk with others in a group; being encouraged to take risks.
- More support at school - Teacher Aides.

**16. Is there anything else you would like to say?**

- In one focus group the students spoke of their desire to leave school.
- One student said, *“I have been at school too long – I’m turning 21 this year – school is boring, I do the same thing over and over again”*.
- Another said, *“School is boring – been there 5 years – only at one school – time to do something new. The end of the year needs to come quicker so I can get out of school”*.

## ii Focus Groups with Parents/Primary Caregivers

Below is a summary of key themes from the three focus groups with parents/primary caregivers.

### 1. **What do you imagine your young person's life will be like after they leave school?**

When answering this question the parents/primary caregivers told these stories:

- We hope our daughter can live independently, have a job, someone will develop her artistic ability.
- Not sure – change can be a struggle – workforce is an unknown quantity – don't know what help there is out there to help with transition into work.
- We need some advice about where he can get a job – wants variety to keep his mind occupied.
- Our son is already doing work experience – would like him to leave school and have a paid job, even if only part time – he is limited in his thinking of the future by what he has experienced so far.
- We hope our daughter will have paid employment and live independently – big challenge is learning the skills (eg. budgeting, etc) to be independent - she sees transition as a challenge – she struggles with budgeting, hygiene, timeliness and needs support - difficult to know where to get support for her.
- The girls will be well supported in the community - have severe intellectual disability so won't work – they need stimulating activities with support and continuity of the level of support they get at school – need a programme so that they are out there everyday with peers, both disabled and non-disabled.
- Our son is passionate about hospitality – he has plenty of self confidence - planning to the moon! – safe at school, but he doesn't need to stay as he has NCEA – with hospitality there will be health and safety issues to work through – he needs a life coach when he leaves school to keep him on track.
- Not sure. Our son believes he is great but what is the reality?
- I have no idea. Our daughter feels it is a natural progression from school to a job – I would like some support with this as my daughter will get very frustrated if she can't get a job.
- Questions have come up – Where will I live? What will I do when I leave school? - she is keen to live near but not with her parents – we wonder how will she develop her life skills - we will maybe build a cottage on the section - she is very well supported at school with therapy, what will happen to this service when she leaves? - leaving school is significant - we have only started planning in her final year and we fear there isn't enough time to get it all done.
- We hope he will be able to live independently with other disabled people.
- We want her skills to continue to grow – she has lots of support at school – her communication is vital – safe environment at school - we want her to get involved in part time CPIT courses.
- We hope to build him a flat and he's learning lifeskills – needs a fulltime support person – with the right support he can live up to his dreams - there are good people out there, but we have to find them.
- I fear our son will be very lonely, lose contact with his school friends and his school routines will go – there is no support or funding available to take them out into the community.
- I'm not sure. Because there is no structure for community participation our son will stay at home.
- Transition not just about finding a job it is about social transition – important to find the right support for community participation – the lack of development of his social skills has an impact on transition.
- Our son needs buddies – he needs total care – needs a group that will cater to his very high needs so he can continue what he's doing at school; building his communication and community activities.
- Hopefully our son will get a part-time job - the problem is finding an employer – we want him to live in some form of assisted accommodation to develop his independence – he would need support initially at a job – if he doesn't find a job what will he do? – he can't be a librarian but volunteering may lead to a position – through volunteering they get to know you as a person with an interest.
- My child would like to work with animals, but we don't know how to access this.
- Work experience is good – my daughter is loving childcare - you need qualifications these days – it makes it really hard for disabled students to get jobs.

## 2. What does the young person that you know want to do when they leave school?

- Some spoke of employment - a panel beater, policeman, train driver, a job around interests/hobbies.
- Many talked about independent living:

*"He wants to leave home to get away from the rules". "Our daughter wants a normal life – job, living independently, marriage, family". "He talks of getting married – not sure if it will happen – he will need to be in an environment where relationships are seen as being normal".*

*"His goal is to have his own home – he wants to earn money so he can buy things, but needs support with this – we told him that he couldn't live independently until he learnt to make his bed, shower himself, etc - he took that on board and started doing those things - we didn't expect him to move away from home but it went smoothly".*

- Others were concerned about the aspirations of their children:

*"He could live independently but he will sleep in his clothes if no one tells him not to – he needs more awareness of stranger danger". "We are anxious as she will approach and hug anyone". "Sometimes they aim too high – wants to be the manager not the gofer, but who doesn't?"*

- A few said, "I don't know".

## 3. What has their preparation involved so far?

- Individual Education Planning (IEP) around transition planning, CPIT courses, visiting day services, work experience, speaking with school transition staff, linking in with transition services (eg. Catapult Employment Services, Helen Anderson Trust, Workbridge), the student completing the Young Enterprise Scheme and Gateway programme, a school transition class, support with life skills/community participation (eg. Catching a bus) and talking with other parents.
- Below is some feedback from parents/primary caregivers in relation to this question:

*"The transition meeting at Allenvale School was extremely useful/interesting as various providers were brought together".*

*"Meetings at Ferndale – meetings with people at Horizons – my son is OK about the change but mum's not...I'm fearful that my son will be taken advantage of – I'm worried because he doesn't have the right support".*

*"I haven't done anything". "Done nothing yet as he is only 16". "Not much".*

*"Our daughter has done things through her school transition class in year 12 – careers days – she looked at courses at CPIT – there are sufficient options for parents/child to investigate, but no life skills support – respite care has not worked – where do you find support around self management/care issues?"*

*"IEP meeting with teacher and teacher's aide, not helpful - lifeskill needs not currently being met – we give the school ideas but it is difficult".*

- Some parents/primary caregivers spoke of their fear of their child leaving school:

*"Preparing your child is scary, it's like falling off a cliff".*

*"I'm too scared to think about preparing the youngest even though we probably need to start".*

*"I can't imagine life after school – very frightening to think he will leave in 18 months – need to set up an adult unit, but probably won't be set up within 18 months – where does he go in the meantime? - academically he is able but needs support otherwise - leaving transition planning until the final 18 months is too pressured for what needs to be done – would like a half way step".*

*"They need routine and predictability which they have when they are at school – what happens when they leave".*

*"I need to learn to let go more to improve his independence".*

#### 4. Who has been involved with this preparation?

- The parents/primary caregivers, the young person, Elmwood Visual Resource Centre, school transition staff, external transition agencies (eg. Catapult Employment Services, Helen Anderson Trust, Workbridge, CCS Disability Action transition staff, Youth Specialty Services).

#### 5. What would the ideal framework for preparing disabled students to leave school look like?

- This quote from one of the parents summed up their overall feeling - *"The key is to have the information and then have the coordination to put it in place. Where do we go? How do we find out what we don't know?"*
- The needs of the parents/primary caregivers were:
  - (a) More Information About Transition Options: A database where anyone can access information and support/service information about criteria, etc - a transition booklet with all the support agencies - we need to be able to do our own research from home - accurate information is really crucial - we need information continuously throughout life – have an expo to visit before you begin transition.
  - (b) An Independent Person Coordinating Transition Services: Someone who will act as a go-between. Why didn't MSD give the transition funding to one agency? A one stop shop would be much easier for students and parents - we need neutral advocates who provide support throughout, a 'key' worker who can deal with all issues - advocates need to be neutral (not providing services), have a really good understanding of the services available, systems and process – a lifelong service outside of school to coordinate, a caseworker to follow the child through, who refers to a pool of experts.
  - (c) Agency Collaboration: Professionals need to share information too, often they don't know what is available – they need to talk to each other, we need better coordination and less competition.
  - (d) Continuity of the Level of Support They Get at School: There needs to be a middle step between school and the outside world.
  - (e) Government Funded Community Participation Activities: A monthly meeting to allow interaction between similar students to build friendships and social skills; swimming, craft; with both disabled and non-disabled peers.
  - (f) More Community Participation Support and Funding: Practise skills to build confidence.
  - (g) Programmes to Support the Development of Life/Social Skills: A facility/agency to teach lifeskills - supported accommodation to try out things/develop independence (eg. self/time management, budgeting, getting to a job, supermarket shopping, etc) - for students with very high support needs - numeracy and literacy programmes - CCS camps or similar - something like the 'Up Club' for other disabled students, providing social activities for young people even after they leave school.
  - (h) More Day Services with People of a Similar Age - An Adult Unit - a half way step.
  - (i) A Buddy System or Mentoring Programme for the Disabled Students: - Disabled students working with disabled people who have succeeded.
  - (j) Life Coaching to Keep Students on Track: Someone monitoring success; outside the family.
  - (k) Parent Mentoring: Parents talking with other parents who have been through it.
  - (l) Support With Getting Employment – work experience, job support.
  - (m) Teachers Listening to the Parents.

#### 6. There are already a number of agencies providing support, why are people still finding it difficult getting information and requiring neutral advocates?

- The system is very complicated and even some professionals don't know about all the services.
- Current agency staff tend to only focus on a specific area (eg. Transition, employment), don't have or give the overview of all available services and also only sell their own services.
- NASC services are aligned to the Ministry of Health funding – it is demoralising to have to beg to LifeLinks – they are a gatekeeper for the MoH funding - what we need is a list of agencies we can approach – can't do that without a referral from LifeLinks.
- There is a problem knowing which agency works with which disability – *"you get told this agency doesn't cater for that disability"*.

- Even if your child is with one of the existing agencies they can't tell you all the information.
- You can only access agencies if you know about the agency!

#### 7. Are school staff knowledgeable about transition and what is available for students?

- Some are – *“On the whole I have had a positive experience with school”*.
- Some aren't – *“I had to tell the teachers what my son's interests were. I feel like you come in the back door when you have a disabled child and go out the back door”*.

#### 8. At what age should disabled students start to prepare for life when they leave school?

- The parents/primary caregivers had a range of views in relation to this question.
- A few felt it depends on the individual needs, how far they will be able to go within the school system and the ability of the student to take it in.
- Most suggested somewhere between 13-16 years and made comments like:

*We haven't started talking to our son as I'm not ready to deal with it. You need to get your name down early as lots of people are chasing a few placements in day services”*.

*“Should be started as soon as possible – at least working on their social development skills – if you can't relate to people then even if you get a job it won't last. It is very important to have people skills”*.

*“If you don't start early enough then some children will have left school before they are properly prepared – some children leave school before their parents have had a chance to really plan and identified what they need”*.

*“2 years is not long enough to prepare – we need to start as early as possible - work slowly/thoroughly”*.

*“If it is too rushed then that causes panic – earlier the better so it doesn't seem frightening”*.

*“Our children don't cope with change well – so trying to cram transition into a short period of time is not a good idea”*.

- Other comments included:

*“There is a good system for transitioning to early childhood, primary and secondary, but none for school to work”*.

*“All too scary to think about”*. *“Transition has come as a big shock”*.

#### 9. Who should be coordinating this preparation for life when a disabled student leaves school?

- A neutral advocate who can provide the overview of services and be contacted whenever necessary.
- An unbiased person to support students/parents through transition.

#### 10. What makes this preparation hard?

- General Transition Planning: Schools need to cater better for transition of students with different needs. We have only started planning in her final year and we fear there isn't enough time to get it all done. It takes time and effort to visit places - disabled students don't realise their support needs.
- Coordination: We are working with a couple of agencies. Some individual agencies are great, but we don't understand how to use them together – there is a lack of coordination between agencies - Who do we go to for other support needs? Do we contact these agencies ourselves?
- MSD Transition Services: MSD have funded a number of agencies to provide transition services, but only funded for students in their last year of school and only ORRs funded students. Why didn't MSD fund one agency with overall coordination of transition? This would be much easier for parents.
- Information: Hard to find a one-stop booklet - can't get information – you have to fight for everything as there is no information given freely - takes up a lot of time which is frustrating and each agency only tells you about their services.
- Life and Social Skills: We wonder how students will develop the life skills they need to leave school - with the move towards inclusion; camps, workshops and other services have been closed. That's where they could learn life/social skills. It is difficult to find places to learn these skills now.

At school they have not developed enough social skills to be independent (eg. catching a bus) and there appears to be little support to continue this development once they leave school. This has an impact on their ability to get a job and with community participation.

They may lose contact with school friends when they leave school.

- Therapy Services: Our daughter is very well supported at school with therapy, what will happen when she leaves school – when she leaves school the support probably won't be there to continue with her communication development using her Dynovox. This will have an impact on her ability to transition.
- Support and Funding for Community Participation: Not enough support hours – continuity of support difficult - lack of funding for this.
- Funding: Passed from pillar to post! - different funding levels for ACC and health funding – need more support funding for when they leave school - funding from WINZ is not straight forward.
- Employment: Who supports them? – some larger employers won't take on disabled students due to health and safety regulations - finding employers difficult - If they don't find a job what will they do? - some employers exploit young people or lack understanding of disability - the desire for qualifications.

**11. What extra support would assist you with preparing your young person to leave school?**

- Careers advice at school needs to cater better for different needs, funding for respite care.

**12. Name the one thing that would make a real difference to preparing disabled students?**

- Independent person coming to school with knowledge, so schools put all their energy into teaching.
- Job support to begin with at a new job.
- For those without jobs, worthwhile activities to build greater independence.

**13. Name one thing that the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust could assist with?**

- An independent advocate who can help to get access to and coordinate services - a mediator between the parents, school, other services – they need disability and agency knowledge – need one service with the right staff for each different situation - contact families at an early stage to get the transition process going and as required – a free service – provide support the whole way through the process.
- Information: A resource/information database that parents could access as required – a booklet - expo - a one stop shop that shares information through a database of information and clients so no one falls through the gaps - we need to know more about the process, funding, who and how to access this step by step as we require it, so we don't get overwhelmed - posters and information in units so we have ideas in the back of our minds.
- Programmes that can teach social and life skills and provide support to do this - this would need to be available from a young age right through until after a person has left school.

**14. Would a mentoring programme for parents/primary caregivers be useful?**

- There was some support for this. However, some felt 'Parent to Parent' already provides these services, so any new developments should build on these existing services and not create duplication.
- Some felt mentoring programmes sometimes don't work because parents don't want to be seen as not coping – group meetings where parents can be matched up may work better.
- Use each other as sounding boards and get information from each other – *'not the only one'*.
- Need some categorising so the matches work well.

### iii Focus Group with School Staff

#### 1. **What transition support and guidance do you provide disabled students?**

- Upland Unit, Hillmorton High School: Programme for 18-21 year olds – provide part time work experience in a variety of places - important to think about why the student is being placed with a particular employer (eg. if for social inclusion ensuring the student is there at morning/afternoon tea to socialise with people) - the more time a student spends in one place the better – employers resist to begin with, but when they have a better understanding then they are very positive - one work experience may lead to an employment opportunity - many different employers are involved – often they are nervous to begin with but once visited then OK - cold calls are made to employers that match interest/ability of students - big employers least likely to take a student, smaller employers better.
- Papanui High School: Programme for 18-21 year olds - have contacts with supported employment agencies (eg. Catapult Employment Services) – school staff new to transition coordination – use personal contacts/experience of students, parents, coordinators – good for parents to see what is possible – work experience could lead to a position, but don't want to raise hopes – students (like all teenagers) want meaningful work - some work experience is boring – external transition services need to teach about funding for the future – we try to match abilities with jobs – some students are independent (eg. catch a bus) - social interaction is important, they need to feel valued - need input from employers – lifeskills very important, but haven't enough staff to provide one on one support - we need to spend more time in the community to increase the number of contacts available.
- Ferndale School: Programme for 16-21 year olds – do Duke of Edinburgh award, so do voluntary work in a service industry and focus on following a task from A to B - work experience through personal contacts – support students going to CPIT for work skills courses – teach students about using the bus, shopping, etc - some work experiences not successful for health and safety reasons – some employers not prepared for the students and have no specific tasks for them to do, so watch other people do tasks - important students learn about shopping, preparing meals, catching buses, etc as a job will probably not be for 5 days - need social skills/ability to manage leisure time, fitness, etc.
- Halswell Residential School: Transition/Residential Programme for 14-16 years olds from anywhere in NZ – students with challenging behaviours - ORRS funded students encouraged to return to their previous school when they leave – Non ORRS funded students who don't go back to their old school are found work placements – learn to bus independently – in a villa to encourage independence – given money for entertainment depending on employer feedback - some work fulltime or at the weekend – careful students not exploited – providing adequate support is an issue as only 1 transition staff member – OSH requirements can be a problem – 3 liaison teachers throughout NZ working with families – many students want to work on farms, but don't have numeracy/literacy skills - when students leave and go home the reality is that there is often no ongoing support – give support for as long as possible – some students end up with NASC agencies or get 'lost' - links with Avonmore/Salvation Army programmes – without the correct support it is easy for these students to get involved with the wrong groups.
- Mairehau High School: Programme for 18-21 year olds - work experience often through personal contacts – various students with very high/high support - need lots of school support – use workskill/computer skills programmes at CPIT/Salvation Army – work experience is good while the support is there, but when it is removed it often falls over – links with CCS Disability Action, Catapult.

#### 2. **What does this preparation involve?**

- Most transition planning occurred through Individual Education Plans (IEP):

*“IEPs give the chance for everyone to discuss transition – students/families, etc have an input into creating dreams - when we first started working with high needs students the parents/caregivers didn't have high expectations, but they do now as they see others succeeding with work experience – Chris Ruth Centre has helped a lot - families know there is a next stage – parents worry that some students will have their expectations raised at school and then be disappointed - \$18,000 per year for supporting students with very high support needs is too little to be effective when they leave school and some students are not funded at all! - realistically need \$46,000 per person per year to offer a day service like the Chris Ruth*

*Centre to train staff, have therapists, etc – need professionals to give proper support to students and train up non-trained staff - problems arise when the funding suddenly goes”.*

*“IEP done, CCS come and visit student, career path is looked at, students do CVs, learn social skills – works well - want to get life skills programme going – important that students learn from experience - good to work with them as a group, but need to get parents on board to individualise and provide reinforcement of their learning – need a pooled resource transition pack - sometimes the parents don’t want the students there when doing a IEP about transition“.*

*“Parents are invited – get students talking with their parents – done in their last year, but not earlier enough, needs to start at 16 – slowly happening - work experience should start earlier, but depends on the individual - good to keep the junior students mainstreamed, but harder as they get older. It has to be what is best for them – need a lifeskills programme - MSD funded agencies have come on board such as CCS, Catapult, Blind Foundation - students are identified at enrolment as to whether they are going back to school or tagged for transition in the last semester”.*

*Have a service plan – four IEPs meetings during their stay – all services are listed – recommendations are made and the plan is followed - tick off achievements – if a career is wanted then focus on that – start at pre-visit with goal setting.*

### **3. Who is involved?**

- Students, parents/primary caregivers, school transition staff; personal contacts of school staff, families, friends; CPIT, Avonmore, Salvation Army; employers; Catapult Employment Services, CCS Transition Coordinators; those associated with Duke of Edinburgh Award and community services – buses.

### **4. What would the ideal framework for preparing disabled students to leave school look like?**

- Transition Planning: Important to have big dreams/expectations – there is a tendency to err on the side of caution - *‘took 2 years to convince parents of CPIT course, had a good outcome”* - acknowledge everyone has a valued life - more transition support for schools (eg. supervision, help for work experience) - from 16 years change the name of IEP to ITP (Individual Transition Plan) and transition becomes the primary focus of the meetings.
- More Information about Transition Options: Parents have pre-conceived ideas – both parents and transition coordinators need more education as to what is available - develop a pooled resource transition pack that goes to all schools - students and parents visiting services.
- Programmes to Support the Development of Life and Social Skills: Important students learn these skills as a job will probably not be for 5 days, so need social skills and ability to manage leisure time, fitness, etc - students should learn these skills from having the experience (actions speak louder than words for the students and their parents) - need reinforcement of a student’s learning at home.
- More Funding: Research to get proper funding - if funding was increased then options would increase - increase resources to support students transitioning.
- Government Funded Community Participation Activities and Support
- Support with Getting Employment: Educate the employers more!
- More Supported Accommodation: Important students can learn to be independent – particularly for students with physical disability.
- Advertisements to Change Attitudes

### **5. What makes this preparation hard?**

- Parental Concerns: Many parents don’t want students to leave school - they feel secure in the structured school environment – hard for them to accept and take responsibility for change, especially if the necessary support is not there - parents are scared of what they don’t know - some parents don’t want the student involved in transition planning - when we first started working with high needs students the parents/caregivers didn’t have high expectations and were reluctant to give false hopes. They do now as they see others succeeding - they want to focus on academic achievement; we need to convince parents lifeskills can be more important than academic skills.

- Concerns About Existing Day Services: When parents are taken round and shown services they see some sad sights - not enough staff, not an inclusive environment, not accessible – this is in contrast to the structured school environment – at some day services people sit all day - activities are limited compared to school - SAMS says they are doing a great job.
  - MSD Transition Services: MSD funding various transition agencies - parents don't know who to go with - inexperienced staff supporting schools with transition - leads to varying degrees of success.
  - Lack of Information about Transition Options: What's there when the students leave school? - there is not much for students with physical disability.
  - Life and Social Skills: Lifeskills important, but we haven't the staff to provide one on one support - low numeracy and literacy skills.
  - Support and Funding for Community Participation: Providing ongoing support difficult because of the low number of school staff available for supporting students with transition and in the community - some students may get employment, but have no social support available.
  - Funding: If funding was increased then options would increase - \$18,000 per year for supporting students with very high support needs when they leave school is too little and some students are not funded at all! - problems arise when the funding suddenly goes - how can agencies do a good job when there is only funding for the student's last year – if funding withdrawn students go backwards – huge amount of politicking to get funding – Non ORRs funded students get left behind with no support.
  - Employment: Can only work in a voluntary capacity in some places because need qualifications - many disabled students with high support needs don't have the academic ability to get qualifications – some students want to work but they are not ready to take instructions
  - Work Experience: Some work experience is boring - not successful for health and safety reasons - some employers not prepared for the students - work experience is good while the support is there, but when it is removed it often falls over.
  - The Lack of Supported Accommodation: Some young people are put in old peoples homes - difficult for those with very high support needs – some don't have trained nurses anymore so staff don't have adequate skills to provide support – worries about the high staff turnover – workers are not paid or supported enough, so don't attract qualified staff.
- 6. At what age should disabled students start to prepare for life after they leave school?**
- Most school staff recommended between 14-16 years, but it depends on the student.
- 7. How do you bring parents on board with transition planning?**
- Show by example – sell hard to the parents - tell the parents this will happen.
  - If the parents come up with ideas, it is important to try and meet their expectation if at all possible.
  - Understand where parents at - school is secure; parents are scared of what they don't know.
- 8. Name the one thing that would make a real difference to preparing disabled students?**
- Need someone to coordinate services and support needs - need a transition service that starts earlier, then follows the student through and continues to offer support to build trust and rapport.
  - Day services where those that can, can and those who can't have meaningful activities.
  - Need something that is a continuum of school experience and meets a range of needs.
- 9. How could the WFT assist the preparation of disabled students for life when they leave school?**
- Research: To get more funding, to find what's happening elsewhere and how successful programmes like Avonmore, Salvation Army and tertiary education are for ORRs/Non-ORRs funded students.
  - Information: Transition expo - website – give information to schools, students, parents, etc.
- 10. Is there anything else you would like to say?**
- The students who participated in the student focus groups gave positive feedback about the project to school staff and their parents/caregivers.

#### iv Focus Group with Agency Staff

##### 1. **What transition support and guidance do you provide disabled students?**

- CCS Disability Action Transition Services: Provide a holistic service with employment experience being a part of it – look at further education options and community participation (eg. catching a bus) – link with youth groups – have mentoring scheme which is seen as part of the transition process – support the families as well as the students – work on an individual basis.
- Chris Ruth Centre: Provide a more specialised service – clients have very high support needs – schools and families are involved – schools give advice through IEP – emphasis on students getting to know Chris Ruth Centre to smooth transition – originally set up to take graduates from Upland Unit but now also work with Allenvale, Waitaha and Ferndale Schools – Upland Unit students have a unique relationship with the centre because of the history and close working relationship – students from other schools usually come later.
- Kaleidoscope: Not a big player – most are ACC funded – 8 or 9 school aged clients who have no funding but work with them anyway - ACC has good attitude as they see if they don't help now there will be a bigger problem later - interested in seeing how Kaleidoscope can work with other agencies – try to build confidence - have a library and computer training facility that Mairehau use each week – it could be used more.
- Skillwise: Fairly new – working with one student – have a community integration focus.
- Canterbury University: New team of 5 – want to build and consolidate service – limited contact with schools - only really work with students coming to the university – want to have a liaison team forming a relationship with the schools – really helpful when students come to the campus early so can develop an individual programme.
- Catapult Employment Services: New to transition this year, MSD contract – funding a big issue – working with 10 schools – there is a much higher need in the sector than funding can support, particularly with Non ORRS funded students – have a client based system.
- Ministry of Education: Transition is a key focus area for the MoE – in Dunedin transition is part of a project which focuses on restructured learning environments post secondary schooling - in Christchurch the MoE is considering how more effective transition processes might impact on outcomes in the medium to long term for students who are moving out of residential school settings back into the community - the philosophy of the MoE is to integrate special education.

Transition is the biggest problem facing health and disability – working with schools - it is important to get people thinking earlier – getting guidance counsellors to have a disability perspective – one size doesn't fit all - working with a third party such as Catapult is a good way.

- Helen Anderson Trust: Started with a MSD transition pilot - didn't offer enough so now act as a broker to other services – Christchurch has a huge group of services that want to work together – we go into schools and get to know the students to see their capabilities, work with their teachers to tailor an individual programme - we look outside of services (eg. work experience, etc) - the collaboration between services is excellent.

##### 2. **What does this preparation involve?**

- IEP process allows us to build up rapport with students – important to get to know the student – let them experience a variety of courses or work experience – only work with students in their last year – too late, need to start earlier say at 13.
- Sometimes the students only want a job – with supported employment it is important to get the balance of support correct - being upfront about the situation allows the attitudes to change and the natural supports to grow.
- There is an expectation that students will do it for themselves - if they don't try how do they know what their ability is - every student must have been given a chance – potential to fail allows success.

### 3. Who is involved?

- School transition staff, MSD funded transition services, employers, parents, students, community services – buses, CPIT.

### 4. What would the ideal framework for preparing disabled students to leave school look like?

*“Important to have family support programmes, collaboration of agencies and access to services within the community – concentrate on strengths rather than disability and aim for continuity of support”.*

- Transition Planning: There is nothing wrong with putting students outside their comfort zone, but they need to be able to move from stage 1 to stage 2 then 3 rather than expect them to jump from 1 to 5 - important to concentrate on ability, but need to be realistic about disability - keep realistic: aspire to worthy goals so don't persist when it is not in the best interests of the individual - when students have an IEP the goals should be written down each year and support given - collaboration– work together - transition planning needs to be different for different students (eg. ORRs vs Non ORRs funded).
- Improve Coordination of the System: Need family workers to work with parents and their issues – youth workers only work with the students – important to link in with other agencies to help whole family - should transition be taken away from IEP, more student driven - Where do Non ORRS funded students get their necessary support?
- Parent/Primary Caregiver Support: Parents often have no or too high expectation of their child – we need to help them find the middle ground - parents need to be shown how students can succeed - fear of stepping forward - actions speak louder than words - A solution would be to work with the parents in a group so they can learn from each other.
- More Information About Transition Options: Work with the parents to get the services and resources they require to be comfortable with transition - have stories and information about how students with high support needs can achieve and available services - regular expo (every 6 months) with stories and information for the parents and students - a database to let parents know of services that could help - a parent evening to inform what is available
- Programmes to Support the Development of Life and Social Skills: Work on increasing confidence levels from 13- 14 years, so better prepared to transition later - Social aspect within schools needs to be improved. If disabled students don't have the necessary social skills they will miss out.
- More Funding: Want to avoid sudden changes due to funding issues – people need time to cope.
- Government Funded Community Participation Activities and Support
- Day Services: Needs a continuum of services.
- Mentoring for Students and Parents
- Employment: Awards scheme for the most inclusive employers - more support for the employers to change their attitude
- Staff Development: Careers counsellors floundering with disability – provide training
- Advertisements to Change Attitudes
- Improve Attitudes: Look at how to get parents on board and build higher expectations - integration in schools: increased exposure helps to improve attitudes towards disabled students
- Monitoring Transition Outcomes: Schools should be evaluated on where the students end up after 2 years – could be a component of the ERO report - there is lots of potential for schools to improve.

### 5. What makes this preparation hard?

- Parental Concerns: Many parents have had to work “*bloody hard*” to get where they are – school is a safe place – funding is significantly reduced after they leave school – the parents are very afraid, they are getting older themselves – state of shock and therefore afraid to change - a solution would be to work with the parents – many parents believe that decisions are often made by people with no experience or knowledge of the situation.

- MSD Transition Services: Only working with students in their last year is too late, need to start earlier say at 13 - why was there a change from working with students in the last 2 years of school – it was much better for getting to know students.
- Lack of Information About Transition Options
- Funding: Families have to spend a lot of their time putting pressure on Government to get adequate funding for individuals with very high support needs.
- Negative Attitudes: Lack of resources often gets blamed, but social attitudes is a bigger problem – employer/ family attitudes need to change, but this is hard to do - careers counsellors floundering with disability, too hard basket! - students may get a much better deal in one school than they would in another due to the principal's attitude towards disability - disability not as valued as other minority groups.

#### **6. At what age should disabled students start to prepare for life after they leave school?**

- Most agency staff recommended between 14-16 years, but they made the point that it depends on the student:

*“Start around 13-14, if you leave it until 16- 17 years then you are trying to close the gap once the horse has bolted”.*

*“Most 13- 14 year olds don't know what they want to do so it is better to leave transition planning until 16. Best to let them have a go – try various work experience”.*

*“Career development needs to be around exploration – hard for young people to set realistic goals – start around 13 to gain skills such as catching a bus to give a level of independence - computer skills also important”.*

#### **7. How could the WFT assist the preparation of disabled students for life when they leave school?**

- More Transition Information: Expo - get transition information out to the schools, parents, students - develop a website to pool information - disseminate information about what successful schools are doing to inform other schools - collation of success stories with various disabilities - students that have left school come back to inform current students, parents and school staff.
- Coordination: Get more transition services into schools - build collaborative partnerships - have a couple of people whose job it is to work with the families/students - talk to principals to let them know what is in it for them.

## **7. National and International Best Practice Guidelines for the Transition of Disabled Students**

Prior to completing this stocktake, Grant Cleland completed a review of available national and international literature on the transition of disabled students. This highlighted the following key points:

### **i Ministry of Education**

#### **Special Education Policy Guidelines**

These policy guidelines include this Special Education principle relevant to transition:

7. Young children and students with special education needs will have access to a seamless education from the time that their needs are identified through to post- school options.

They also state that this principle will be visible in practice when:

- 7.1 Admission and transition procedures enable young children and students to move successfully from one education setting to another, or to a workplace.

The guidelines also outline these National Education Goals which are also relevant to transition:

1. The highest standards of achievement, through programmes which enable all students to realise their full potential as individuals and to develop the values needed to become full members of NZ society.
2. Equality of educational opportunity for all NZers, by identifying and removing barriers to achievement.

#### **Ministry of Education Creating Pathways and Building Lives Project (CPaBL)**

This is a Ministry of Education project aimed at building a sustainable school-wide approach to career education. The key student outcome for the CPaBL project is *“leading to a smoother transition to further education, training and employment”*.

It is interesting to note that this project does not specifically include disabled students; but includes other at risk groups – Maori, Pasifika, refugee and migrant students.

The CPaBL project is taking a whole of school approach, so in some schools there may be disabled students involved. Prior to contacting the interested schools, the project team decided not to specifically include disabled students in the early part of the project. However, when the findings are rolled out the project team may look at the impact on the disabled students, but there is no guarantee of this.

Baseline data gathered from the 100 schools who are involved with this project highlights that:

- (a) Principals believe career education meets the needs of senior students effectively, but they are less positive about the provision for junior students.
- (b) Principals identified the following areas requiring improvement - adopting a school-wide approach, integrating career education across the curriculum, staff awareness and education, parent involvement, planning and tracking outcomes and links with the community.
- (c) Other findings included:
  - Schools usually allocate only a small amount of time specifically to career education.
  - The amount of time tends to increase with each year level.
  - Career education is usually incorporated into the social studies or health curriculum and mostly starts at year 10. The baseline data indicates that national guidelines recommend starting at year 7.
  - About half of the schools provided transition for gifted, talented or special needs students.
  - Careers staff generally do not have many opportunities for professional development.
  - Few schools have education goals, actions and targets relating to career education or analyse trends.

(d) The following key actions should occur:

- Use baseline data to identify student needs, including the needs of specific groups.
- Establish desired student outcomes at each level and for different groups.
- Check whether career education meets the needs of all students.
- Design programmes based on student need and outcomes.
- Look at ways of involving parents/whanau.
- Identify staff needs for professional development.
- Establish and measure indicators of effectiveness.
- Plan and implement a self-review process and make adjustments.
- Report on outcomes and identify areas requiring further development.

## ii Ministry of Social Development

### Guidelines for Transition of Disabled Students

In October 2006 the Standards and Monitoring Services (SAMS) was contracted by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to provide this transition guideline relating to disabled students.

This contains similar findings to those outlined in other research. This guideline:

- (a) Indicates in North America, Europe and Australasia the emergence of a new generation of disabled young people who have no desire to participate in the traditional “sheltered” work. In NZ transition services are provided in various ways and have meant different things to different people.
- (b) Includes a real focus on the self determination of disabled students within the transition planning process. The aim of MSD funded Transition Services is to achieve increased participation in employment; and/or increased participation in their communities. MSD funds transition services for the last year of school for ORRS funded students. In many countries, programmes commence 3 or 4 years before the individual leaves school.
- (c) Consists of key transition service principles, values and components; student/family expectations and provider standards for these transition services. Much of this information reflects other national and international literature reviewed as part of this process.

### Ministry of Social Development Youth Transition Services (YTS)

Youth Transition Services (YTS) is a programme that has been developed in partnership with the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs. This is part of the shared central and local government goal that: *"all 15-19 year olds will be in work, education or training or other activities that contribute to their long-term economic independence and wellbeing"*.

These services are available in fourteen regions in the North Island. At a national level there is a National Advisory Group that guides YTS service delivery and development.

The Ministry of Social Development is currently undertaking an Outcomes Evaluation of YTS through its Centre for Social Research and Evaluation. This is due to report to Government at the end of June 2008.

Preliminary findings suggest that the critical factors that appear to contribute to the achievement of successful outcomes for young people involved with YTS services are:

- YTS coaches developing quality one-to-one rapport with each young person.
- Tailoring services to individual needs.
- Allowing YTS to be responsive to each community's characteristics produces the greatest buy-in.

As part of the development of these services, various reports have been commissioned by Ministry of Social Development. For example, the *Youth Transitions Report Series 2003: Executive Summary: Key Findings on Youth Transitions* includes key factors that can have an impact on successful transition.

This report indicates that:

- (a) A large group of youth spend a considerable period of time inactive between the ages of 16 and 21 and this has an impact on their ability to transition.
- (b) Improving educational attainment is a significant first step. Effective interventions include:
  - High quality and intensive preschool education and home visiting programmes.
  - High quality teaching.
  - Effective schools including high expectations for all pupils, leadership, practice-orientated professional development, a focus on central learning skills, monitoring student outcomes.
  - Increasing pupils' extracurricular involvement at school, mentoring, study and personal support.
  - Coordination to ensure provision of a wide range of services.
  - Workplace learning in the final year(s) of schooling.
  - Follow-up services that keep in touch with school leavers to prevent them "falling off the radar".

### **iii Review of Other National and International Literature**

Research, various literature reviews and projects have been completed in relation to transition of disabled students. This information provides the following best practice framework. Much of the focus group feedback reflects this framework.

Where a point has been cited by various sources the number of times is included in brackets. 'Section 9 - References' includes the various sources this information has been obtained from.

### **General Transition Findings**

- (a) Transition planning should start to occur no later than the age of fourteen years.
- (b) People involved in transition planning should include: The student, their parents/caregivers, teachers, transition coordinators, vocational specialists, external disability support staff/advocates, guidance counsellors, funding representatives, adult service providers and peers.
- (c) Secondary school transition programmes should be integrated within the structure of general education, rather than as a separate, parallel programme.
- (d) One of the big questions is who should coordinate transition planning? Schools or transition staff from an external agency? Disabled students and parents/primary caregivers in the 'Young Persons Deciding Their Own Futures Project' in Christchurch recommended transition staff from an external agency. They felt they were in a better position than schools. Transition coordination is very important.
- (e) Indicators of effective transition planning include:
  - Students and parents are the primary decision makers. (3)
  - There is commitment and involvement of relevant school staff.
  - Non school agencies/community resources assist with transition.
  - The curriculum offers preparation for all areas of life.

### **Barriers to Transition Planning**

- (a) Researchers have expressed serious concerns about the lack of involvement of young disabled people in transition planning advocating they should be engaged in actively determining their own future goals.
- (b) Research also indicates that further education after leaving school can increase opportunities for young disabled people to secure employment. However, it is evident that there are major barriers for young disabled people seeking to move into further and higher education.
- (c) Barriers include: lack of knowledge about further education options and funding sources; social isolation from peers; attitudes and exclusionary criteria of colleges and universities.
- (d) Many researchers find that young disabled people are not consulted about their preferences or interests and parents/carers and/or professionals control decisions about their futures.

- (e) Disabled students and parents/primary caregivers in the ‘Young Persons Deciding Their Own Futures Project’, identified these systemic barriers within some schools in Christchurch:
- Insufficient funding, resources, services to coordinate transition and support students in schools.
  - Some students are not taken seriously or being taught things other students are taught.
  - Students and parents/carers are often not able to make an informed decision about transition.
  - Staff, students, families lack information on disability supports for tertiary study and employment.
  - Some staff lack understanding of current disability issues/philosophies, student needs and support.
  - Work Experience: Some students wondered what skills they were learning and felt exploited.
- (f) There is a real need to provide information and support to disabled students that opens the door to a wider range of inclusive community based options. Preferred options are often unavailable.
- (g) The experience of a young disabled person preparing for adult life is often one of a struggle with systems that seem only to lead to dependence and few choices. Families often consider the transition from school to adult life as a time of risk when the need to protect and care contradict the feelings of wanting their loved one to be independent and free to experiment (Dobson and Jay 2000).

### **Person Centred Planning**

This should form the basis of transition planning. The control is in the hands of the student and family, asking them to determine the future direction themselves. This is at odds with traditional approaches of educational teams formulating an IEP plan for or on behalf of the student.

As most young disabled people have IEPs at school, transition planning often becomes integrated into the IEP process. Some international literature is critical of efforts to integrate transition planning into the IEP process because the focus on transition is limited and young disabled people and their families are not equally involved as participants and decision-makers in the process.

### **Partnerships**

Transition planning should involve developing partnerships with providers of services such as supported employment agencies. Involve representatives from these and other services for 2 years before the young person intends to leave school. School personnel often report a lack of expertise and knowledge of available adult services or options for disabled students.

### **Involving Students**

- (a) Getting a disabled student involved in their transition planning is really important. Students need to be involved in choices, decision making, problem solving, goal setting and attainment; encouraged to communicate their wants, to complete and evaluate tasks, take risks, to think about safety.
- (b) There are various barriers to student involvement – staff/family perceptions about the students’ competence to make decisions, student motivation which is often the result of the student’s lack of control over the process and the complexity of the education planning process.
- (c) Disabled and non-disabled students have similar hopes and dreams. Research gathered as part of the ‘Young People Designing Their Own Futures Project’ suggested disabled students:
- Access community based activities (e.g. work experience, non school courses) while at school, so they get used to life outside school and there isn’t a huge change when they leave school. (2)
  - Know about their rights and about how to advocate for themselves (or where to get support).
  - Be encouraged to be as independent as possible. (3)
  - Are fully involved in determining and driving their transition process. (3)
  - Be given lots of information about the range of options available to them. (3)
  - Have the same access to opportunities that all students have.

## **Involving Families**

- (a) Families have a pivotal role to play in the transition to adult life for their son or daughter. Families are often the only sources of consistent emotional, practical and financial support throughout and after the transition process. They should be involved in transition planning and their views should be taken into account. Families also have their own support needs when their son or daughter moves into adult life.
- (b) Families need support and advice about how best to support their son or daughter, acknowledge their competencies and independence; and encourage self-determination.
- (c) Families should be:
  - Fully involved in determining and driving the transition process. (3)
  - Given information about the range of options available to allow truly informed decisions. (2)
  - Encouraged to use their own networks to explore options for their child when they leave school.
- (d) Parents see transition as not just a period of school to work, but as a major family event that signifies a total life change for all concerned. (2)
- (e) It is common to accept families' input over the individual wishes of the disabled student.
- (f) Parents identify these barriers to transition: waiting lists for services, lack of social networks.
- (g) Families face dilemmas with transition eg. wanting opportunities for independence whilst assuring health and safety needs are met.
- (h) Parents often find further education options 'safer' than employment. We need to broaden ideas of meaningful daytime occupations.

## **Students with Intellectual Disability**

- (a) Parents of those with intellectual disability also want real choices for their son/daughter. (2)
- (b) Transition planning is not just about work, it is also adult education, social relationships, supported living, and community participation. Transition planning is supposed to be positive. Young people with an intellectual disability must also be in control of their own transition process.
- (c) It is important that these young people learn self-determination skills - how to make choices and decisions for themselves. Researchers have found that being able to make their own choices and decisions helps people to have more positive adult lives.
- (d) The Donald Beasley Institute identified these implications of the research for NZ transition initiatives:
  - Transition from education to adult lives is more complex than is sometimes acknowledged.
  - One of the most challenging aspects of transition planning is fostering and aiding a transition toward socially valued, "adult" and stimulating roles (Mitchell 1999).
  - Transition planning needs to incorporate a range of options/activities - employment, adult education, social relationships, supported living, community participation and leisure. (2)
  - Planning is urgently needed for provision of quality transition services for all young people with an intellectual disability. Strategies need to be intersectoral eg. MoE/WINZ policy responsibilities.
  - Young people with an intellectual disability must remain at the centre of transition planning whereby their views, preferences and interests are taken into consideration.
  - Those working with young people need to be creative about developing processes which fully include them as active participants. A clear distinction also needs to be made between the transition needs of the young person, and those of their family.
  - Those who are self-determined, experience more positive adult outcomes. (2)
  - Vocational training within the educational setting should be accompanied by 'real' work experience.
  - Flexibility within the benefit system is necessary to encourage people into employment and to ensure they are not disadvantaged financially by seeking work.
  - Particular attention needs to be paid to those with high support needs.
  - Collaboration between all individuals and organisations involved in transition planning is consistently highlighted as critical to successful transition planning

## **Functional Curriculum**

Transition skills are integrated into the curriculum and they are practised at home.

## **Employment Ideas**

Supported employment should begin at school. Schools should develop links with employers. Having vocational education programmes or a staff member whose job it is to assist students to find employment is beneficial. There needs to be the development of cooperative links between employers, schools and post secondary education.

## **Community Learning**

It is important that students live the daily schedule they will have when they leave school – classes at polytechnic, work part-time, meet friends for social activities, shop at community businesses. This should particularly occur in the latter years at school.

If students stay in school past the age of eighteen, they should receive services in relevant adult settings. Some schools offer an off campus option as part of transition services. Community based instruction should be started between the ages of 10-13 years, rather than the typical 16-17 years.

## **Evaluation**

Schools need to evaluate the outcomes of their graduates in order to determine what is working and what needs to be changed. They should also evaluate the curriculum in terms of its age appropriateness and functional relevance.

Graduate follow-up surveys are one mechanism for tracking student outcomes. Students should be monitored for at least 3 - 6 months after completing the transition programme.

Feedback from students/families should be acknowledged and where appropriate incorporated back into the development of the transition service.

## 8. Conclusion

*“The experience of a young disabled person preparing for adult life is often one of a struggle with systems that seem only to lead to dependence and few choices. Families often consider the transition from school to adult life as a time of risk when the need to protect and care contradict the feelings of wanting their loved one to be independent and free to experiment”.*

*(Dobson and Jay 2000)*

This quote provides a general sense of how many involved with the focus groups felt about transition.

77 people participated in the focus groups about transition of disabled students in Canterbury, including:

- 26 disabled students
- 30 parents/primary caregivers
- 13 agency staff
- 8 staff from schools.

Feedback was received from people associated with a wide range of schools and with various support needs, including those involved with special units and high schools. Many themes were consistent across the focus groups and we now have a real sense of what would enhance transition.

In terms of the disabled students:

1. Most wanted jobs in open employment.
2. Many also wanted to live independently and to do other things - travel overseas, have income, buy a house, have friends, get married, have children, etc.
3. A ‘valued role in society’ was important and they saw employment would give them this.
4. There were some who wanted to do further study to get more skills.
5. Some were eager to leave school and saw this as a real opportunity to get a job and live independently. Other students had real concerns about leaving school.
6. Work experience was popular with many of the students.
7. Many of the students struggled with thinking about the additional support they needed to prepare and the barriers they faced with this preparation – *“I don’t know what else there is”*.
8. The following would enhance their transition experience – planning well before they leave school, support with community participation, career days/expo, trying jobs to see if they have the ability to do it, mentoring, someone to match their ability with jobs, support people for school and work.
9. Most wanted to start transition somewhere between 15-17 years.

There were some interesting contrasts between the feedback from disabled students and the parents/primary caregivers. Some students were eager to leave school and saw this as a real opportunity to get a job and live independently, while many of the parents/primary caregivers feared transition. One parent described transition as *“falling off a cliff”*.

Most students also wanted inclusive community based options such as open employment, while some parents/primary caregivers and school/agency staff placed more emphasis on the development of day services and life skills programmes.

The parents/primary caregivers needed the following to enhance their transition experience:

1. More information about transition options.
2. An independent advocate coordinating the transition services.
3. Continuity of the level of support they get at school.
4. Government funded community participation activities.
5. More support and funding for community participation.
6. More programmes to support the development of a young person’s life and social skills.
7. More day services which provide a half way step and involve other young people.
8. A buddy system or mentoring programme for the disabled students.
9. Parent Mentoring Programmes.
10. More support with getting employment for their young people.

In particular the need for more information about transition options, an independent advocate and programmes that can teach and provide support for the development of social and life skills; were the highest priorities for the parents/primary caregivers.

The feedback from school and agency staff highlighted additional needs:

1. More programmes to change the attitudes of employers and other people involved with transition.
2. More supported accommodation so disabled students can learn to be more independent.
3. They raised concerns about some of the parents/primary caregivers – “*Many parents don’t want students to leave - they feel secure in the structured school environment – parents are scared of what they don’t know*”. They stressed the need to try things to alleviate parent/primary caregiver concern.
4. Some school and agency staff were also concerned about the quality of work experience opportunities and the ability of current day services to meet the transition needs of the disabled students.
5. More coordination and information about transition options, plus further research were their priorities.

It was also evident that the support some agency staff were providing schools was meeting a gap.

Some parents/primary caregivers were criticised for the tendency to be cautious when it comes to transition. However, given that the young people they support are moving from a structured school environment to one they often know little about, this was not surprising.

It is interesting to note that the feedback from the parents/primary caregivers, school and agency staff focused on the development of life and social skills. There was very little emphasis placed on the development of academic skills.

The feedback from the focus groups highlight the following transition issues and solutions:

### **Age to Start Preparing For Transition**

Key Issue/s:

1. This should happen at a much younger age than currently occurs in most schools.
2. Many parents/primary caregivers were concerned that leaving transition planning until the last 12-18 months wasn’t sufficient time to get everything organised. This had an impact on transition success.

Solution:

- Most focus group participants suggested starting transition planning somewhere between 14-16 years. However, this depends on the individual needs of students.

### **Information about Transition Options**

Key Issue/s:

1. Students and parents/primary caregivers lack information about transition options.
2. They find it hard to get this information.
3. Some are therefore fearful of what they don’t know.

Solution:

- A transition resource/information database that they could access as required.
- Develop a website to pool information.
- A transition booklet, detailing all the support agencies, that goes to all schools.
- A regular expo to visit before they begin transition.
- Posters and information in special units so they have ideas in the back of their minds.
- Visiting services.
- Parent and student evenings to inform them about what is available.
- Have success stories and information about how students with high support needs have achieved.

- Students that have left school come back to inform current students, parents and school staff.
- Disseminate information about what successful schools are doing to inform other schools.
- They need to know about the process, funding, who and how to access this step by step as required.
- A one stop shop that shares information through a database of information and clients, so no one falls through the gaps.
- The information must be accessible and easy to understand for all students.

### **Independent Coordination of Transition Services**

#### Key Issue/s:

1. The system is very complicated and even some professionals don't know about all the services.
2. Some agency staff only focus on a specific area (eg. transition or employment), don't have or give the overview of all available services and also only sell their own services.
3. Needs Assessment/Service Coordination Services (NASC) are regarded as a gatekeeper for the Ministry of Health funding and therefore are not seen as being independent.
4. Some current agency transition staff lack experience.
5. Feedback indicates a lack of coordination between agencies and that some schools need to cater better for transition of students with different needs.
6. It is clear that the transition needs of some disabled students involved with the focus groups were not being met by the current transition system.

#### Solution:

- There needs to be one service to coordinate transition services in schools.
- A neutral advocate for students and parents/primary caregivers who can provide the overview of services, be contacted when necessary and follow them through the transition process.
- They need to contact families at an early stage to get the transition process going and as required.
- They need to act as a go-between; provide support throughout the process; be neutral (not providing other services); have a really good understanding of the available services, systems and processes; refer to a pool of experts; access and coordinate services; mediate between the parents, school and other services; have disability and agency knowledge; offer a free service and build collaborative partnerships.
- This service needs the appropriate staff for different situations.
- Look at new ways of providing transition services:  
Start earlier; have a specific transition planning process for all students rather than including it with IEPs; the process is driven by the student with the support of their whanau - person centred; it seeks to identify/overcome the barriers to disabled students, build external partnerships, offer information about transition options; the system develops life, social and academic skills from an earlier age and encourages the reinforcement of these skills at home.
- Transition outcomes are evaluated by tracking a sample of students through their transition experiences, starting early and following them through to post school life.

### **Ministry of Social Development Transition Services**

#### Key Issue/s:

1. Many asked why didn't MSD give the transition funding to one agency - A one stop shop would be much easier for students and parents/primary caregivers.
2. These services are only working with students in their last year – it is too late.
3. Non ORRS funded students are not getting the necessary support.

#### Solution:

- A one stop shop with neutral advocates that start working with students and their whanau from 14-16 years or when the individual needs of the student warrant this.

## **Development of Life and Social Skills:**

Key Issue/s:

1. Many disabled students in their final years of school don't have the life and social skills to transition successfully and be independent.
2. Many are left wondering how students will develop the life skills they need to leave school.
3. There appears to be little support to continue this development once students leave school.
4. Many schools don't have sufficient staff to provide one on one support to develop these skills.

Solution:

- Work on increasing these skills from 13- 14 years, so students are better prepared to transition.
- Increase support funding for schools.
- Reinforcement of a student's learning at home.
- More supported accommodation where these skills are developed.

## **Community Participation**

Key Issue/s:

1. There is not enough funding and support for community participation while students are at school and when they leave school.
2. Schools and agencies don't have enough staff or funding to provide one on one support for community participation. This has an impact on transition.

Solution:

- More support and funding for Community Participation.
- For those without jobs, there needs to be worthwhile activities to build greater independence.
- Schools building closer links with other services (eg. CPIT).

## **Employment**

Key Issue/s:

1. Some parents/primary caregivers asked which agencies support the students in employment.
2. Some students find it difficult getting jobs.
3. Negative employer attitudes.

Solution:

- More job support and funding aimed at disabled students.
- Educate the employers more!
- Enhance support with getting employment.
- More support/incentives for the employers to change their attitude.

## **Meaningful Work Experience**

Key Issue/s:

1. According to some focus group participants current work experience is boring and there are employers who are not prepared for the students.
2. Some work experience is good while the support is there, but when it is removed it often falls over.

Solution:

- Develop guidelines for effective work experience – this should be used as an assessment tool, be meaningful, develop work and social skills, etc.
- Build ongoing external and natural supports within the workplace.
- Work experience and jobs that lead to skill and career development.

## **Continuity of the Support from School**

Key Issue/s:

1. Students and their supports are moving from a structured school environment to one they don't know much about.
2. There is a lack of structure to create the pathways that students want when they leave school.
3. Some parents/primary caregivers are concerned about continuity of support and whether communication, life and social skills development and therapy services will continue. They are not sure what supports are available once a student leaves school.
4. Many of the day services have long waiting lists, so it is difficult for school leavers to get a place.

Solution:

- Earlier and more coordinated transition planning.
- There needs to be a middle step between school and the outside world.
- There needs to be a continuum of services that meets the range of needs when students leave school.
- From 16 years change the name of IEP to ITP (Individual Transition Plan) and transition becomes the primary focus of the meetings.
- Build more capacity in day services.

## **Improve Attitudes**

Key Issue/s:

1. When it comes to transition of disabled students there is a tendency to be cautious.
2. Some employer and family attitudes need to change.

Solution:

- Look at how to get parents/primary caregivers on board and build higher expectations – actions speak louder than words for the students and their parents/primary caregivers.
- More support/incentives for the employers.
- Help people find the middle ground – there is a fear of stepping forward.

## **Funding**

Key Issue/s:

1. \$18,000 per year for supporting students with very high support needs is not enough.
2. Families have to spend a lot of their time putting pressure on Government to get adequate funding for individuals with very high support needs.
3. Support funding for some disabled students appears to be significantly reduced after they leave school.
4. Some Non ORRs funded students appear to have little funding and support.
5. Many schools don't have the staff to provide one on one support. This impacts on academic, social and life skills development for transition.
6. Focus group participants spoke of the funding system being very complicated.

Solution:

- Research to get adequate funding.
- Increase funding so transition options and support is increased.
- Avoid sudden funding reductions – people need time to cope.

## **Professional Development for Transition Staff in Agencies and Schools**

Key Issue/s:

1. Some school and agency staff require more support with transition.

Solution:

- Supervision, help with work experience, provide training.

Much of the focus group feedback reflects the review of national and international transition literature for disabled students, completed prior to this stocktake.

This provides the following best practice framework for transition of disabled students:

1. The transition process starts to occur no later than the age of 14 years.
2. This occurs as part of a specific transition planning process, rather than through an Individual Education Planning (IEP) process. Transition planning often becomes integrated into the IEP process. International literature is critical of efforts to integrate transition planning into the IEP process because the focus on transition is often limited and young disabled people and their families are not equally involved as participants and decision-makers in the process.
3. The transition planning process is driven by the student, with the support of their Whanau. They are asked to determine their future direction - Person Centred Planning. Those working with young people are creative about developing processes which fully include the student as active participants in the transition planning process.
4. The young people are actively engaged in determining their own future goals. Their views, preferences and interests are at the centre of the transition process. They are actively involved in choices, decision making, problem solving, goal setting/attainment; encouraged to communicate their wants, to complete and evaluate tasks, take risks and to think about safety.
5. The transition planning includes the student, their whanau, teachers, transition coordinators, vocational specialists, external disability support staff/advocates, guidance counsellors, funding representatives, adult service providers and even peers.
6. External partnerships between the school and employers, supported employment agencies, post secondary education, other day and community participation services; are developed at least 2 years before the young person leaves school.
7. The transition programme is integrated within the structure of general education rather than as a separate and parallel programme.
8. The transition process seeks to identify/overcome the barriers to disabled students - staff/family perceptions about the students' competence to make decisions, a student's lack of control over the process, their motivation due to lack of control, the complexity of the process, including transition as part of an IEP process, lack of funding and support for academic, life and social skills development.  
These barriers are overcome by the student moving into further education, receiving meaningful work experience, employment, social relationships, supported living, and community participation.
9. The students and whanau are offered information and support that opens the door to a wider range of inclusive community based options.
10. The transition process helps young disabled people to learn self determination skills - how to make choices and decisions for themselves.
11. The transition process pays attention to all students – those with very high/high support needs, ORRS and Non-ORRS funded students.
12. A clear distinction is made between the transition needs of the young person and those of their family.
13. Functional transition skills are in the curriculum and practised at home.
14. Disabled students at school after 18 years old receive services in relevant/integrated adult settings.
15. The outcomes of the transition planning process are regularly evaluated - feedback from students/families at least every 3 - 6 months, graduate follow-up surveys to measure outcomes.

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