



Bradford & District Transition Study

Investigating the barriers to transition and identifying good practice in the district for transition into Key Stage 4 and Post-16 education, employment or training

A report prepared by Careers Bradford Ltd for the Bradford District Confederation Strategic Executive

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Title:

Investigating the barriers to transition and identifying good practice in the district for transition into Key Stage 4 and Post-16 education, employment or training

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The **rationale** behind this research is to ensure that young people have the knowledge and opportunity to be able to access, engage and achieve in appropriate provision both at KS4 and post-16.

The main **objective** of this research is to provide information regarding good practice to assist the planning and provision for young people going through transition at KS4 and post-16 in Bradford and District.

The **aim** of this report is to present the barriers to transition experienced by young people and education and training professionals in the district, whilst also detailing the existing good practice.

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Glossary

ASDAN	-Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
BDCT	-Bradford District Care Trust
CAMHS	-Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
e2e	-Entry to Employment
EMA	-Education Maintenance Allowance
FE	-Further Education
FLT	-Foundation Learning Tier
IIAG	-Impartial Information, Advice and Guidance
IFP	-Increased Flexibility Programme
ISSP	-Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes
JAR	-Joint Area Review
KS4	-Key Stage 4
LAC	-Looked After Children
LEAP	-Learning, Employment and Advice Preparation Team
LDD	-Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
NEET	-Not in Education, Employment or Training
PA	-Personal Adviser
PRU	-Pupil Referral Unit
PSE	-Personal and Social Education
SEN	-Special Educational Needs
SENCO	-Special Educational Needs Coordinator
WBL	-Work-based Learning
WWCB	-White Working Class Boys
WFSMB	-White Free School Meals Boys
YOT	-Youth Offending Team

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Executive Summary

Introduction:

The process of transition is a significant aspect of the current 14-19 education agenda. Developments are already in place to ensure that young people have a clear entitlement regarding options through the forthcoming 14-19 Online Prospectus for example, and progress regarding the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) and specialised diplomas also aims to ensure young people have the best possible chance to succeed on their chosen pathway.

However, particular groups of young people continue to drop out of education, employment and training to become NEET. Looking at the two transition stages where young people are at risk: Key Stage 4 and Post-16, this report presents the process, difficulties and good practice involved in the transition process.

Research Objectives:

1. Explore how young people view transition both into KS4 and into post-16 education, employment and training
2. Identify the barriers to effective transition identified by young people, teachers/tutors, support works and education managers across Bradford and District
3. Identify areas of good practice in transition
4. Consider the success of the Increased Flexibility Programme in Bradford and District

Chapter 2 details - Methodology:

A series of qualitative interviews with young people and education and training professionals comprised the main method of data collection for this report. Combined with desk-based research on good practice outside Bradford and District, and a particular evaluation of the Increased Flexibility Programmes run in Bradford and District, the research aimed to provide an overview of good practice and perspectives on the process of transition.

Chapter 3 - Key Questions:

-How do young people make decisions for KS4?

Young people approach their decision-making in Year 9 for their KS4 transition using 4 primary influences

- Enjoyment
- Perceived Ability
- Relevance for the future
- Advice and support from friends, family and teachers

-What are the barriers to an effective transition into KS4?

- Awareness of the long-term consequences of choices at KS4
- Constraints in the way options are made available and young people's awareness of these options
- Concerns over achievement in KS4
- Unrealistic expectations

-What are the critical success factors for transition at KS4?

- Well informed formal and informal support networks for young people
- Qualified practitioners offering advice and guidance relating to KS4 options
- KS4 option tasters
- Provision of clear information regarding the long-term implication of KS4 choices

Chapter 4 - Key Questions:

-Influences on the post-16 transition

Essentially the influences at post-16 mirror those found at KS4 particularly the influence of family. Financial reasons and the amount of travel involved also influenced a young person's choice for post-16. In addition, young people also based their choices on their expectations (informed or otherwise), of different qualifications, vocational areas and different providers and organisations.

-What are the barriers to transition into post-16 education, employment and training?

- Support mechanisms and influence
 - Lack of impartial information, advice and guidance, in particular for a "forgotten" group of young people on school roll but attending alternative provision paralleled by a focus of statutory support for those with special educational needs and the current focus on NEET reduction
 - Misguided advice accompanied by pressure from family
 - Lack of support from family to reinforce support given formally
 - Peer pressure
 - Questions surrounding the level of impartiality of support offered by teachers and tutors
 - Lack of formal guidance concerning linkage between formal and informal networks of support

- Availability of provision
 - Lack of choice in some types of provision
 - Lack of opportunity in the labour market for employment and placements
 - Fragmented programmes of study
- Partnership-working and collaboration
 - Insufficient and inconsistent sharing of data
 - Lack of linkage across formal networks to coordinate follow-up support for young people in transition
 - Perceived and actual conflicting agendas of providers leading to inconsistent partnership working and willingness to collaborate across the district
- Personal Needs and Vulnerability
 - Unclear career aspirations and unrealistic expectations
 - Lack of confidence and self-esteem
 - Lack of knowledge of financial implications post-16
 - General fears of a change in environment, people and routine – insularity and preference for the ‘host’ environment
 - Lack of motivation
 - Mistrust of education and support
 - Attachment/loyalty disorder of wanting to please support workers
 - Vulnerable young people

-What are the critical success factors for post-16 transition?

- Activities and approaches centred on the ‘real’ experience
 - Emphasis on holistic tasters for post-16 education and training
 - Mentoring
 - Mock results days
- Multi-agency collaboration (internal and external)
 - Open and honest partnerships between different agencies to overcome the “Trust” agenda
 - District-wide protocols for collaboration (identifying roles and responsibilities)
 - Focus on the young person
- Appropriate provision
 - Tailored induction
 - Appropriate/blended provision to blur the boundaries of transition
 - Flexibility in approach
 - Young person-centred rather than resource-led provision
- Supportive and trusting relationships with young people
 - Partnerships of support with young person at the centre
 - Continuity of support and follow up to increase retention
- Young person – centred planning and management

Chapter 5 – A Focus on one transition activity

The IFP places a high emphasis on collaborative working between schools and post-16 providers and aims to diversify the curriculum at KS4. Ultimately it aims to improve transition into education and training post-16. The data presented regarding intended and actual destination data for those participating on IFP compared to the general cohort indicates a link between participation on IFP and transition into post-16 education at training at college. Interviews with young people currently attending IFP at the three colleges in Bradford show an appreciation for the real experience gained in vocational activities and college and in some cases the direct influence this has had on their intended career choices and post-16 intentions.

However, the emphasis within IFP of multi-agency collaboration between schools and providers was found to be both its principle success factor where this was effective, but in addition it's downfall where this was inconsistent. A "trust agenda" between schools and colleges, lack of communication and lack of data sharing persisted according to some participants and although collaborative approaches are improving, consistency across the district has yet to be seen. It is concluded that IFP should not be seen in isolation as a transition activity or solution to collaborative working, but its principles and good examples should certainly be used and seen as good practice. IFP should be part of a 'package' of activities alongside a 'package of support' developed individually for each young person's individual need.

Conclusion

Transitions into KS4 and post-16 education, employment and training can be a challenge for many young people. Formal and informal influences, structural factors determining choice and availability of provision, IAG, personal needs, and issues surrounding vulnerability are all found to play a role in determining the success of transition.

Every young person faces a transition process unique to them, however it is concluded that many of the factors that encourage transition are not consistent across the district. Key success factors recommended as good practice include open and honest partnership-working, provision of IAG, involvement of informal networks and an emphasis of young person-centred approaches.

1. Background

1.1 Policy Context

“Successful transition through the education system into further work, education and training is central to current United Kingdom Government policies, designed to promote social inclusion as well as economic prosperity through the development of skills”
(Smith et al, 2005, p.1)

The subject of transition is an integral part of the new 14-19 Agenda in education and training and it is essential that all young people have the knowledge and opportunity to be able to access, engage and achieve in appropriate provision both at KS4 and post-16. The forthcoming Online Prospectus of options 14-19, an increase in school capacity for offering vocational education and the development of the foundation learning tier all form part of the current agenda in education and skills. However not all young people succeed in achieving their potential and some individuals and vulnerable groups are likely to ‘drop out’ of the system, despite aims of the 14-19 agenda and the current Connexions service which aims to help young people access an appropriate path of provision.

The main stages at which young people might find themselves at risk include the transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 and from compulsory schooling into post-16 education and the post-16 labour market. In fact, to specifically aid transition, the curriculum at Key Stage 4 is under review to ensure learner needs are met and appropriate progression routes identified (LSN, 2006).

This study provides a much needed analysis of the issues, difficulties and good practice around transition from the points of view of both young people and education and training professionals in the district.

At this time of change in the 14-19 agenda, the movement of the Connexions service to the local authority and the impending Joint Area Review, this research is both relevant and timely. It looks at both the Key Stage 3-4 transition stage and the post-16 transition stage to identify barriers and success factors of initiatives currently in place in Bradford and District. This report should serve as guidance for both strategic planning and practice in transition management.

1.2 Bradford: post-16 destinations and vulnerable groups

During transition periods, there are a number of key vulnerable groups of young people who may be at an increased risk of 'dropping out'. These young people may have a range of different support needs and not fall into one category as such, however they are commonly referred to as potential NEET (not in education, employment and training). Although referred to as a group, it must be noted that young people identified as potential NEET face widely differing problems and have in some cases a number of different support needs. In this section, the NEET or potential NEET group in Bradford is presented to give some context to its use in the study and its position in Bradford District.

Table 1.1 below shows the NEET rates for Bradford compared to the rest of West Yorkshire and England. It clearly shows the district continues to have one of the highest rates in West Yorkshire, with 9.8% of all 16-18 year olds identified as not being in education, employment or training in 2006. Work continues however, to reduce the proportions of young people who are NEET and the table shows considerable progress has been achieved.

Table 1.1: West Yorkshire 16-18 Adjusted NEET (%)

	% 16-18 year olds NEET			Progress made	
	2004 (Nov 04- Jan 05)	2005 (Nov 05- Jan 06)	2006 (Nov 06- Jan 07)	over the last 12 months	since 2004
ENGLAND	8.0%	8.2%	7.7%	-6.5%	-4.2%
West Yorkshire	10.3%	10.6%	9.7%	-8.7%	-6.1%
Bradford	13.1%	11.6%	9.8%	-16.1%	-25.5%
Wakefield	10.6%	11.6%	10.6%	-9.2%	-0.3%
Calderdale	9.7%	9.5%	9.7%	2.3%	0.4%
Kirklees	9.0%	9.6%	9.7%	1.4%	8.0%

Source: DfES (2006)

Within the NEET group, there are particular factors that act as identifiers for potential NEET and these categories are presented in table 1.2 below. Young people belonging to these categories are much more vulnerable to becoming NEET, and particularly vulnerable at stages of transition. Categories with particularly high NEET rates as shows below include young people attending Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), supervised by the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and those who are cared for by the Looked After Children's Services.

Table 1.2 Significant groups vulnerable to NEET

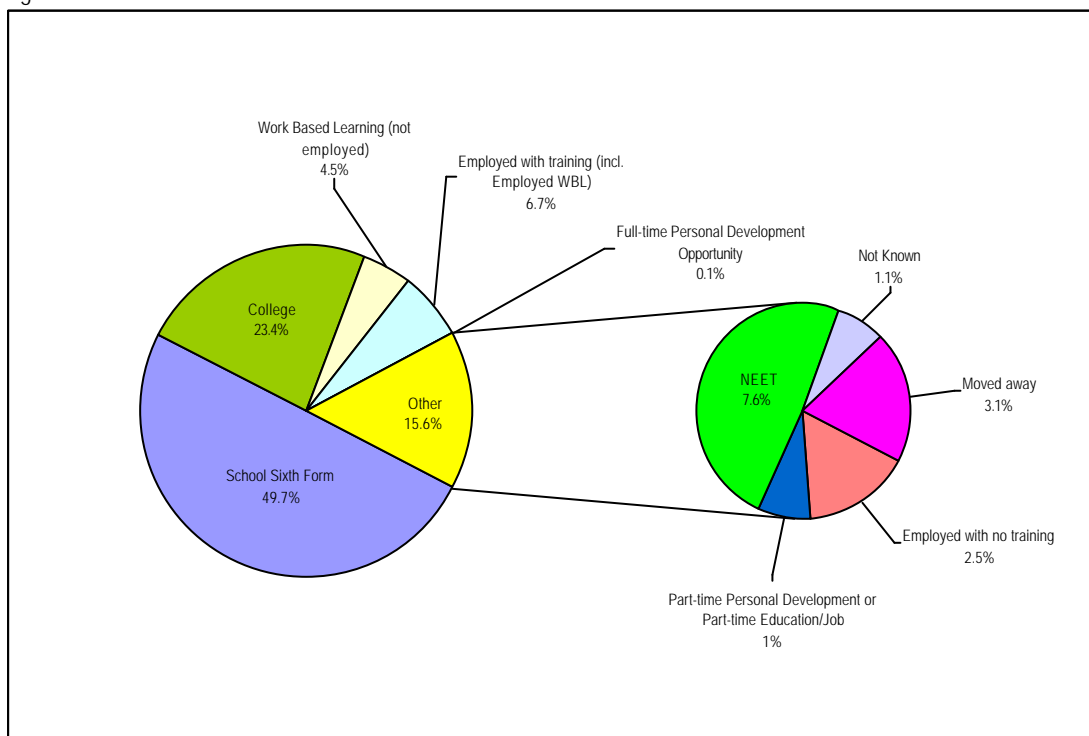
Category	% NEET Nov 2005	% NEET Nov 2006
White Ethnic Origin	9.2%	8.6%
Boys	9.8%	8.2%
PRU Pupils	51.6%	40.9%
No local school identified	12.9%	13.4%
Looked After Children	30.4%	17.4%
YOT supervised	35.3%	40.2%

Source: Careers Bradford (2006)

To put post-16 transition into context within Bradford District, the following chart offers a snapshot of destinations in February 2007 for the 2005/06 school cohort. It gives a very clear picture of the outcome of post-16 transitions in the district. The majority clearly entering school sixth form (49.7%) followed by almost a quarter going to College and a much smaller proportion in work-based learning and employment with training. What the chart does not indicate however, is whether these destinations indicate a successful transition for a young person. The NEET group is perhaps evidence of there being an ineffective transition, but what the statistics do not answer is whether school sixth form was the most appropriate pathway for a young person.

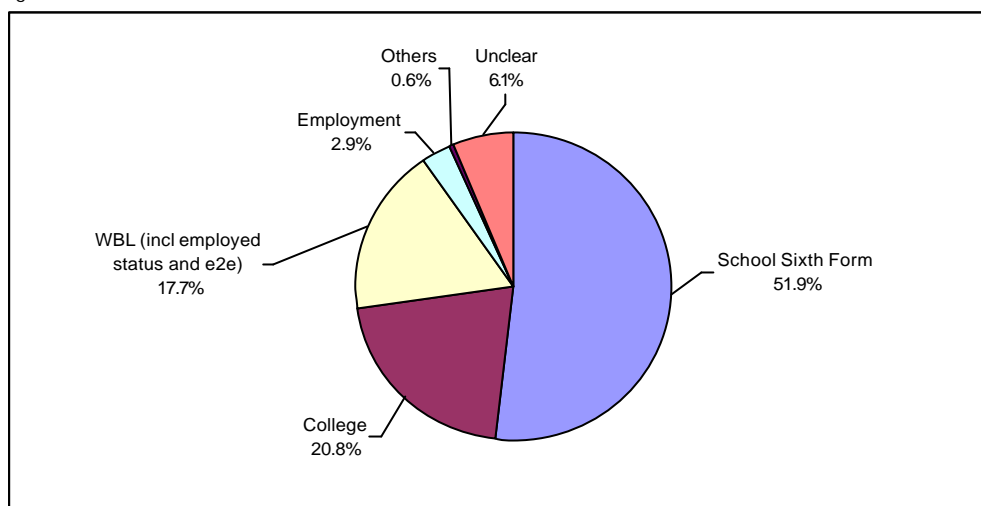
Figure 1.2 helps to show where transition might not have been successful for some young people. The percentage of young people who intended to go to school sixth form before they finished Year 11 was actually 51.9%, which is slightly higher than the actual numbers, whereas the percentage of young people who intended to go into college was actually lower than the actual, at 20.8%. The area with the starkest difference is work-based learning, which 17.7% of young people actually intended to go into, whereas a much smaller percentage actually did so.

Figure 1.1: Destinations as at Feb 07– All Schools of 05/06 Cohort



Source: Careers Bradford (2007a)

Figure 1.2: Intended Destinations of 05/06 Cohort



Source: Careers Bradford (2006)

This report aims to gain an insight into the process of transition for young people. It explores transition from the point of view of young people and education and training professionals and support workers not only at post-16 but also transition into Key Stage 4. The research includes the views of young people specifically identified as potential NEET including Looked After Children (LAC), those Leaving Care, those supervised by YOT, young people with special educational needs (SEN), young people at risk from exclusion and those attending alternative provision as well as those in the general school cohort.

1.3 Decision-making and Transition: a review of the literature

A review of the relevant research about young people's transition highlighted a number of factors regarding how young people make decisions at pre-16 transition points and external factors impacting upon their transition, whilst also giving an element of context for this particular study.

The first point to note is the extensive range of literature available regarding transition for young people with a statement of special educational needs or who are looked after through the care system in particular. Good practice in this field is extremely well documented (see Polat et al (2001); East Together (2006); ODPM (2005); CSCI (2007) for example). Essentially however, it is argued here that a young person faces the same core set of barriers and influences as they go through transition regardless of whether they have a statement of SEN or not. The reasons young people with SEN for example face a slightly different transition is due to the additional changes in their lives at this point. Vulnerable young people with varied support needs face a 'multiple' transition where, in the case of SEN for example they are not just moving from school to education or employment but also to adulthood and maturation which also includes a fundamental review of the support services

and care around that young person (Polat et al, 2001). For this reason, the statutory level of support during transition is comparably higher than that of the mainstream cohort of young people.

Young people and decision-making

From the literature it is possible to identify a key set of influencing factors for transition which centre on themes of personal perspectives, support, information and provision/options:

- PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

Particularly around KS4 decision-making, young people have been found to choose subjects based primarily on their *intrinsic* or *extrinsic* value (McCrone, 2005). In other words, young people are heavily influenced by their enjoyment of a subject or its perceived usefulness to future careers.

Young people's perceived ability in a subject has also been found to heavily influence their decision making for KS4 options (McCrone, 2005).

- SUPPORT

Provision of information, advice and guidance:

Smith et al (2005) argue that access to high quality information, advice and guidance that is tailored to meet young people's needs is crucial to achieving targets. However targeting information and advice to young people at these times of decision making in Year 9 and Year 11 is found to be particularly difficult due to the varied needs of each young person (Blenkinsop et al, 2006). The importance of timely, up to date and impartial information and guidance however, is a particular success factor that needs to be in place for young people to make appropriate and effective progression post-16 (Webb, 2006). The links between choices and careers guidance activities are found by some young people however, to be less relevant to decision-making in Year 9 compared to Year 11 (Blenkinsop et al, 2006).

Influence of teachers:

Most research on decision-making refers to the influence of teachers on young people's choices (see Blenkinsop et al, 2006; McCrone et al, 2005; Dobbs et al, 2004). The ability however, for teachers to provide accurate information was a question raised in many of the reports, as well as a tendency to advise young people to choose an academic route rather than a vocational one (Dobbs et al, 2004). The influence of teachers was also found to directly link in some cases with the personal factors of young person's enjoyment of a subject, or perceived ability (Blenkinsop et al, 2006).

Influence of parent/carer/family:

In most reports this was found to be the factor valued the most by young people. Teachers for example in one study felt that young people juggled advice from a number of sources but ultimately based their decisions on the views of their parents/carers (Dobbs et al, 2004). The influence of parent/carers or family can be a barrier to effective transition however if they are ill-informed of the options available to young people or encourage unrealistically high expectations (Semple et al, 2002; McCrone et al, 2005). As Dobbs et al (2004) note, without a positive parental role model, or encouragement from home though, it is difficult for teachers to motivate young people. In a review by McCrone et al (2005) however, research regarding the extent of parental influence was divided and in some cases was found to decrease throughout KS4. Whatever the influence, it is concluded that steps need to be taken to ensure parental advice is well informed and appropriate for transition stages.

Influence of school ethos:

Linked to the above point, schools in which a community ethos was found to be prominent were successful in engaging and informing parents and the wider community to aid transition (Dobbs et al, 2004).

- INFORMATION

The importance, of early and comprehensive information regarding choices was noted by Webb (2006) and in particular the impartial manner in which it is offered as a success factor for transition.

- PROVISION/OPTIONS

Research by Blenkinsop et al (2006) and McCrone et al (2005) presented the dissimilar ways in which post-16 options were presented in 11-16 schools compared to 11-18 schools with sixth forms. It was found that the openness of an 11-18 school for example regarding the number of post-16 options available was directly linked to the amount of competition they faced. For Bradford, a district where nearly every school has a sixth form or shared sixth form this influence could be particularly strong. However it should be noted that a lack of awareness regarding options is not solely down to the existence of a sixth form (McCrone et al, 2005).

Participation in vocational programmes pre-16 at post-16 institutions, such as Increased Flexibility Programmes was found to directly influence young people's chances of progressing onto post-16 studies and choosing the right course (LSN, 2006).

For those young people who belong to any one of the vulnerable groups identified in section 1.2, in addition to being impacted by the factors just described, there are a number of further issues that can influence their decisions and transition. Young people who are Looked After for example are likely to experience wider problems associated with social exclusion including

unemployment, teenage pregnancy, homelessness or drug and alcohol dependency (DfES, 2006). These factors are all likely to heighten the influence of those already listed, such as personal aspirations and motivation, and socio-economic influence of their background and subsequent family support. Young people with a statement of SEN face a different set of influences which centre around financial issues, family influences and from a personal perspective often very low expectations and self-confidence (East Together Regional Transition Group, 2006).

In summary, young people are argued to be influenced by a number of factors, from their personal enjoyment of a subject to an indirect influence by their socio-economic background, to how their school chooses to present their post-16 options for example. In an extreme view of transition and decision-making, some research questions whether for many young people, a 'real' choice does not essentially exist as so many constraints are present¹. What was clear from the literature is that the influencing factors are often very much interlinked, and dependent on each young person's experiences both in and out of school.

Given the present 14-19 Agenda reforms that aim to enhance choice and increase personalised pathways, the possibility that young people at present still do not have 'real' choice raises many questions about the transition process. The objectives of this research aim to look at transition in Bradford and District, in order to identify barriers and good practice to ultimately improve the process of transition for all and ensure that young people make the right choices.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. Explore how young people view transition both into KS4 and into post-16 education, employment and training
2. Identify the barriers to effective transition identified by young people, teachers/tutors, support workers and education managers across Bradford and District
3. Identify areas of good practice in transition
4. Consider the success of the Increased Flexibility Programme in Bradford and District

1.5 Report structure

- Chapter 2: This section outlines the methods used in this study.
- Chapter 3: Transition into Key Stage 4 is explored in this section, including influencing factors, barriers and good practice.

¹ See McCrone et al (2005, p.22) and reference to a literature review by Unwin (2004) that notes due to associations with vocational qualifications such as low attainment and lower social class, most young people do not have a real choice in Year 9.

- Chapter 4: This section looks at the Post-16 transition, and similarly presents the process including both barriers and suggested good practice.
- Chapter 5: An evaluation of an established transition activity is presented here: the Increased Flexibility Programme. Using participant data, official Ofsted evaluation and results of primary research in Bradford District, the IFP is evaluated in terms of its success for transition.

2. Methodology

Qualitative interviews were the primary method used to identify barriers and good practice in transition:

2.1 Scope and method of primary data collection

Qualitative, informal, semi-structured interviews were carried out with a range of young people and education and training professionals in Bradford and District between May 21st and June 27th 2007. The interviews aimed to explore the process of transition by asking participants about their experiences and activities they have taken part in/information read or shared/organisations contacted for example. The interviews also looked at different perceptions of transition and particular examples of good practice and barriers to transition in their opinion and experience. A list of generic interview questions can be found in Appendix 1 pp77-78, however as the interviews were only semi-structured, the opportunity existed for some issues to be explored in more detail depending on the participants personal experiences.

Through the range of institutions, professional staff and young people included the scope of the research will including those young people particularly vulnerable to NEET and disengagement from education and training, as outlined in the previous chapter:

- Young people with LDD
- Looked After young people
- Young people supervised by the YOT
- Young people entitled to Free School Meals, particularly boys
- Young people attending alternative education provision

Qualitative interviews were chosen as the main method for the research because it is thought to really understand the process of transition for young people some explanation and discussion would be required. This is especially true when researching young people who went through the process of transition almost a year prior to interview, who will undoubtedly not have evaluated the whole process, the activities they took part in or the support they received before. In comparison, a quantitative approach with a questionnaire and larger sample numbers would be too prescriptive and not fully explore the process each young person went through.

Each interview was relatively informal, and sought to explore a number of themes rather than specific questions in order to be able to respond to the areas each young person wished to speak about. For confidentiality reasons, the names of young people were not recorded, merely their gender, year group, provider and course (where relevant). In many cases an element of explanation and prompting was necessary with young people when asking

them what helped them decide on a particular pathway post-16, or how they chose their Key Stage 4 options in Year 9. The research was careful not to lead participants in any way, but where a young person was not sure, it is possible they simply answered what they thought the researcher wanted to hear (this was particularly evident interviewing a small number of young people in one alternative curriculum provider).

Depending on the type of provider participating, interviews with young people were conducted on a one to one basis with the researcher, however in some cases, particularly alternative provision; a member of staff was present during the interview, which may have influenced the young person's answers.

Young people from Years 9 to Year 12 were proposed to be included in the research to gather perceptions on their experiences whilst going through the process of transition and retrospectively for those who had engaged with KS4/Post-16 education and training. However, due to the timing of the research, Year 11 and 12 students in mainstream schools were difficult to include in the study due to them being on study leave or in examinations at the timing of interview visits.

At the same time, some staff were unavailable for interview due to invigilating exams and other commitments. These factors therefore resulted in a wider range of young people being included in the study.

It was planned to interview staff of similar position at each organisation, but the research had to be flexible in their approach to each, and in some organisations more interviews with a wider variety of staff were possible, whereas in others, not all planned interviews were able to take place.

The Appendix (pp.79-80) has full details of the research participants, but a summary of the can be found in Figures 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 below:

Figure 2.1.1: Distribution of young people participating in study

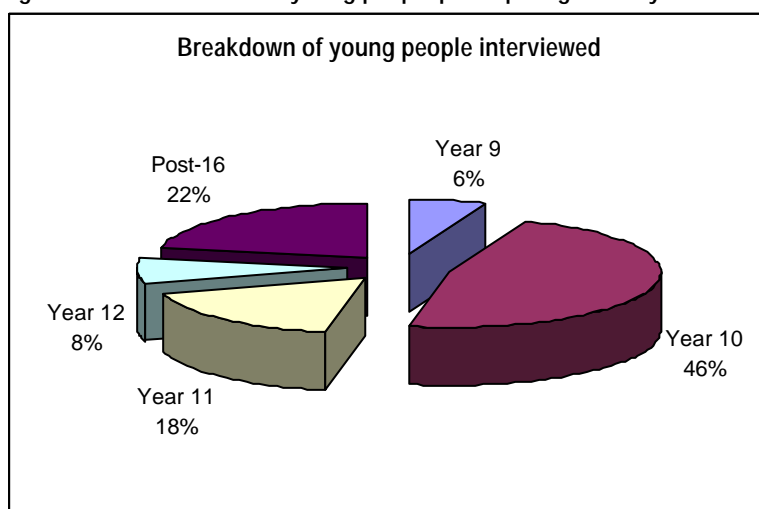


Figure 2.1.2: Participating organisations

- 3 mainstream secondary schools with sixth forms including an all girls school
- 3 main colleges in the district
- 1 training provider
- 2 alternative education providers
- 1 Pupil Referral Unit
- Youth Offending Team
- The Looked After Children's Team and Leaving Care Team
- Careers Bradford/Connexions Service
- 1 Special School
- Education Bradford

The results of the qualitative interviews were analysed to pull out core themes of barriers to transition, but also to identify common areas of good practice to present in this report and subsequent Good Practice Guide.

It is recommended that this qualitative study is not used in isolation, but would benefit from comparison with longitudinal data to test its validity. The comparison was not within the scope of this particular research, but the benefits of widening the evidence base, particularly for local qualitative studies when looking at choices at 16 is recommended (Payne, 2003). This study is intended to provide an insight into transition in Bradford and provide detailed case studies of good practice rather than representative views.

2.2 Desk-based study

A review of the relevant literature about decision-making and transition was undertaken to establish a picture of the barriers faced by young people and education and training professionals in terms of transition. This was also used to identify models of good practice outside of the district.

A limitation of this study is that there will inevitably be examples of good practice in the district that the researcher has missed. It is noted that this report is not a comprehensive list of good practice but rather a report exploring transition through primary research, accompanied by a sample of good practice case studies identified through desk-based study and through the primary data collection.

2.3 A Focus on Transition: Increased Flexibility Programme

To support the primary data and wider literature search, an evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programmes in Bradford District is presented. In section 1.3 pre-16 vocational provision was cited as a particularly important and

successful activity to engage vulnerable young people in education and training post-16, and is therefore explored in more detail in this section. The evaluation, in providing a detailed look at an established transition activity within the district, seeks to evaluate the effects of it on transition for those who have participated. A number of different methods were used for this section:

Firstly, by using data collected from CORE+ on the destinations of young people who participated on the IFP in 2005/06, the success of IFP in Bradford district at increasing the numbers in post-16 education and training can be evaluated.

To provide context and linkage with this transition study, the views of young people currently on IFP were also taken into account with relation to their transition into Key Stage 4 or prospective transition into post-16 education, employment or training. 7 young people listed in section 2.1 were on IFP at Bradford, Shipley or Keighley College, and were therefore asked an additional set of questions to ascertain the perspective and influence of the programme on their transition journey and to be used as case study material for the evaluation. Using this information will give an insight into how successful the activity has been at ensuring their transition into appropriate courses.

Data from the CORE+ database held by Careers Bradford was also used to give a profile of the types of young people participating in this provision. This data, alongside the views of college tutors teaching the provision, college support staff, PAs and school staff it is possible to evaluate the barriers and success factors of this particular activity.

3 KS4 Transition: Process and Good Practice

In order to explore how young people feel about the transition into KS4, participants in Years 9 and 10 were asked to explain what subjects they chose for their options, why, and what types of people or activities helped them make that decision. It was found that a combination of different factors often influenced their choice, and barriers at this transition stage centred on the selection of subject they had to make including whether it was the right one or whether it would be difficult to study.

Year 10 student, Jack², explained how he chose his IT GCSE: “everyone was telling me I need IT as a key skill...you need it for most jobs and anyway, I like it and I’m good at it”. About his choices in general, Jack concluded “there’s no point picking it if you’re no good at it and don’t like it”.

3.1 Factors influencing KS4 choices

The research found that the **influences** on a young person entering KS4 can be categorised into 4 separate areas, which help to give an insight into how young people see and deal with this transition stage.

1. *Enjoyment*

The most common reason given for choosing particular options was how much the young person enjoyed a subject. Factors influencing enjoyment were varied, as the key comments below demonstrate.

Key Comments: **ENJOYMENT**

It’s fun
I love it!
I’m interested in business and art
I looked at what was involved and if I would enjoy it
I like science and geography, they’re interesting
I’m confident in drama, I’m a drama queen!
I like being creative in food technology
I enjoy working with cars and my hands
I’ve enjoyed history so far

2. *Perceived ability*

A young person’s perceived ability was also very important when choosing their options for KS4. To know they would do well in a subject often made them more confident they had made the right choice, as it alleviated the concerns surrounding performance for the next year. Advice from parents and teachers often tied in with the confirmation of a young person’s perceived ability in a subject.

² The names of the young people interviewed in this study were not recorded for anonymity; those specified in this report are fictitious.

Key Comments: **PERCEIVED ABILITY**

I'm confident and good at it
I get good grades and will do well
I've taken the subject before so I know I'm good at it
I got a high level in geography I'm good at it
I know I can do well in this
It's not relevant for the future but I will do well in it
Spanish is easier than Urdu

3. Relevance for the future

Most young people interviewed also made connections with future career paths when making their choices. This in some cases made the young person confident they would make the correct choice. In other cases this made the transition much more difficult as they were concerned about the implications of taking subjects just because they enjoyed them for example. As with perceived ability, this factor was often affirmed through discussions with family or teachers.

Key Comments: **RELEVANCE**

Whatever job you do you'll need it (ICT)
Business is for later on in life if I want to run my own business
Business is a good qualification for leaving school
I looked at the options book and related the subjects to my future
Health and Social Care is good practice for a medical degree
Business will give me good experience for the future
Most careers need IT

Case Study 1: KS4 Transition – Relevance of choice

Sam is in Year 10 and her reasons for choosing her options back in Year 9 have now changed as a direct result of her work experience earlier in the year. When she chose her options she wanted to be a midwife, so consequently chose applied science and health and social care. She also chose history because she was interested in issues about Hitler. Sam was very clear that she chose what she wanted and explained that she spoke to her friends, but at the end of the day it was her education and not theirs. In fact, Sam said she specifically didn't choose performing arts "because everyone was doing it". As a result of work experience at the end of Year 10, Sam would now like to work with children with learning difficulties through dance workshops. Consequently, Sam is now looking to study Performing Arts post-16. Sam did not seem fazed by her change of direction and still maintained she wanted to make a name for herself and not follow either friends or family. She pointed out she was not, for example, going to follow in her sister's footsteps and be a hairdresser, a profession she has grown up around.

4. Advice and support

For ability and relevance to be factors, young people often sought advice and support from others to reaffirm their choices.

a. Friends

Approximately half of the young people interviewed mentioned speaking to friends about their options. Many of them were however quite conscious of being influenced too much by their friends, and emphasised making a decision for themselves. In the cases where a young person did listen to their friends it was often because they were seen to know them well enough to give advice and rarely to follow them into the same options. Some key comments can be found below.

Key Comments: **INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS**

Friends were most helpful, we know each other well
I decided together with my friends
I spoke to them but I am not influenced. I go where I want to go from here
It was helpful talking to friends, a lot of them are doing ICT
I thought they would push me to do the same thing, so I asked a friend for advice who
didn't
My friends wanted to choose the same as them but I wanted to do something different
My best friend said do what you want to do
I did talk to my friends but they weren't as helpful as friends and family

The following case study shows how one young person ensured she made her own decisions and was not influenced by her family and friends. Relevance for careers did not factor as the young person did not have clear career aspirations, and she found the process neither easy nor difficult.

Case Study 2: KS4 Transition – Independent choices

Sara is in Year 10 and is not sure what she wants to do after Year 11. Her KS4 choices were based mainly on what subjects she was good at and which ones she enjoyed doing. Sara didn't find it a particularly difficult or an easy time, she simply said she took time to think about it a bit. She asked for help from her mum, who said Sara could do whichever ones she wanted. She also asked her friends but explained that she realised "I could copy them and be with them, but.....[might not be right for me]". Her form tutor was also very helpful for her, and gave her any advice she needed "they told me to stick to what you want to do and don't be influenced". The person most helpful though was Sara herself, she said it was easier to choose what she enjoyed. Sara chose textiles "I love sewing", IT because she likes working on PCs at home, RE so she can learn more about religion and Urdu, as it will be easy because she speaks it half the time at home. Sara found that the options book from school simply reaffirmed her choices and "everything just fitted".

b. Family

The influence of family for a young person, generally related to the affirmation of ability and enjoyment of subjects and encouraging an independent choice. Some young people also reported speaking to specific family members because of their perceived knowledge or experience within a subject. In a minority of cases, direct advice or influence on course choice was found. Whether this was well informed advice or otherwise, was not within the scope

of this study (parents were not identified as a sample group), but in these cases the young person placed a high value on their family's advice. Case Study 3 is an example of this type of influence, and the young person is still unsure of her choice in Year 10. In cases like this, where a young person shows some awareness of the relevance for the future, but is unsure of the right options, personalised impartial information, advice and guidance (IIAG) would perhaps ensure the young person makes the right decision for themselves and not just what their family wishes.

Key Comments: **PARENTS/CARERS – FAMILY**

My older brother is doing business and he says its good
I spoke to my older sister who is in the sixth form and she told me what she thought
were good
Mum wanted me to take history so I would have some writing work
My brothers and sisters said don't choose what your mates do
Mum and Dad said pick what you want to do, nothing too hard though
Mum said do what you want
My cousin and sister are doing their A-levels and I asked what would be boring, what
would be interesting. They said do something you'll achieve in
Mum advised me on good qualifications

Case Study 3: KS4 Transition – The importance of family advice

Miriam is in Year 10, and wonders if she made the right decision about her choices for KS4. When thinking about her choices Miriam was stuck at first and decided to discuss it with her family. Her brother was very helpful, because he had done some of the subjects before and they helped him. Miriam felt that as he was older and had already been through it he would be most helpful to her. He advised to choose business as she would learn more about business and it would help her in future. She also chose IT as her brother had said most jobs are to do with computers. She also chose Spanish, but because it was easier than doing Urdu. Miriam also discussed her options with a friend who said to do the ones she wanted and found easy. In addition, her cousins advised her that it was Miriam's choice. Miriam also spoke to her form tutor about business, for some advice. Now Miriam is doing her business she is both "happy and unhappy". Although she finds the lessons boring she knows she has learned a lot and often thinks that she could've chosen drama but then she knows she wouldn't use it, at least "with business I will know more".

c. Teachers

Most young people sought advice from their teachers in school, and this advice was commonly linked with their experience and knowledge both of subjects and of the young person's ability in it.

Key Comments: **TEACHERS**

My form tutor was most helpful, we talked things through and it explained a lot
My science teacher's a good teacher and I knew they would be teaching science next
year

I asked teachers at the pathways evening to see if I was doing the right thing
I spoke to teachers individually and they explained things better than the [options] book

She told me what I would enjoy and what would be difficult

I asked the Head of Business what would be involved in the course

My form tutor helped the most, not saying pick this or that but do what you think is
best

We had taster talks in lessons from the teachers

Perhaps lacking from the above influences is advice from a Connexions Personal Adviser or specific activities other than an options booklet or evening. In some cases where the interviews took place in the careers library, it was the first time the young person had even been to the room. For those whom this stage was a difficult time (as is explored in the next section), or who now find they are unhappy with their choices, impartial advice and guidance would have perhaps been useful. For Year 9's however, a Personal Adviser (PA) described the provision of information, advice and guidance is "inconsistent". Another PA explained, the Connexions Service and careers libraries are only introduced in Year 9, and sometimes even Year 10, as the main work must be carried out with Year 10 and 11's who are thinking about their post-16 transition. The emphasis on reducing NEET means that those in Year 9 who are struggling with their options and do not fall into groups such as special education needs (SEN), potential NEET or alternative provision must seek out their own advice or rely on that provided by the education provider.

3.2 Barriers and difficulties at the KS4 transition stage

Young people also identified a number of **difficulties** they had with their KS4 transition, which are linked in many cases to the factors influencing their decisions. Although the majority did identify some difficulties, it must be noted there were, and always will be young people who are simply unfazed by the prospect of transition at any stage. For example one young person described options time as "not difficult, I just read the list and then decided". The difficulties identified are presented below.

3.2.1 Consequences of choices made in Year 9

Some of the young people had a very high awareness of the effect their choices could have on their future careers and lives, and this often made it a very difficult choice for them. The case study below illustrates this point very well as the young person had a very strong awareness and concern for how her KS4 choices would affect her future and shows how a number of different factors and advice helped with a young person's transition.

Case Study 4: KS4 Transition - Long Term Consequences

Uzma is in Year 9 and recently chose her GCSE options. She got a “bit stressed out” wondering if what she chose would be for life and asked for help from quite a few people about her choices. She explained that she was also under pressure from her Dad who wants her to be a Pharmacist like him and take over the family business one day. However, Uzma feels she is not clever enough. To help her, Uzma spoke to one of her friends she felt would not push her to do the same subjects. She also spoke to her parents who advised her to “pick what you want to do, but nothing too hard though”. She also spoke to her Citizenship teacher to find out which subjects she would enjoy and which would be difficult. Most of all though, Uzma asked her cousin and sister who are both currently doing their A-levels to find out about which were boring subjects and which were interesting ones. They advised her to do something interesting and then she would achieve. When Uzma picked drama, a subject she loves and finds fun, she was still worried though because she was not sure if it mattered or not if she didn't use it in the future. Her teachers said no, and Uzma's mum was ok about it when she saw her grade in drama. Uzma's choices ended up being a mixture of things she liked and did well in (like Drama, Humanities and RE) and also ICT, which she found a bit interesting but knew it would be good for her in the future.

3.2.2 Constraints of the way in which options are made available

The way in which young people are guided through their options was referred to by both young people as a barrier to their transition. In some cases they made the direct link between their ‘band’ or ‘pathway’ and the options available to them and also explained that the choices they wanted were not always possible due to the combinations of subjects available for them. In one case for example, a young person had essentially picked the ‘lesser of two evils’, none of which he wanted to do at all. This difficulty was also expressed by a senior education officer, who explained that the KS4 offer was also found to vary from school to school and combined with the fact choices are heavily guided by schools, there is not a universal set of choices. A need for a KS4 curriculum that captures the needs of all levels, interests and learning styles was identified to enable effective transition. School Improvement Officers also reported a need for a strategic/political lead to encourage occupational options because at present it depends on the philosophy of the school. Channelling young people through pathways, they explained can be beneficial but can also leave young people with limited options.

The following case study shows how one young person, aware of the ‘band’ she was in, decided on her choices, after making two initial ‘option sheets’. This young person did not always make the links between her options and careers, despite the fact she states she would like to be a vet and shows a transition quite heavily influenced by her mum.

Case Study 5: KS4 Transition – Guided Choices

Ellie is in Year 10 and reflected back to when she chose her options in Year 9 in her interview. She found the process quite difficult because she wanted to do a lot of the choices available. In the end she did two “option sheets” and chose the one that would challenge her the most (rather than an option including French which she had already sat in Year 9) Ellie chose business studies because both she and her mum thought it would be a good qualification to have when leaving school, plus she explained she would like to start up her own business as a vet. She also chose IT, but for different reasons. Ellie had done IT before and enjoyed it and was confident she would do well. She also chose applied science and explained that she would have rather done triple science but was in the wrong band for this option. Ellie spoke to her parents and science teacher about her choices, but it was her mum in particular, who helped her see which were “good qualifications to have”. Her mum also advised Ellie to study drama part-time when she is older rather than at GCSE as it’s “hard to get into”. Ellie said she spoke to her science teacher because he’s a good teacher and would also be the one teaching the course in Year 10. Looking back, Ellie wasn’t really sure what to expect in Year 10, but thinks that speaking to the teachers really helped and suggested that it would be good to be able to have a day of each subject in Year 9.

3.2.3 Concerns over whether they will achieve in Years 10/11

This point is linked heavily to the influencing factor of perceived ability in choosing options. It has been shown also that advice given to young people from friends and family often centres on choosing subjects they will do well in. To hold up this factor so high when making a choice and to then not do well, was a fear expressed by many of the young people.

3.2.4 Expectations

Linked closely to the previous point, the expectations young people had of their chosen subjects varied, and where they were unclear, made the transition more daunting for them. For example, finding out which teacher would be teaching the course was important for most young people. Many also worried about the coursework and exam elements to a subject as they worried they might not do well with too many exams for example. School Improvement Officers also reported young people having unrealistic expectations of courses and what will be involved, for example choosing PE for the practical element but not understanding the role of the theory involved.

3.3 Good practice for effective KS4 transition

Using the influencing factors and identified difficulties, a number of **good practice principles** can be identified from the research into KS4 transition.

- 1. Ensure that parents/carers, families and teachers are well informed about the process and implications for KS4 transition*

What must be noted is that even in the relatively small sample of 19 young people who were asked about their KS4 transition, each had a very different story to tell, with a number of divergent influences and concerns. Some felt comfortable speaking to their teachers, whilst others to their parents and families. And while it is not possible to know how knowledgeable the parents/carers of all young people are, ensuring that both they and teachers are well-informed will ensure a more effective transition and decision-making for the young person. School Improvement Officers particularly emphasised the need for working with parents who currently see vocational subjects and the new diplomas, as a “lesser option”.

2. *Ensure that teachers are well informed to give advice regarding options and future implications if personalised IAG is not available for all students in Year 9*

The distinct lack of influence of IAG for young people at KS4 transition stage, other than in a minority of cases, and the high relevance of family and teachers for young people suggests that either increased provision for personalised IAG at this stage needs to be available, or families and teachers need to be more widely informed about the long-term implications of subject choice for KS4.

As the KS4 curriculum diversifies under the current 14-19 agenda reforms, and the 14-19 Online Prospectus develops as a tool to present each young person's options, care must be taken to ensure that the way in which this is mediated is efficient. If some young people feel daunted by the choice available now, then in the next few years this is likely to increase. Information about options must be given to young people in an impartial, and well-informed way for them to make the correct decision.

3. *Tasters of the options for KS4*
 - a. Doing KS4 work in Year 9 – this was mentioned in all schools by young people and staff as an effective way to ‘blur’ the boundaries of transition stages.
 - b. A day taster of each subject in Year 9 – suggested by one young person to help them make an informed choice
 - c. Off-site provision policy – suggested by one participant to open communication between providers and present young people's entitlement to support

If expectations are unclear due to a lack of knowledge about the subject, how can a young person make the right choice? When evaluating influencing factors such as advice from parents or teachers or taster activities, it is this ‘real’ experience or what is perceived to be ‘real’ that is crucial to a young person's expectation and importance placed on an activity or person. Included in the sample group for example, were young people who were on Increased Flexibility Programmes (IFP), and a stark difference in their process of choosing was evident in some cases. Those at Keighley College mentioned the use of tasters they had done at college:

"I knew I wanted to do construction but doing tasters helped me decide which to study. Did tasters every Monday afternoon for 3 weeks. Did painting and decorating one week, one week brickwork and one week joinery. It made me decide which one I wanted to do. I met the tutors, had a look around and had a go at the course."

"It was helpful cos I coulda thought joinery, and the trial days helped me see if I would like it or not. Helped me decide brickwork or joinery"

The knowledge of what they were going onto for these young people was much clearer, and an increased confidence in their choices was evident. With regard to courses run out of school, particular preparation is also needed to ensure consistency of support and obligation by the providers involved. Just as important as tasting the vocational aspect, an education adviser noted that young people also need to be clear what support they are entitled to, and providers need to be clear as to what obligations they have.

The number of suggestions made by young people interviewed in mainstream school regarding taster sessions indicates a need for more preparatory work in Year 9. Students in one school explained they had begun their KS4 work in some subjects already, such as Science and English; however for the 'new' subjects the blurring of boundaries was not so evident.

4. Information on the long term relevance of their choices for KS4 needs to be provided for young people.

Whilst some young people were very aware of this and consequently found their choices difficult, at the other end of the scale some young people perhaps didn't give enough thought to the relevance, instead explaining that they chose randomly or they didn't know why they made their selection. Most young people referred to an options booklet or open evening that helped them decide, however only two young people noted the use of a careers booklet or information about the requirements of their chosen career. This point was echoed by a Year Head who explained that they felt Year 9 students were not aware of careers and believe they do not need to know about it until Year 11, and also by a number of other teachers who felt it was difficult for students to learn about the long term view. It was found that the transition into KS4 does not have the same significance as post-16, however more emphasis should be placed on the change involved and the importance of choices. As one teacher explained "the teachers have different expectations [at KS4] but students don't see it [as such a change]".

3.4 Conclusion

Two main influences on young people's decision-making at KS4 were identified: their enjoyment of a subject and their perceived ability. Young people were found to look to family and teachers for confirmation of these influencing factors and their subsequent choices. However, inherent in these influences are a number of barriers identified as a heightened awareness or a lack of awareness of the consequences of option choices, a limited availability of options determined by 'bands' or 'pathway' groupings of young people prior to Year 10, worried about achievement and expectations. Principles of good practice to alleviate these barriers as much as possible include ensuring all those involved in transition are fully informed of the process and implications, ensuring teachers are fully equipped to offer advice and support, tasters of all KS4 options to ensure expectations are accurate and to provide information to young people regarding the long-term relevance of KS4 choices.

It must be noted that more often than not the young people did not recall the resources they had used in making their choices, such as certain careers books or specific events or activities with just the exception of the options evening. Further research would be necessary to investigate the effectiveness of particular resources and activities.

4. Post-16 Transition: Process and Good Practice

4.1 *Young people and their transition*

The young people who participated in the study who were able to comment on their post-16 transition were in Years 10, 11 and 12. Included in this sample group were young people attending mainstream school, work-based learning, alternative provision and the Pupil Referral Unit.

Essentially, the influences on choices and the way young people feel about their post-16 transition strongly echo those of KS4 which included the level to which they enjoyed certain subjects, the influence of family and friends, teachers, their perceived ability in a subject and also their perceptions about the post-16 activity or organisation.

The main differences between KS4 and post-16 are the change in influence of the Personal Adviser (PA), and the additional barriers caused by the prospect of leaving school (an issue not relevant for the majority of young people at KS4). To help understand the barriers identified by both young people and staff presented in the next section, the decision-making process is presented for each outcome of those interviewed below.

4.1.1 School sixth form

The majority of young people interviewed were attending school at the time, and, intended to stay on at their school's sixth form (echoing the intended destination data presented on p.14). Young people primarily cited reasons centred on familiarity as a reason to stay on in their school sixth form. Key reasons included it's proximity to their home, their familiarity with the environment, the teachers and fellow students. Also however, a number of expectations were also cited to explain their choice, such as the good choice of courses available, the high level of support they would receive or that it would be the same as school. Some key comments can be found below:

Young people in sixth form

Always wanted to stay in FE, lots of subjects to choose (young person in 6th form)
It felt weird at first but it didn't take long to settle in because I had friends here

Young people in Year 10

I'll get more help and support in the sixth form compared to college
I'll stay on in the sixth because I like the staff, will keep in touch with my friends, I'm
alright, not nervous at the moment
I know everyone here already and it's just 2 minutes up the road I'll settle in easier
I've not really looked at other options yet, it's not too difficult a choice
It's a bit scary moving form Year 11 it would be a bit weird at first, a change. I want to
stay on in sixth though and mum says its better to stay too
Will stay in the sixth form because it's close to home and my Granddad says its good
I've thought about the school sixth form, and it will be the same as school, no change
I'll need to think about things properly when I leave sixth form

It appears that for most of those interviewed, staying on in the sixth form did seem the easiest and 'safest' option with perhaps the expectation that it would be an easy transition. However, not all young people viewed sixth form in this way, as the following case study shows. The young person was worried about the change of environment despite the fact he is staying on at school.

Case Study 1: Post-16 Transition – Change of environment/influence of friends

Tom is in Year 10 and is not looking forward to after Year 11. He says he will be staying on in sixth form to do his A-levels as he is used to the environment and doesn't want to have to start over again, but he has heard that A-levels are really hard and he is worried that school sixth form will be quiet. He will not see his friend who will be leaving school, and the closer it gets the less he is looking forward to it.

In a stark contrast, the next case study shows a young person confident about entering the sixth form despite not having researched any other option, but indicating he would also like college. In this example, it is possibly the post-18 transition which dominates, rather than post-16.

Case Study 2: Post-16 Transition – Gifted and Talented

Robert is currently in Year 10 and very clear on his career path. Eventually he would like to do medicine at Nottingham University, and at the moment he is doing his GCSE's. Robert looks to go into the school sixth form after he finishes Year 11, because it is close to home and his Granddad has told him it's good, although he thinks he would like college as he could meet more people. Robert hasn't read any information about sixth form or college yet but is looking forward to sixth form. While Robert has not experienced any tasters, talk or visits for post-16, he has in fact been to visit a number of universities as part of Aim Higher.

4.1.2 Work-based Learning/e2e

Only a small sample of young people were interviewed who were on an e2e course at a training provider, and for two it had not been their first choice. Again this seems to be representative of the destination data presented on pp.14-15 which shows a greater proportion of young people entering work-based learning than intended to. Again, the familiarity and proximity to home was an influence in choosing the particular training provider, however feeling nervous about starting a new course and making new friends was common among those interviewed. The following case study helps to illustrate a post-16 transition that was not effective at first, but where the young person entered work-based learning.

Case Study 3: Post-16 Transition – into work-based learning

Raheela, aged 19, is due to start her NVQ level 2 in childcare in a week, but her transition from Year 11 has not been a smooth one. Raheela explained that she got caught up in a bad crowd at school and was heavily influenced by them when she decided to stay on in the school sixth form. She did 2 years in the sixth form, Health and Social Care in Year 12 and IT in Year 13, both of which she failed. For Raheela moving on was a big step and it took her mum nagging her to do it. Raheela did like school, but the influence of her friends meant she didn't do well. She found out about A&R Training as some of her friends told her about it but she also went to the Connexions Centre for advice. Now she is at A&R Raheela loves it, even though when she first started it felt a bit weird with new people, a new building, 'everything new'.

4.1.3 College

In the sample of young people interviewed, those considering college, or currently at college were mainly young people who were not happy at school or had not attended school for some time. For them, it was not necessarily a choice influenced by the provider they would be going to, but by their experiences at school. Those in the sample at college or intending to go to college were mainly vulnerable young people, including those attending the PRU, alternative provision or with SEN on an entry level course³. For some in fact, attending a school sixth form was not an option as their application had been denied. The box below includes some key points to show how the young people saw their transition to college. The influence of the college location, friends, school experience and taster activities all influenced their choices.

Potential NEET (white boy with free school meals)

I'm excited to leave school, find out new things, new experiences and get out

SEN

No-one wanted me to leave, I was their friend, but I was happy the teacher was driving me crazy!

I was picked on at school and happy to leave, but was quite nervous

Alternative provision/PRU

Don't want to leave, but looking forward to starting college as the environment and tutors there clicked for me

Most of my mates are at college so I spoke to them about it, I'm looking forward to staying on

College as a destination was also mentioned by a number of young people in mainstream school who were considering it alongside sixth form as a choice. The familiarity and existing knowledge of sixth form however, seemed to outweigh the appeal of college in most cases. Case study 2 also illustrates this.

³ It must be noted here that this is not representative of the whole cohort, but that in the small sample included, more young people identified as vulnerable happened to choose college compared to those attending school.

4.1.4 Employment

Employment was an option mentioned by only a small number of young people in the sample. The principle influences on young people making this choice were work experience, finance and family. For those who enjoyed their work experience, this played a major role in their decision making, both in terms of the occupational area and the element of working outside of a classroom situation. Earning money, paying bills and thinking about leaving home were also factors noted by some young people. Where family members were employed in a particular occupation such as motor vehicle repair or the armed forces this also had a high influence on their decision-making and how confident they were in their choices. Case study 4 is an example of a young person intending to gain employment whose decision is very heavily influenced by his family, and financial situation.

Case Study 4: Post-16 Transition – Employment

Family culture/influence

Gary is currently on alternative provision in Year 10, although he is still on the school's roll. He feels ready for when he leaves and would like to go into either the army or the police force. The army is a "family thing" Gary explained, as his brother was in the army and his Granddad was in the army, except for 2 years when Gary explained he had been in prison. Gary would like to "help", and wants to fight for the English country and he has already been to Army Careers with his mum, who he feels is supportive whatever he does, but she would rather he didn't go in the army and him stay at home instead. Gary has thought about Shipley College after speaking to his Nan as she wants him to have a career like his mum and Gary said he wouldn't mind going to Shipley College to be a PE Teacher eventually. Gary is worried though about leaving home and paying bills, so for him, that is another reason to go into the army as he knows about the pay.

4.1.5 Unclear aspirations post-16

For some, the concept of post-16 was something that had not been considered when the young people were interviewed. Reasons for this mainly centred on their feeling that it was too early to consider transition at the end of Year 10, or that even at 16 it is too young to decide. In general these young people were not worried about moving on after Year 11, and as a result could not explain about any preparatory work done for their transition and found it difficult to explain how they felt about it. The comments below and the case study help to illustrate how these young people view their transition. For the young person in the case study who is now at college it was still difficult to identify why his transition was not effective after Year 11 and he could not explain his reasons for going back to education and training. It is possible that some young people are simply not ready at 16 to make such a decision, and in these cases extra support either from a teacher or PA is essential.

Year 10 mainstream

Don't mind, not bothered about leaving Year 11 just want to do good
Not looked into it deeply
Don't know yet how I feel about leaving Year 11
Year 10 is too early to speak to anyone about it

Alternative provision

I don't want to leave [provider], at 16 you're too young to decide

Case Study 5: Post-16 Transition – unclear what to do when leaving school

Mark was quite happy when he left school 2 years ago, although he didn't know what to do. He had thought about college and school, but really didn't know what area to do. He also explained that his work experience got cancelled. For the first year after leaving school Mark explained that he just did nothing, until a leaflet came through the post about college, which his mum spoke to him about. Mark wasn't sure why it was at this point he decided to go into education and training, he simply said "well it had to be done didn't it so I got on with it". He wasn't bothered about coming to a college he hadn't been to before or didn't know anyone at. Mark is now looking forward to starting his apprenticeship next year. Looking back he said he would have liked to hear a bit more about the options available to him, and would have loved the chance to come to college in Year 10 and "try something out".

The young people interviewed for the study generally found it difficult to identify the barriers to transition directly, however by using the above influences and context in which they make decisions, a number of barriers do begin to surface. These include personal factors such as family influence, finance and travel but also expectations of college and sixth form for example. Also, some young people appeared not to feel ready to make a decision about their choices post-16. The following section explores the barriers to post-16 transition in more detail.

4.2 **Barriers to an effective transition**

As sample sizes were not significant in this study, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the barriers to effective transition across the district, the results from both young people and education and training professionals are combined. Where particular barriers were more significant for certain groups of young people or professionals this is noted in the text. What should be emphasised before considering the results below is the very varied nature of each young person's needs and experiences during transition. The study was intended to be an in-depth insight into transition; therefore it is unknown whether the findings are an accurate representation of the entire district.

To set the context for exploring the barriers to transition, an existing transition guide published by the Learning and Skills Network identified a number of principle barriers which are presented below.

Principle barriers to successful transition arrangements:

- Inappropriate or insufficient support for learners
- Lack of awareness of course and college requirements by learners
- Inappropriate initial assessment and results not used to best effect
- Learners being unfamiliar with the college environment and its ways of working
- Ineffective communication strategies between schools, colleges and their partners

Source: LSN (2006, p. 25)

4.2.1 **Support mechanisms and Influence**

1. *Impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IIAG)*

A lack of impartial careers support was cited by the majority of staff interviewed in the study, including teachers, support workers and PAs themselves. Most commonly however, it primarily concerned a particular group of young people commonly described as the "forgotten" group by participants. This group includes young people who are on a school roll, but educated out of school, resulting in a situation where the school has responsibility to provide careers education for that young person, and the PA allocated to that school has responsibility to provide IIAG. However, it was reported by PAs that difficulties exist in tracking these young people, and in alternative provision the level of support provided by school and the ability of the provider to offer this support was variable. Concerns for the effects of this unequal access on young people within alternative education providers were high, but in one particularly this resulted in staff actively discouraging extensive school involvement and support.

A number of influences on this particular issue were identified by participants including:

- the awkward position of the PA between the school and other provider in accessing the relevant information on young people to target their support where needed
- emphasis of the Connexions service on reduction of NEET and statutory requirements for those with SEN
- a fragmented and geographically diverse “forgotten” group in the middle who are difficult to access
- confusion over whose responsibility it is to provide this support
- lack of data-sharing in order for PAs to target particular young people

The interviews with young people attending alternative provision certainly echo the views of staff. Where a Connexions PA was not present at the provider few of the young people could remember receiving any careers advice and would recall speaking to their tutor or support worker instead. They were however aware of the Connexions Centres in the district. In comparison, those young people excluded from school, supervised by YOT or LAC each had an allocated PA.

In many cases it was reported that schools and other providers do try to offer advice themselves, however the question remains as to the degree of impartiality and expertise when this is the case.

2. Influence of the family

The previous sections have reported the high influence of the family on young people’s transitions, but this informal support can be a barrier, particularly if advice is misguided or pressured. Similarly, a lack of support from home to reinforce what is being learned with a provider or school was also found to affect transition.

Preferences for sixth form or perceptions of certain vocational areas or providers were found to be the most common barriers from family. Young people frequently mentioned their parents when explaining their intentions post-16 for example:

Year 11 attending alternative provision

“My parents want me to go to sixth form though as the think college will mess me up and there are bad people there”

Year 10 mainstream school

“My sister said Sociology was good at sixth form because she did it”

“My Dad wants someone to be a doctor in the family and stay on in the sixth form”

“I chose construction because my Dad’s mates and my Uncle do it. I want to be an all-rounder like my Uncle”

A particular pressure from family to either stay in school or to enter a career unsuitable for the young person were reported by teachers and PAs to be more significant in areas with a predominantly Asian community. In terms of the all-girls school included in the study, the Head of Sixth form noted that the

general expectation is that girls would be pressured by their family to stay on for the duration, given that is the common reason for choosing the school. Another teacher for example, reported that many parents within the community his school supports have very high expectations of their children but very little knowledge of further education.

The opposite barrier was also evident, where a family culture of unemployment or low achievement was reported to influence young people. The YOT in particular emphasised a form of “learned behaviour” from family and similarly, the LAC PA noted that clients often came from a family of four generations of unemployment. In these cases the aspirations and motivations of young people to make an effective transition from school are particularly low. A lack of familial support was commonly reported to accompany the cultural influences in this case.

For young people with SEN the influence of family is particularly significant. Interviews with PAs, teachers and a parent all noted this as a potential barrier. The parents themselves explained that they are very mistrusting and need particular reassurance of the paths their child is taking. Teachers and PAs also noted that parents can often be very overprotective and controlling of their child’s needs and aspirations. Transition for young people with SEN it seems can involve a significant transition for their parents too.

3. Influence of friends

Like at KS4 the influence of friends was an important factor for most young people in their decision-making for post-16. Peer pressure and influence was also cited by most professionals as a distinct barrier to transition, particularly those working with LAC young people or those attending alternative provision. The influence of friends was found to be such that it might influence a young person to attend a particular organisation because their friends were attending, but on the other hand some young people did report (like in KS4) consciously deciding not to tell their friends plans, or consult them at all.

Year 12 Student, School Sixth Form

Doing a BTEC in sixth form and I go to BEST Training. “My friends keep trying to persuade me to do AS levels but I have my own ambitions”

Post 16 Apprenticeship Student, College

“I planned with mates together we’re all doing brickwork”

Year 11 Student, Alternative Education

“Not bothered about going to college – got friends at college”

As well as directly influencing young people’s decisions, the awareness of peer pressure was also found to provide a barrier for education and training professionals trying to plan and manage transition. At one particular alternative education provider, due to the high levels of peer pressure, college visits cannot be done in large groups. Instead, to stop young people applying

just to follow a friend or “just because”, very small groups, or one to one visits are arranged for those who are seen to be absolutely serious about going. Consequently this puts extra strain on staff resources and results in not all young people being able to visit college. An example of a situation this occurred was given during the interview: a group of young people after visiting college all applied to do motor mechanics except for one young person who applied for Health and Social Care course at College. On afterthought, he changed to motor mechanics too. In a similar way, another alternative provision provider reported how one young person had actually put off applying for the course she really wanted to do until her friend had also applied to college. It seems that for many young people, the people and environment they are moving into can overpower a desire for a particular organisation or course.

4. School influence

For young people attending school, the influence of their teachers was very high for post-16. This was reported to be a barrier to successful transition when advice and support is given with a particular agenda other than that of the young person’s interests however. The lack of IAG for many young people has already been identified in this section, and in the absence of an impartial PA, a number of professionals both within a school setting and out, raised concerns over the capabilities of staff to be able to offer young people the advice and support they need. Key comments can be found in the following box:

Uninformed, biased support and advice

Poor staff development in understanding careers guidance can be a barrier, as staff can give the wrong information or equally there is a scenario of “it’s not my job” and give none

Teachers are biased towards their own subjects

Teachers have a great impact but do they have the knowledge?

Generally schools want to encourage participation into their own sixth form

The last point in particular with regard to school sixth forms was found to be most common. The overprovision of sixth forms and pressure to recruit into them was noted by the majority of teachers, PAs and education managers. The effects of which were reported to be high levels of disengagement with education at 17 as many young people who are “generally not a traditional sixth form cohort” such as male low achievers going into their school sixth form. Given the influence of location and the barriers relating to familiarity and an insularity of young people, even slight guidance into the sixth form might be all a young person needs to disregard an alternative route.

5. Formal and informal links

The high impact of family on young people’s decision-making and the possible barrier that it can create would imply that the involvement of parents/carers

would be central to a successful transition. However the research found that in most cases this was not possible, and little formal guidance existed.

One particular issue for the involvement of parents is that concerning the “forgotten” group. As with the provision of IAG and other support for these young people without specialist support, it was found that in one college and alternative education provider for example that it was not part of their remit to involve parents that instead it should come from the school. On the other hand the numbers of professional staff who recognised the sometimes negative influence that the informal network can have, but who could do little to facilitate more involvement and guidance was high. For example one Head of Year 10 expressed frustration that there was a need to involve parents, but in many cases she found the parents themselves do not want to be involved and see transition as the school’s responsibility. In another school, the Head of Sixth Form reported that due to language barriers it was very difficult to involve many parents and in addition the young person may not want their parents involved.

It was also found that PAs felt not enough parents/carers get directly involved in their young person’s careers interview. An increased understanding of the young person can be obtained if parents attend an interview and the opportunity is then also presented for the parent to continue the dialogue once at home. This point was echoed at district wide level, in that linking with informal networks of support, particularly parents/carers, is encouraged, but does lack consistency as each confederation and organisation has its own practices.

4.2.2 Availability of Provision

1. Choice

Choice was found to be a barrier to transition in two ways. A limited availability of some provision and transition activities particularly for SEN is combined with an over provision of others, such as sixth forms. From a strategic perspective, the question was asked as to whether post-16 provision is resource-led rather than young person led? There is undoubtedly a wide range of post-16 provision trying to cater for every need, and from the point of view of a young person, this was found to be a barrier too. Unclear career aspirations of young people interviewed both at college and school were found to be a direct result of simply not knowing what to choose from the provision available.

The overprovision of school sixth forms has already been mentioned in the report, but it is also echoed here. Strategic education professionals in the district expressed concerns that there was in particular an over provision of level 3 due to the number of sixth forms. This point would certainly explain the reasons behind the young people interviewed who reported to have changed their mind after a year of sixth form and enter work-based learning. A Head of Sixth form interviewed in the study reported that there is a very broad range of needs to have to cater for in sixth form, and that it was difficult to get it right for

everyone. The following case study is an example of one young person, who just did not know what to choose after Year 11, and benefited from a degree of flexibility in the 6th form for changing courses.

Case Study 6: Post-16 Transition –too many choices?

Nadeen is currently in Year 13 in her school sixth form, and is happy with her courses in Sociology, RE and Product Design, but when she first started last September, she was studying Law, RE and Health and Social Care. Nadeen explained she was confused between Law and Nursing so she decided it would be helpful to do them both at the same time. However, after the January exam results she began to realise she was on the wrong courses. Nadeen decided to speak to the Head of Sixth form who said she could carry on with the subjects she felt confident in and try something different next year. So Nadeen dropped health and Social Care and continued with Law, which she said she did not get a good grade in, and RE, which she did ok in. To decide what to do the following year Nadeen sought help from a number of people, her PA (who most the most helpful), her cousin and her Dad. Nadeen is now happy with her choices. Nadeen had found it difficult to choose from all the courses available and didn't really know what to expect from the sixth form even though she knew about it and went to an open evening. Speaking to existing sixth formers helped a bit. Nadeen also remembered a particular activity in Year 11 which she found really interesting: Business and Dynamics Day where local businesses came into school and did activities with the students.

For young people with SEN, it was found that choice is often very limited due to the support and care needs of the young people. For those with profound disabilities and physical needs, staff at the Special School commented that it is often a case of “where they [young people] can be fitted in”. A specialist PA and staff at Bradford College echoed this concern and summarised that provision was very much resource driven, and the practicalities of access for this group of young people often limited their choice and limited the courses able to be provided. In terms of transition activities and courses, both staff at college and the special school felt that these were again limited due to the problems of access and that short tasters are not sufficient for these young people.

Concerns over the long-term impact of provision for young people with SEN were also raised by staff and a parent. Due to the intensive needs of young people with SEN it was reported that increasing the hopes of the young person through post-16 provision was not always beneficial when in many cases young people tend to drop out afterwards as there are no further courses available that meet their needs, nor the employment opportunities for them. In this way, post-16 courses were seen simply as “filler” courses until the young person goes into residential care.

Another particular area of provision found to be limited was pre-entry level for those with complex needs although not SEN. YOT staff, LAC/Leaving Care staff, PAs and Head of Sixth all reported various cases where young people were simply not ready to move on after Year 11, or had additional influencing factors or needs that meant they did not fit into any provision available. For LAC young people for example it was felt that often high ability is masked by a

combination of other factors such as behavioural issues and a history of non-attendance which results in attending a low-level course, with little interest and in the end the young person disengages.

2. Lack of opportunity

This barrier links very strongly with the previous one, but concentrates on a lack of opportunity in terms of employment.

In WBL, it was reported by both training provider staff and PAs that obtaining employer placements for apprenticeships and e2e was increasingly difficult. Young people were reported to often not possess the right skills for finding their own placement, and in many cases they experienced a lack of commitment from employers to work with young people.

For those young people wanting to enter employment after Year 11, it was found that they often had very high expectations of what they would achieve and how easy finding a job would be. One young person explained how he intended to just get a job where his brother worked and do his apprenticeship too, saying it would be easy for example. In another case, support workers explained how some young people, coming from a background of low achievement and qualifications assume that as their father for example has no qualifications but has a job, that they will be able to do the same.

It must be noted that for some young people, employment is the most appropriate option, as the NEET Coordinator for Bradford explained. However for these young people, with few qualifications, the employment opportunities are limited and employers are generally unwilling to take on a young person, often with multiple needs.

3. Fragmented programmes of study

This barrier was found most commonly to apply to the more vulnerable young people, with a history of variable attendance, instability at home, exclusion or behavioural issues for example. It was reported by staff in alternative education providers, YOT, PAs, LAC, Leaving Care Services and the PRU. A fragmented programme of study was described as an education where the young person has changed provider numerous times, or currently attends more than one provider. It was found to have numerous effects on the young person which in turn affect how successful their transition is.

For example, it has already been noted that there is a gap in the provision of IIAG for young people with no Specialist PA who attend alternative provision. In addition however, the movement and constant change can lead to other barriers such a lack of trust in education and training, low expectations of both themselves and their course and support workers and low self-esteem.

Due to the factors listed, participants revealed that some young people lack the experience of routine, consistency, stability, basic skills and aspirations to enable an effective transition, and often feel let down by the system. Participants commented that when a young person eventually feels settled

and begins to engage with their course it is often the case that the prospect of another transition can cause them to panic and slip back to their initial behaviours.

4.2.3 Partnership-working and Collaboration

1. *Data-sharing*

An inconsistency in what data is shared on young people and who it goes to was found to act as a barrier to ensuring young people receive the support they need at the right time in their transition process.

Most commonly reported by PAs, the sharing of data between schools, PAs and other providers was found to vary across the district. Where it is a statutory requirement to share information such as the completion of a Section 140 Assessment, or the young person has intensive needs and specialist support, data sharing was not found to be as prominent a barrier. Although there were concerns from PAs that the information included on the Section 140 did not get to the correct person in all cases.

For young people who leave school early to be educated at home or young people who attend provision outside of school however, data regarding these young people was reported not to be passed on at all in many cases. From a district-wide perspective, a manager stated that “there are no formal protocols working really [it is] more based on trust and personal working relationships”.

2. *Linking across the formal networks*

Collaboration between providers and support services was found to manifest itself in two main areas. Firstly, general communication and willingness to work together centred on conceptions of mistrust and conflicting agendas. Secondly, in the provision of follow up and support in the final stages of transition, for many young people this was reported to end too abruptly and ultimately affect the success of their transition. There was agreement from a strategic level as to the necessity of collaboration across different providers and even internally within large organisations; however no formal guidance exists at present. The key areas which lack of collaboration was reported to affect can be found in the box below:

<u>Multi-agency collaboration and communication</u>
Varied attendance of colleges and WBL providers at school transition events
Duplication of advice and guidance
Lack of data sharing between professionals
Reliance on personal relationships
Misrepresentation of options to young people
Culture of distrust

The key areas in which lack of follow up and support are found are presented below. For many young people, participants felt that the level of support was sufficient, and post-16 they would be able to locate support when they needed

it. However, for vulnerable young people without a statement of SEN whose statutory support must end with their current provider, such as those attending alternative education, or those with emotional and behavioural difficulties or LDD at mainstream school, a lack of follow on support, or continual support throughout their transition was reported to be a significant barrier. Case Study 7, is an example of the possible effect this breakdown in support, and referral of young person, can have.

Follow up support

End of statutory support for young people leaving alternative provision
Personal and informal decisions to continue support for some young people
Reliance on drop-in support at pre-16 provider for leavers

Case Study 7: Post-16 Transition – LAC – Continuity of Support

Charlotte left school in Year 11 with a college place. Charlotte's PA who works with the LAC team accompanied her to her interview for the hairdressing course she wanted at college and felt very positive about Charlotte's future. Charlotte was determined to prove everyone wrong who thought she wouldn't succeed. As Charlotte was also moving from the looked after team to the leaving care team her PA liaised extensively with her new leaving care worker to ensure Charlotte's transition was as smooth as possible. However the leaving care worker was not able to keep up to date on all of Charlotte's issues and outcomes, and when Charlotte had started college, her specialist PA support also had to subside. Charlotte became very vulnerable at this point and her PA has now heard that she is pregnant and living with a fellow care leaver. Her PA explained that she is unsure if she is attending college or not, but unfortunately she cannot support Charlotte anymore.

3. Conflicts of agenda and expectations

A distinct "Trust Agenda" was revealed throughout the research that affects how organisations work together, or in many cases choose not to work together and follow their own agenda.

The most common barrier it created was a reluctance of school to promote all options to young people as equally as their own sixth form. This was not the case particularly in the three participating schools, but it was felt overall, by strategic leads, School Improvement Officers, WBL staff, teachers at college and school, PAs and support workers that some schools were certainly more open than others. Each college interview revealed a list of schools they reported had never received any response from in terms of college involvement in post-16 tasters and option evenings for example.

An internal pressure for schools to keep up their sixth form participation rates was mentioned by one strategic lead as a very important factor in their agenda. One Head of Sixth referred to sixth form as a "natural progression", and their job was to guide young people through the process and their choices. It was also reported that young people who would be accepted to sixth form but who do not apply are followed up by staff. It could be argued that this is in the interests of the young person, however it is not possible for a college or training provider to a similar follow up. In addition it was found that

PAs often do not get passed this type of information to offer their impartial support. Most school staff did maintain that they were able to offer impartial advice despite having retention targets, however this was questioned by many.

4.2.4 Personal Needs and Vulnerability

1. *Unclear Career aspirations and Unrealistic Expectations*

Clear linkage was found through the research between the aspirations of a young person and what information they received, which can result in unrealistic expectations of their post-16 decision. This barrier incorporates a combination of factors that lead to young people having the wrong expectations of post-16 options and ultimately an unsuccessful transition.

It was found that a young person's expectations are the result of a number of different types of influencing factors such as family, friends, teachers, media, previous experience and preparedness for transition.

For WBL in particular, participants reported that young people often have the expectation that it will be just like school and don't understand that they can be asked to leave for example. In addition, a level of occupational immaturity and lack of basic skills was also reported to be a barrier to their transition as it can result on them attending the wrong courses.

The information young people receive about their options is crucial to overcoming this barrier, however concerns were raised by a strategic lead that the right information is not getting to the right people due to a degree of "gate-keeping" by different organisations.

The following case study is an example of one young person who is perhaps on the wrong post-16 course, and would have benefited from clearer information and guidance about her vocational options.

Case Study 8: Post-16 Transition – on the wrong course?

Anna is now in Year 12 in her school sixth form studying AS levels in English Language and Technology. Anna knew she wanted to go into the sixth form before she had to make her choice and remembers assemblies about different careers, the sixth form, apprenticeships and other things. Anna explained that she decided first what to do, then she spoke to her PA, then her mum. Her mum knows her well she explained and helped look through the internet about her career ideas. Now Anna is in the sixth form its not quite as she had expected. She thought that the students would be more responsible and that the work would be lot harder but she says if you work hard then it's okay. Anna wasn't nervous about starting in the sixth form at all. Reflecting on her choice of course Anna is enjoying them, but would now like to do an apprenticeship in hairdressing too, although she explained that she cannot do them both at the same time and is happy to do the apprenticeship later. She also explained that, seeing the Year 10s going out of school doing vocational work now, she would have liked to do it too, but didn't have the option.

2. *Lack of confidence/self-esteem*

This barrier was reported most commonly by professionals working with vulnerable young people. Low confidence and self-esteem creates a barrier for young people as they may end up on courses that are below their level, or avoid particular situations or people as they feel uncomfortable. The box below summarises the main comments concerning this barrier

<u>Low Confidence/self-esteem</u>
LAC young people have very low self-esteem and are scared of their transition
Young people in the care services can often sabotage things for no good reason, they think they will never achieve
Young people with SEN often find it difficult to cope with new situations and a mixed group of new students

A young person belonging to the WFSMB cohort attending college explained his apprehensive feelings about moving onto post-16 courses. As previously he had just missed out on a course because of his grades he was afraid that he would not achieve them this time and therefore was not confident about his transition. The case study below also illustrates how scary a prospect of post-16 transition can be for a vulnerable young person, who only towards the end of her education has found somewhere that she feels supported and able to progress.

Case Study 9: Post-16 Transition –Low self-esteem, low confidence
Nicola is supported by the LAC Services and has a Connexions PA supporting her who works with Social Services. Nicola attended mainstream school until the beginning of Year 11, when she left after the first 2 weeks to come to an alternative provider, although she is still on the school roll. Nicola has very low confidence and self-esteem and some behavioural problems and feels as if she grew out of school too early as she felt pushed into things she didn't want to do, and always used to "have a strop". Now she feels she knows how to deal with her behaviour better, and is better out of the classroom. Nicola is not really looking forward to leaving her provider, and there is nothing she is excited about, although she is thinking about what to do. Nicola explained she would like to go to College but isn't sure what to do. She explained that "if you're 16 you don't know what you want to do. She feels she has to make a big decision and it worried whether she will like it or not at College. Nicola's PA has given her information on Shipley College and she has also been with her to put her name down for horticulture. Now though, Nicola isn't sure and wants to speak to her tutors and her PA again about it. Nicola feels better knowing she can always drop back into her provider as a fallback if things don't go well. Nicola said she might go to an open day and find out what it will be like.

3. *Finance*

The lack of knowledge of the financial implications of post-16 education and training was a barrier raised by education and training professionals in the

research, but not by young people. The financial implications of gaining employment were mentioned by some young people as a reason to enter the labour market; however few were aware of their entitlement in education and training.

Staff working in post-16 providers, particularly colleges and WBL however reported a lack of knowledge about EMA and the processes involved in application. At Bradford College for example, it was reported that for young people with very low literacy and numeracy levels, the long application form can be daunting for both them and their parents. A misunderstanding of young people and parents was also reported as EMA can be seen as a wage rather than a training allowance, resulting in some young people being deterred from training as they are not getting paid enough. Resonant of the “trust agenda”, it was felt by some staff that schools actually promote EMA for sixth forms only, rather than all post-16 education and training.

For LAC young people specifically, it was found that their expectations with regard to entitlements to pay and housing are very high after being used to receiving clothing allowances and free activities for example whilst in care. However a specialist PA working with these young people also noted that they do not want to learn about it either, which poses a difficult barrier.

4. Familiarity and Safety

“Insularity” was a common theme from almost every participant in the research resulting in many young people choosing to stay in their ‘host’ environment. The wish of young people and their parents to stay somewhere familiar, safe and close to home was found to be a common barrier to transition. The box blow highlights some of the central comments made by young people and professionals on this barrier.

	<u>-Insularity</u>
	<u>Young people</u>
I was nervous about a new place, new environment and got lost a bit at first on the open day	
College is just up the road from where I live	
I don't like change, I moved from London in Year 8 and I don't want to start again	
	<u>Staff</u>
Girls often stay on the in the sixth because it's safe, they won't spread their wings	
Young people like the security of the school and its familiarity, they know what to expect, the rules and what they can get away with	
Young people might not like being at school but at the same they don't want to leave because it's safe	
Schools create a culture of dependency and a young person might feel they will do better if they stay than move on	
Creating the right balance between support and independence is a barrier	

It must be noted that while for many young people the host environment is likely to be school, the same principle applies to young people attending

alternative provision or the PRU. For these young people the pressures of leaving a familiar and safe environment were reported to be more significant as in many cases they do not have the option to stay on. The Manager of an alternative curriculum provider for example explained that the young people she deals with often go into 'survival mode' when faced with difficult situations which she described as very aggressive behaviour which simply gives them an element of control over a situation. She explained that months of improving their behaviour through consistent and stable routines can be completely reversed in a young person's final week of Year 11. This is evidence of a very real fear of change, and of starting again in a new environment.

The case study below is an example of how a young person's experience within a post-16 environment whilst in Year 10 and 11 has influenced his view of transition. Rather than seeing it as something new, he refers to staying on at college.

**Case Study 10: Post-16 Transition – College
Influence of location**

Sean is about to leave the secondary PRU Unit based at Bradford College and is looking forward to continuing his catering studies at the college. He wants to get some more qualifications and do better than he's doing now. Sean is really looking forward to being more independent at college, as he feels he is followed around by the support workers of the PRU at the moment. Last year Sean explained that he did lots of sampling of different subjects at college including IT, motor vehicle, engineering and catering, but he has only done his placement in catering. He has spoken to his PA about jobs and as his mum's a chef she has been very helpful too. Most of his mates are at college so he found it good to talk to them about next year. Sean said he wasn't really nervous about meeting new people, "they can take me as I am... no worries" and is familiar with the college environment already so he is looking forward to staying on.

5. Lack of motivation

For some young people it was reported that a lack of motivation was their main barrier. Vulnerable young people supported by the YOT, Care services or attending alternative provision with complex needs were said to often feel very let down by education and some are not actually allowed to access certain provision. Staff and support workers explained they felt that this often resulted in a lack of motivation. The case study below is an example of a young person with little motivation for planning his post-16 transition and at the same time not aware of the barriers he faces. Taking into consideration his support workers comments it seems likely his young person is potential NEET or will experience a fragmented or unsuccessful transition.

Case Study 11: Post-16 Transition – lack of motivation, willingness to try

Carl has attended alternative education provision since the middle of Year 10, but he is still on the school roll (he is now coming to the end of Year 11). Carl said he was “not really bothered” about starting something new, and says he might work or go to Shipley College as a back up as his sister did a course there. He would be happy working in either mechanics as his dad has a car and he likes it or electronics maybe in a shop but he’s not sure. Carl said he might go to Connexions and might look in the job centre, but he’s “not really sure what’s what, what to do”. Carl’s support worker explained that his mum drops him off at the Centre every morning, and feels that Carl isn’t really ready for independent learning, or leaving the Centre, however unfortunately he cannot stay. Carl did not seem daunted at the fact he would be leaving in a few weeks, other than he would be leaving his friends, but said he wouldn’t come back to visit.

A number of PAs also pointed out the frustration that a lot of events and activities such as open days that could improve transition, unless organised formally by schools or providers are reliant on a young person attending out of their own initiative. Advice and information can be given regarding such events but the motivation from the young person is also important.

6. *Mistrust of education and support*

Linked very closely with the barrier of lack of motivation, a history of being let down by education and training was reported by those working with vulnerable young people as a barrier. For young people with SEN for example, interviews with a specialist PA and parent revealed that parents often do not trust support workers and professionals as they have had to fight hard for financial support or equipment or training places for example that they “never expect anything from anyone”.

In a similar way, specialist PAs and support workers for LAC, YOT and other vulnerable young people explained that when a young person is no longer allowed in school, not allowed to access certain provision, or feel under pressure they are increasingly likely to disengage from education and training. When this is considered alongside the fact that intensive support for some of these young people may end post-16 they become increasingly vulnerable and unlikely to achieve an effective transition.

7. *Attachment/loyalty disorder*

Again, this is a barrier reported by those supporting vulnerable young people. The dependency created by a highly supportive and stable environment, although positive in terms of a young person’s engagement with pre-16 education and training, can be a barrier to their independence and progression into post-16 education, employment or training. One alternative education provider explained the two possible effects that this dependence and loyalty could have on a young person: firstly, the young person can become reliant on a support worker for basic skills such as timekeeping, or travel for example, and secondly, they may value the opinion of their support worker to the extent that a decision made regarding post-16 destinations is

what their support worker would want for them, rather than what they would want themselves. These effects were also mentioned by staff at the YOT, LAC team and Leaving Care Services.

8. Vulnerability

Due to the nature of support needs of the vulnerable groups referred to in this report, a brief outline of their particular characteristics in terms of transition is necessary. A number of the barriers listed either apply exclusively, or certainly more so to these groups due to the characteristics identified by participants. These barriers really centre on a lack of basic social and personal skills and disengagement with learning and even authority. It was found that these young people often face a number of crises and that their post-16 transition is often a time of multiple transitions in fact. Characteristics of this groups acting as barriers to transition include the following:

- Anti-authority
- Anti-education
- Anti-training
- Disaffected
- Low basic skills
- Basic social and personal skills
- Intensification of barriers due to offending or unstable home life
- Living up to expectations
- Fragmented history of education
- Transition not always about careers but life chances and life skills
- Lack of independence
- Lack of self-advocacy

The case study below is one example of the effects of a multiple transition, and how with the right support a young person can achieve an effective transition.

Case Study 12: Post-16 Transition – LAC – multiple transitions

Dave is looked after by Bradford local authority but lived out of the area for his own safety. In August after Dave left Year 11 he planned to move back to Bradford to live with his mum, but his Connexions PA in the area he lived was not familiar with the provision in Bradford, so she accompanied the Social Worker to meet Dave and helped him to apply for an e2e programme. Dave's dream however, was to go into the army and e2e was a backup. After starting this course though, Dave got a job in catering, but after an incident at his training provider Dave had to move. His PA kept Dave on her caseload as long as she possibly could, as it was a particularly difficult time for him moving home, course, provider and starting work at the same time. Dave has now completed his catering course and is fully employed. His PA noted that being in settled in work and training really helped Dave's situation, and feels that the involvement of Connexions as a contact for Dave was very important in ensuring that he did not drop out and become NEET. Dave has been nominated for an award at the Looked After Children's Ceremony this year by his PA.

In considering this diverse group of vulnerable young people it must be noted that each young person has a unique set of individual needs, and generalising them as one particular group does not intend to assume their needs are the same. However, the scope of this study did not allow for a detailed analysis of each group. Good practice examples included in the following section are however specific to a number of these vulnerable groups and help to illustrate the targeted approach needed.

4.3 Success factors and good practice

The identified barriers to transition, direct suggestions from research participants and evidence from desk-based research give rise to a range of good practice examples and principles that can help to aid effective post-16 transition for young people. This section presents the principles of good practice as identified through the research according to four main categories: 'real' experiences, open and honest partnership, appropriate provision and supportive relationships with young people. Throughout, an emphasis on provision of IAG and a young-person centred approach are key elements to good practice.

A series of case studies of good practice can be found at the end of section 4.3, most identified through the primary data collection and which are in practice in the district at present. They illustrate how key success factors can be used to overcome barriers to transition and also form the basis of the Guide to Good practice produced in conjunction with this report.

Below is a summary of the key factors identified in an existing guide to good practice. They show that success factors for transition combine a range of supportive, managerial and strategic elements which apply to the full process of transition from decision-making pre-16 to initial commencement of post-16 education, employment or training.

Critical success factors that underpin successful transition:

- Adequate learner support
- Learner awareness of course and provider requirements
- Appropriate initial assessment
- Familiarisation with the new environment
- Communication strategies for partnership-working
- Involvement of parents and carers
- Induction programmes
- Links between all providers
- Taster sessions

Source: LSN (2006)

4.3.1 The 'Real' Experience

1. Holistic tasters for post-16 education and training

As in KS4, a lack of knowledge and unrealistic expectations were cited as barriers to effective transition. Similarly, activities that young people reported to be helpful in making decisions for post-16 included those that gave them a taster and direct, 'real' experience of the course and provider. One of the biggest barriers from the perspective of a young person was found to be the prospect of adjusting to a new environment, learning style and set of people,

therefore activities to help alleviate this fear should be promoted. Summer schools, visits from post-16 providers, visits and tasters to post-16 providers and work experience were all listed by participants as good practice. In particular, the earlier and longer these activities could be the better for the young person as they would be able to make a decision in their own time.

For vulnerable young people, particularly those with SEN an emphasis was found to exist on holistic tasters which incorporate as much of a taster of post-16 life at the provider, rather than just a vocational taster, such as the tasters offered by Shipley College for students moving onto their Entry courses. As one young person pointed out, her choice of college was based on how much she “clicked” with the staff and the environment rather than the choice of course.

Case Studies of good practice that illustrate successful practice in this area include 1; 4; 6; 7 and 9.

2. Mentoring

To help in gaining ‘real’ advice and settling into a new environment, the use of mentors and study buddies was found to be successful practice. For the Entry Course at Shipley College for young people with SEN for example, students on the course act as “Shadows” for new students which help to increase their confidence and self-esteem whilst also ensuring each new starter adjusts and has the peer support they require. The young people interviewed who acted as “Shadows” found their experience very helpful, and are still friends with those who were their “Shadow” when they started college.

3. Mock results days

The time at which young people feel ready to make decisions regarding post-16, or are ready for their transition varied for each young person, and a barrier reported by some teaching staff and PAs was a lack of motivation and realisation of how important planning and consideration of post-16 decisions can be. As mentioned in the section regarding barriers, often transition activities are voluntary and reliant on a young person’s own initiative, and that of their family. However, in Belle Vue Girls School for example, a complete Mock Results Day is held for Year 11 students after their mock exams to help young people to realise what is involved for the ‘real’ thing. Talks are given on the day about what it means to be NEET, the Careers team from the school also attend, and subject heads are available to discuss options with young people. This is a unique example of a taster of decision-making in transition.

4.3.2 Multi-agency Collaboration

1. Open and honest partnerships

To overcome the “Trust Agenda” revealed through the research successful transition arrangements were commonly found to have open and honest approaches to partnership working in order to best meet the needs of young people, regardless of different organisational requirements, restrictions or targets for example. This point is supported by the fact that all the case

studies of good practice included in this section in some way attribute their success to open and honest partnership working.

Additional examples of good practice in this area identified by participants include the following:

- Transparency of the work of the YOT who noted that to work to their own agenda would be to fail a young person. Even when the young person has moved on into training and no longer attends the projects at YOT, collaborative efforts between the YOT and provider help to ensure the young person's transition is as effective as possible
- The Connexions PA in the circle of support a LAC young person receives acts as the central point for the young person and encourages partnership working and communication between everyone
- Buttershaw High School use a Multi-Agency Panel consisting of Connexions, YOT, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Social Services and Senior School staff to discuss coordinated support for young people who are hard to help from Year 7 onwards
- A&R Training has weekly contact with the Connexions WBL PA to inform them of young people at certain trigger points for IAG such as early leavers or those potentially at risk from disengaging. In addition there are partnership agreements to provide IAG at specified points throughout the e2e programme

Case studies that illustrate good practice in this area include 1; 2; 3; 5; 6; 7; 8 and 9. Of particular note here is the transparency of the Keighley College team in their approach to pre-16 provision. Joint inspections of pre-16 courses with schools formed part of their self-assessment for inspection and was an important step in opening up their relationship and trust of schools. The college hopes to pilot joint delivery of some courses in the next year, and has a very pro-active approach to partnership-working.

2. District-wide protocols for partnership working

Lack of multi-agency collaboration and conflict over responsibility ultimately means that a young person can somehow simply be missed out of support they are entitled to due to a lack of knowledge and assumption of another provider's responsibility, and/or lack of resources to provide the IAG themselves. Clearer guidelines from a district wide level might help to set straight the entitlements of each young person, especially those with a fragmented pre-16 programme.

Examples of specific good practice for developing partnership protocols were found in SEN transition documents, but not for general, mainstream transition. These examples can be found in section 4.3.5 in the case studies from Yorkshire and Humberside.

4.3.3 Appropriate Provision

1. Tailored induction

It was reported by PAs, school and college staff that the first few weeks of a post-16 education or training course are crucial to the success of a young person's transition. An effective induction tailored to the needs of young people attending the course was found to be the best practice in ensuring this time was not a trigger point for disengaging with a course. Some particular examples were explained during interview:

- Separate induction sessions for learning about EMA are given by A&R Training in addition to their course specific inductions
- The Sixth Form at Challenge has a week long induction for all students that is holistic in nature, covering critical skills challenges, learning about different styles of learning, stress management, time management, how to be a good sixth former, enterprise activities and exam and revision strategies. This induction week aims to encourage personal development and individual learning

It must be noted however, that the induction at a new provider cannot create effective transition in itself, transition courses for young people before they leave school were found to be seen as incredibly valuable for reducing the period of time to settle in to a new course. This applies particularly for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, or with SEN. Case Study 4, the Transition Course at Bradford College illustrates this well, and self-assessment work done by the young person, as well as assessments from tutors help to assess their needs for a full-time course and smooth transition not only for the young person but the college staff also. The following case study was provided by the college to illustrate this:

Case Study: Settling in, SEN Bradford College

Melissa was a quiet person, had issues with communication and was lacking in confidence when she started the transition course. During her time on the course she progressed very well with verbal communication skills and her confidence also grew. At the end of the programme, the Transition team was able to assess Melissa's speedy progress, growth in confidence, self-esteem and overall independence. This team was able to advise course tutors in College that Melissa would benefit from just one year on the Personal and Community Skills Course (PCSC) rather than the full three and be ready to move on after that. While on PCSC Melissa undertook a Travel Training Programme and is now an independent traveller. She has also gained a BTEC Certificate in Life Skills. At present Melissa is enjoying her work placement in Beauty Therapy at the college and is looking forward to starting the Skills for Working Life (College 4U) course at college in September. Without the assessment from her attendance on the Transition Course, her tutors feel her outcome may not have been so positive.

2. Appropriate/blended provision

Encouraging blended provision was reported by School Improvement Officers, Strategic Leads, PAs and school staff as a way to “blur the boundaries” and improve transition. This kind of provision includes:

- the IFP and the PRU encouraging young people to undertake some work in Year 11 that can count towards their post-16 course for example. It was found that staff sometimes felt those young people on IFP or attending the PRU with very high abilities often finished courses quicker than their peers. Allowing them to begin at least the theory on vocational courses eases the pressure of their new course post-16.
- the NEET Strategy for Bradford and District also specifies blended provision to encourage young people to engage in learning pre-16.
- post-16, Challenge College also have blended provision for young people who remain at level 2 in the sixth form but are unable to move on. Programmes involving time at their school sixth form, Laisterdyke sixth form, a training provider and work placements prepare young people for their next transition from sixth form and keep them engaged in learning.

Relevant case studies for this point include 6 and 8.

3. Flexibility

Particularly for young people at risk of disengaging it was found that flexibility in terms of start dates for courses, enrolment, taster activities and support and advice was successful practice. For young people going to college for example, the change of environment has been noted as a difficult barrier to transition; however college staff and PAs also suggested that the enrolment process can be incredibly daunting for a young person. Difficulties with the EMA application process alone have also been commented upon, but negotiating the enrolment process in its entirety in a new environment would pose more of a barrier for some. A flexible enrolment process, staggered for different groups was suggested.

For vulnerable groups, good practice can be found in case studies 2; 6; and 9, including flexible ‘roll on roll off’ transition groups for young people moving into the Leaving Care service, and flexible starts on programmes as part of a range of activities that aim to reduce NEET in the district.

4. Young person centred

Concerns were raised by staff working both in post-16 settings and at a district-wide level about the extent to which provision is resource led rather than young person led. For transitions to be effective for young people, the provision and transition activities available need to meet their needs. The majority of education and training professionals noted a barrier related to resources either in terms of staff or equipment and this was particularly important to the Transition Course at Bradford College (Case Study 4). The course currently has a long waiting list but they are unable to offer more places due to the equipment and staff support that needs to be made

available. Attendance on the course is for 10 weeks throughout the young person's final school year, therefore it almost forms part of their school curriculum, a form of blended provision in fact. The combination of an over-provision of sixth form courses and NEET reduction activities with a very limited attendance on a course such as this which could benefit so many more young people indicates a gap in provision led by resources rather than need.

All the good practice case studies show an approach centred on the needs of the young person.

4.3.4 Supportive and Trusting Relationships with Young People

1. Partnerships of support

A lack of consistency in the provision of IAG for young people was cited as a barrier to successful transition. Therefore it is recommended as good practice that the "forgotten" group in particular are able to access IAG. Parental involvement, knowledge and support was also found to vary across the district, however as in KS4, with the high influence family can have on a young person's decision making and perceptions of education, employment and training, it is important that they form part of a partnership of support for a young person. The West Midlands Transition Pathway Scheme for young people with SEN for example (Case Study 5) ensures parents/carers are involved and informed at every stage of transition through planned reviews and activities. Family guidance is another successful practice aimed at engaging the family in supporting the young person and was even found to result in the parent engaging in learning themselves as a result (Case Study 3).

Additional areas of successful practice identified include:

- A community ethos at Challenge College aims to involve the community and its families in as many school activities as possible were identified by staff as a fundamental principle for the school
- A suggestion by Bradford College Education Liaison was to have workshops or drop-in locations targeted at parents as well as young people to help to increase their knowledge of post-16 opportunities at college

Case study examples of good practice in ensuring all types of support are coordinated for a young person include 2; 3; 5 and 9.

2. Continuity of support and follow up

Although the issue of retention is separate to transition, they are inherently linked, and good practice for transition would not be complete without recognition of the importance of follow up support once a transition has been made to ensure it is successful. It was mentioned by district-level staff that common internal referral systems would be good practice to ensure young people are followed up after transition to improve retention. Identified through desk-based study and interviews are the following additional examples of how

continuity of support can be maintained throughout the entire process of transition:

- Study buddy scheme run by Lewisham College (LSN, 2006). A scheme of trained student buddies provide support for new learners for up to 5 hours a week to ease the transition into a new and very different learning environment. Increased performance, confidence, independence and retention are noted by the college
- Common practice for alternative education providers and the PRU was to operate an “open-door policy” for students who have moved on. All staff reported experiences of young people returning to the provider for all kinds of support from financial assistance, a chat, help with an application form or to share good news for example
- A specialist PA working with LAC moving into the Leaving Care Service explained how she often tried to be available for young people after they were no longer part of her caseload. Being able to keep in touch by text message was found to be sometimes all a young person needs to ensure they do not feel abandoned by support workers they have gotten to know and trust
- As part of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes (ISSP) run by the YOT in Bradford, when a young person moves onto a course at another provider, the staff carry out spot checks at the provider to review on the progress of the young person and use telephone calls to liaise with the provider to identify any issues arising for the young person as they complete their transition.

In fact, it could also be argued that any tasters and transition courses are another way to overcome the barrier of a breakdown in support, as they blur the boundaries of transition and gradually introduce young people to new professionals offering support.

Good practice case studies particularly relevant are 2; and 8.

4.3.5 Young Person-Centred Planning and Management

The barriers identified through the research concerning conflicting agendas, and issues of trust cause the focus of transition arrangements to shift from what is best for the young person, to being over-ridden by factors best for the provider. Staff working with young people with SEN, reported good practice to be specifically related to young person-centred planning. This group of young people, heavily reliant on the advice and guidance of others, need particular assistance to ensure their needs are met. The principles of person-centred planning however, should reside throughout all transition arrangements if transition is to be effective for every young person.

Research by the East Together Regional Transition Group (2006) has revealed a range of good practice examples and research into transition for young people with SEN. In addition to the statutory requirements of support for this group, a number of additional factors have been found to be good

practice. Similar in many ways to those recommended in general, the principles could be applied to all young people approaching transition as they centre on multi-agency collaboration and young person centred planning.

Good Practice for Effective Transition: SEN

- Close liaison between Connexions PA and SENCO
- Multi-agency meetings to identify young people who need additional support in Year 8
- Specialist PA work in mainstream education for those with SEN supporting the development of pre-16 alternative programmes
- Mentoring sessions by PAs to those facing exclusion or at risk of not achieving
- Work with young people at risk of becoming NEET from Year 9 to increase their confidence in future plans
- PAs working with young people with LDD in the labour market
- Increase confidence and self-esteem through developing relationships based on trust and communication
- Multi-disciplinary teams
- Adapted curriculum programmes (e.g. IFP) and targeted work experience
- Transition links and tasters at colleges
- Partnerships with employers
- Flexible and tailored induction arrangements at colleges
- Training opportunities and programmes that recognise the importance of addressing the whole range of a young person's needs
- Behavioural Improvement Programmes encourage attendance at school
- Initiatives to support LAC and Care leavers including those with SEN

Source: East Together Regional Transition Group (2006)

A young person-centred approach to planning transition activities for young people was found to be very widespread in the literature for young people with SEN. Examples of this approach include activities that encourage multi-agency reviews with the young person at the centre (such as the West Midlands Pathway Scheme – Case Study 6), encouraging independence, empowerment and self-advocacy. A Guide to Good practice published for the East of England in 2005 included a range of examples of these activities, which are briefly summarised below:

Young Person Centred Good practice: SEN

- Circles Network Project (www.circlesnetwork.org.uk): Circles of support for young people with complex and multiple impairments to help plan for their futures and achieve greater inclusion in the community. Meaningful friendships, sometimes lacking for young people with SEN can be formed through these circles, consisting where possible of volunteers, not paid to support and be with the young person
- Young People Speaking Up (Cambridgeshire Advocacy Service): Offers mentoring, one to one advocacy, workshops, groups work about transition and making choices and work with the Connexions Youth Participation Board and Youth Parliament
- Heading For Work (ESF funded project in Essex until 2007): Employment advisers work with a young person-centred approach to find an employer placement suited to each young person. Work was carried out closely with parents/carers, schools and employees and Trident, who certificated each placement.

Source: East Together SEN Regional Transition Partnership (2005)

Additional good practice was also identified in Yorkshire and Humberside for young people with SEN. Of particular note for principles inherent in these good practice examples, is the persistence of a concentration on the young person's voice and young person's needs through person centred planning and advocacy. In addition, the projects often involved a number of different partners working together, and protocols detailing the requirements, strategies, roles and responsibilities for transition for young people with SEN are developing in a number of areas. However, such protocols were not found to be available for general transition.

Good Practice for SEN Transition, Projects in Yorkshire and Humberside

- "The Lilacs Outreach and Transitions Team", Beverley, East Yorkshire providing a range of support to promote independence and social inclusion
- "Doncaster Transitions Project": Strategic, multi-agency sub-group designed and implemented Transitions Protocol in Doncaster (involving advising and giving information to all professionals involved, pilot tracking scheme of learners in special schools)
- "Leeds Interagency Transitions Team" working with up to 100 young people at their Year 9 Transition Reviews
- "Positive Transition Framework", North East Lincolnshire: Development of a protocol that outlines the overall principles, standards, roles and responsibilities of the key agencies involved in the transition planning process for vulnerable young people and those with a statement of SEN
- "Advocacy Development Work" in Sheffield: Support for young disabled young people and those working with them so informed choices about services can be made

Source: The Partnership Yorkshire and Humberside (2007)

Case Study of Good Practice 1:

Leeds College of Technology Pre-16

Pre-16 opportunities for Years 10 and 11 developed in 13 local schools in order to minimise the risk of learners progressing to post-16 education and training and then dropping out, and also to promote achievement. The college has a variety of opportunities including the Increased Flexibility Programme, Young Apprenticeship Programme and individual partnerships with schools.

Key elements:

- Collaborate with local training providers
- Learning mentors from Leeds Further Forward Partnership assist with sharing of information about the students
- College aims to build on the wider social skills of young people as well as vocational

Barriers to transition:

- Incorrect curriculum offer (pre 16 prog 'mapped' to post-16 offer)
- Insufficient learner support (tailored support to meet individual needs – induction, individual tutorial sessions)
- Lack of awareness of requirements (effective pre-course guidance, involvement in parents evenings careers events and college open days)
- Ineffective initial assessment (communication of initial assessment and training needs to all stakeholders and continual monitoring and support against the training plan with regular assessments)
- Lack of familiarity with college environment/ways of working (intensive 1 week taster course – vocational specific, but with activities to promote awareness-raising about the priorities of college life)

Working with partner schools:

- Detailed and appropriate information sharing before pre-16 provision begins (including teacher references, SATs scores, experiential learning)
- Invitation of school staff to delivery team meetings
- Written reporting mechanisms and email

Success? A 50% transition from school vocational provision into post-16 programmes of study

Source: LSN (2006)

Case Study of Good Practice 2:		
TITLE	The Smooth It Out Group	Key groups
Contact	Dawn Brannigan, Vera Markovic 01274 436760 Leaving Care Service	Looked After / Leaving Care
<p>Run jointly by the Looked After Children's Team and the Leaving Care Service, the Smooth It Out Group aims to support young people aged from 15 ½ who are moving over to the Leaving Care System, whilst also going through transition from compulsory schooling. This is often a 'crisis' time for a young person. The aim of the group is independence: Independence in education, training, employment, housing, finance, social, personal and travel for example. These areas are addressed through 'issue-based' sessions and leisure activities in a voluntary group of up to 20 young people who meet every other Monday at Seen & Heard in Shipley for a roll on roll off 18 week programme of sessions. Approximately 50 young people throughout each year are being referred to the group.</p>		
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young person-centred • Effective multi-agency collaboration within the Care Service and externally (e.g. Connexions, Housing organisations, Job Centre), a 'Triangle of Support' for each young person, seen to be working together • Data sharing between the services on the young people • Honest and trusting relationship between Leaving Care/ Looked After children's workers and young people • Flexible starts/roll on roll off programme • Flexible approach to planning (staff meet between sessions to adjust programme as appropriate for the group) • Mixed group of young people to assist with personal and social skills 	
Key Activities for transition into post-16 education, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accredited qualifications (Youth Train, ASDAN, Duke of Edinburgh) • IIAG • Mentoring • Team building/confidence building Activities & residentials • External visitor-led sessions (from employers or Personal Advisers for example) • 'Pathway Plan' reviewed 6 monthly incorporating education, training, accommodation and leisure issues • Promotion of self-assessment 	
Barriers addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrealistic expectations of what 'independence' really means • Culture shock of leaving the care system and compulsory schooling • Poor basic social and personal skills • Lack of trust in support workers • High dependence on support workers • Disengagement with education, employment and training • Multiple/complex needs of many young people (i.e. young parent, LDD, YOT supervised, emotional, behavioural, attainment and achievement, financial, housing) 	

Case Study of Good Practice 3:		
TITLE	Increasing Access for White Working Class Boys (14-19) @ Shipley College	Key groups
Contact	Chris Holgate 01274 327300 - Shipley College	White Working Class Boys
<p>A joint initiative run by Careers Bradford and Shipley College, funded through AimHigher, this project aims to address the disproportionately small number of white working class boys participating in post-16 education. The project offers intensive support to an identified caseload of young men and their families, to encourage retention and achievement in their chosen post-16 activity. IAG, summer school places, student mentoring and a range of enrichment activities are just some of the ways in which this project engages with the target group of young men.</p>		
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency collaboration to facilitate outreach at regular points and follow up of those who disengage • Offer of a 'package of support' • Relationship building with the young person and Connexions PA • Holistic approach to transition for the 14-19 phase addressing not just career aspirations of the young men but their social, personal, financial and learning issues 	
Key Activities for transition into post-16 education, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer of summer school places and tasters at Shipley College • Close overlap with the Increased Flexibility Programme • Student mentoring • Development of a model for family guidance • Outreach at key 'drop off' point such as after the Christmas break • Enrichment activities/social skills development • Referral of young men to other support workers if no longer matching requirements of project • Advocacy in college where necessary on behalf of young person 	
Barriers addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disengagement with learning • Parenthood/pregnancy • Finances • Lack of knowledge and support • Influence of poorly informed parents • Peer pressure • Trust issue with support workers • Complex needs of the young men (i.e. parent, health issues, LDD, alcohol or drug misuse, YOT supervised, Social Services support) 	

Case Study of Good Practice 4:		
TITLE	SEN Transition Course for School Based Learners	Key groups
Contact	Jas Walker 01274 438903 - Bradford College	Young people with LDD
<p>The transition course is designed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who may be considering going to College for a Pre-Entry/Entry Level 1-2 course when they leave their school. The course runs for 2 days a week for 10 weeks and runs 3 times a year. Students who attend the course come from a range of schools and learn together in a small group of 8 learners. Often the students are accompanied by classroom assistants if their support needs require it. The course offers access to college facilities and involvement in taster activities to enable them to become familiar with the college environment.</p>		
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration on independence • Holistic taster of college environment – not recruitment for Bradford College • Separation of college from school to encourage a new, unique experience with the young person at the centre • Valuable assessment for planning a future pathway through college 	
Key Activities for transition into post-16 education, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasters • College mentors • Travel Training • 'Learning lunch' • Interaction with young people from other schools • Self- assessment through a 'treasure map' journey 	
Barriers addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of independence • Lack of confidence • Lack of personal and social skills • Feeling of being overwhelmed when leaving school to start somewhere new • Long period required to settle in at a new provider • Over-protectiveness and low expectations from parents and schools 	

Case Study of Good Practice 5:			
TITLE	West Midlands Transition Pathway Scheme		Key groups
Contact	Sheila Johnstone 01274 829400 Careers Bradford	Vicky Donnelly 01274 322030 Community Team- -Learning Disabilities	Young people with LDD, attending Special Schools
<p>The Transition Pathway is a resource pack aimed at anyone who is involved in supporting a young person into adult life. The key point to note about the Pathway is that it was developed in a person-centred way and reflects what young disabled people and their families need. Principle features of the Pathway are standard documents to be used in transition reviews to explore the right topics for the young person and their family, standard information (legislation, good practice and templates and checklists for use) about transition for all people involved and an emphasis on involving all people involved with a young person in the transition process.</p>			
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and consistent information presented to all agencies about transition – common approach and goal for all involved • Involvement of parents • Multi-agency collaboration • Clear circle of support for the young person • Emphasis on early, and clear planning for transition • Recognition of follow up and encouraged involvement of post-transition providers 		
Key Activities for transition into post-16 education, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young person centred methodology of the reviews • Activities at school and home to feed into reviews • Information sharing between agencies from Year 9 • General awareness raising for all involved about transition from school at an early stage • Case Studies included in the Pathway pack • Checklist for action and by who in preparation and after, each transition review – clear roles for all involved and keep all informed • Good Practice guidance for places young people might move on to 		
Barriers addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of parents • Views of parents • Fear of change and the unknown • Involvement of too many agencies and influences • Lack of acknowledgement of the young person's wishes 		

Case Study of Good Practice 6:		
TITLE	The Summer Fix and NEET Fix Activities	Key groups
Contact	Fay McIntosh (NEET Coordinator) 01274 829400 Careers Bradford	Young people who are NEET, or unclear about their career path
<p>The Summer Fix is a range of activities over a specific 2 week period aimed at those young people in Year 11 who are identified as potential NEET. It aims to motivate young people into the provision available for them at a time when they are particularly vulnerable to disengaging. The Summer Fix forms part of a wide range of work being carried out in Bradford and District coordinated by the NEET Coordinator to reduce the NEET levels in the district.</p>		
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual, intensive careers education and guidance • Effective multi-agency collaboration and communication • Data sharing • Coordination of numerous events to coincide during one 2 week period 	
Key Activities for transition into post-16 education, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working between Connexions and the PRU to offer support in making CVs, job applications and mock interview skills • Bradford College Summer School • Appropriately timed start dates for e2e programmes • Coordination across the PA network, of tracking, identifying and contacting young people for the NEET fix • Collaboration with partner agencies to promote NEET Fix activities/events • Assistance for particularly vulnerable young people to find an employer placement for their training • Engagement of peers where possible 	
Barriers addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer engagement • Lack of motivation • Low self-esteem • Low expectations • Missed opportunities for IAG in mainstream school • Combination of 'crisis' issues e.g. homelessness, young parent, LDD, exclusion • Peer pressure • Family 'worklessness' 	

Case Study of Good Practice 7:		
TITLE	Pre-16 Provision at Keighley College	Key groups
Contact	Heather Whitehead 01274 618375- Curriculum Director Pre-16 Provision, Keighley College	Young people looking to attend college post-16
<p>The College has an extensive range of pre -16 provision going right down to primary school age, and within this, a history of successful collaboration with partner organisations including local primary and secondary schools in the Three Valleys area as well as uniformed services, and the Air Cadets. In addition to the Increased Flexibility Programme the college also offer bite-size programmes arranged independently with each school. The college also jointly runs a number of post-16 courses in conjunction with schools.</p> <p>Being piloted for 2007/08 academic year is the joint delivery of pre-16 programmes between schools and the college. This will be on a small scale for the pilot, but it is hoped that it will encourage the sharing of best practice by allowing the school to offer the classroom based lessons and the college to offer the practical elements. The College intends to use the pilot so more can be learnt about 14-16 education from their point of view and for schools to learn about the vocational delivery.</p>		
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative approach to all activities and communication • Transparency and honesty are key to all partnership arrangements • Pro-active efforts to evolve and improve current partnership arrangements 	
Key Activities for transition into post-16 education, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at fortnightly Curriculum Deputies meetings with college staff keeping constant links with relevant school staff • Joint training sessions for college and school staff • Involvement of schools in college self-assessment for inspection • Joint delivery of vocational courses • Plans for a multi-agency attendance register • Focus on young persons needs and not organisation's own agenda • Consistency for young people through joint working with school mentors • Work to improve knowledge of the equivalency of vocational qualifications 	
Barriers addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School understanding of college vocational provision • Perceptions of the equivalency of vocational qualifications • Trust agenda between schools and colleges • Difficulties posed by different timetables • Competitive market for vocational provision 	

Case Study of Good Practice 8:		
TITLE	Transition from the PRU	Key groups
Contact	John Linney 01274 431665 Head of Bradford College Secondary PRU	Excluded from school
<p>The Secondary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) at Bradford College is in a unique position due to its location within one of the Bradford College buildings, providing its young people with an extensive taster of college life.</p> <p>The fundamental points of this example lie in the careful balance of trying to give the young people the support they need, but also in some cases required supervision, whilst encouraging their independence and aspirations for after Year 11, when for some, the abrupt end of intensive support can be too much of a change for the young person to cope with. The familiarity which the young people have with the college environment and its staff is crucial to their progression after they leave the PRU. An emphasis on careers and courses must also link in to activities right from their initial interview for the unit.</p>		
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with organisations and employers • Collaboration with other college departments • Young person focussed • Flexible approach • Recognition of balance between support and independence • Focus on IIAG 	
Key Activities for transition into post-16 education, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental involvement and follow up (telephone, email, letters) • 'Open door' policy • Open and honest relationship between Bradford College and the PRU • Encouraging independence where possible and appropriate • Emphasis on the preparation for the transition from the PRU with one to one tutorials with a support worker who the young person trusts • Multi-agency approach to meetings if problems occur (involve family, Cxs, Student, PRU) • Begin post-16 course theory while still in Year 11 – encouraging gradual transition 	
Barriers addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor social and communication skills • Poor basic skills • Insecurity • Behavioural issues • Financial issues (formalities of the EMA application process were cited as a barrier by staff) • Negative expectations/prejudice of post-16 providers and employers • 'Can't be bothered' attitude • Peer pressure/easily influenced by others • Sudden end of statutory intensive support post-16 	

Case Study of Good Practice 9:		
TITLE	Pre-16 Transition Courses at Bradford College	Key Groups
Contact	Tracy Wilkinson 01274 433184- Education Liaison Officer	All young people interested in college post-16. NEET focus
<p>The Education Liaison Department at Bradford College oversee an extensive range of pre-16 college tasters and events to aid transition. The department also links with a number of different support agencies to assist in the reduction of NEET in the district. Their transparent approach to collaborative work is evident in a number of areas and is key to their success at reaching as many young people as possible before they make the transition from school.</p>		
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent and honest approach to partnership working • Extensive offer of tasters/sampling to cater for a range of different learning and support needs • Data sharing about young people attending tasters, summer schools both internally and externally where appropriate • Flexibility in approach and planning 	
Key Activities for transition into post-16 education, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to organise visits and talks to schools about 'college' and not even mention Bradford College to alleviate the fear of schools that they will poach sixth form students • Collaborative work with Connexions and Careers Bradford particularly around the identification of potential NEET young people to go on summer school tasters and to also help track their progress through College if they engage in college provision post-16 (aiding to bridge the gap between school and college and provide the links required for following up the young person) • Flexible starts for courses – January starts – in line with the NEET activities • Bundle of activities over the summer period offered to continuously engage potential NEET young people and ensure they begin college in September following end of Year 11. After an intensive 2 weeks of Summer School involving an initial assessment, tasters, social and enrichment activities, and evaluation including admissions assistance, form filling, EMA help and additional support and finally a party in the Student Union, the young people have the option of dropping in to learner Services at any point over the break, but also a number of bite size courses are offered to those who are interested in college for September. This all helps to bridge the gap between leaving school and officially starting college, a key drop out point for the potential NEET group. • Involvement of parents/carers from the beginning of contact from school until the summer school ends, as an invite to the young person is often not effective on it's own. • College tasters in community centre locations 	
Barriers addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of cooperation from some schools • Multiple needs of the potential NEET group • Lack of knowledge of the financial changes involved in post-16 education and training • Low levels of basic skills of both young person and family • Daunting prospect of the size of college/new environment 	

4.4 One wish for transition...

As the previous section has shown, many different principles and activities can help to ensure effective transition for young people, and there is a wide range of good practice already happening on in the district. However, what aspects are most important for the young people in Bradford and District? Each education and training professional interviewed through this study was asked to highlight one particular wish for transition, which was most important for them.

The most important principle underpinning the majority of wishes was that of a focus on the young person. The way in which this could be achieved was varied, but essentially it was to meet the individual need of each young person, and to ensure they can make an informed and realistic decision about their post-16 destination and for that provision to be available.

Three paths to this being achieved were identified:

1. *Appropriate provision needs to be made available through:*
 - a. an inclusive approach to courses (particularly for young people with SEN and high levels of support needs) and for employers (through incentives)
 - b. flexible starts to ensure the right provision can be available at the right time (particularly for NEET young people and for the early allocation of day-care places for SEN)
2. *Impartial and timely support should be available for **all** young people so:*
 - a. clear, informed and realistic choices can be made
 - b. expectations are realistic
 - c. all young people feel confident about their choices (particularly young people attending alternative provision and supervised by YOT)
3. *An honest and open approach by all post-16 providers to ensure:*
 - a. young people can see all the options available to them and where possible have the opportunity to have taster sessions for all options
 - b. there is no pressure (particularly from schools) for young people to enter sixth form
 - c. widespread sharing of information on young people
 - d. parental involvement is encouraged

4.5 Conclusion

Transition into post-16 education, employment and training was found to have additional barriers compared to that of KS4 transition. These revolve around the prospect of leaving school and consequently the “insularity” of young people was identified as a central factor in their post-16 transition. Other barriers included a lack of IAG particularly for the “forgotten” group, family influences, peer pressure school preference for sixth form and a lack of parental involvement. The lack of availability in certain types of provision particularly for young people with SEN and pre-entry provision for vulnerable groups of young people was also identified alongside the negative effects of a fragmented programme of study. Underpinning many of the factors concerning transition however, was a lack of partnership working and collaboration which diminished the focus on young people’s needs. Where partnership-working was evident and working well, a reliance on informal and personal links was found. A “trust agenda” was found to play a large role in determining collaborative efforts.

Success factors of good practice were presented using detailed case study examples already in place in Bradford and District. Key elements of good practice are concluded to link to a number of principles including

- Holistic emphasis on taster activities
- Open and honest partnership working with an identified need for formal guidance across the district
- Appropriate provision including tailored inductions and flexible approaches
- Consistency of opportunity to access IAG for all
- Young-person centred approaches to underpin all planning and management of transition

Participants reported that appropriate provision, IAG and open and honest partnership working were the three main elements needed in Bradford and District for effective transition arrangements.

Increased Flexibility Programmes are provision that according to the literature is a good example of aiding transition through the necessity of working with multiple agencies. Looking to the IFP assists in identifying the particular areas of multi-agency collaboration that organisations struggle with.

5. Focus: The Role of Increased Flexibility Programmes in Bradford and District

5.1 Background

Increased Flexibility Programmes are a vocational option at KS4 which offers young people who participate in them the chance to gain qualifications in subjects not currently on offer at their school and in doing so, gain experience at a post-16 provider. In essence, the IFP holds a number of the success factors identified in the previous section central to its approach, and has a number of aims which should in turn aid successful transition for young people. The four main aims are listed below:

Figure 5.1.1: Aims of IFP

- Raise the attainment in national qualifications of participating students
- Increase their skills and knowledge
- Improve social learning and development
- Increase retention in education and training after the age of 16

Source: Ofsted (2005, p. 41)

In Bradford and District the IFP is run by the three main colleges, Bradford, Shipley and Keighley which in turn serve a Confederation of schools. An evaluation of IFP by Ofsted in 2005 concluded that IFP has been effective in increasing the numbers of young people continuing in education post-16 and also in enhancing the links between schools and employers. Knowledge of young people about post-16 opportunities was also found to be improved as a result of IFP. However within the evaluation, Ofsted also noted a number of barriers to the success of FP which are very similar to those identified from the research about transition in Bradford and District generally. These are detailed in the Figure below:

Figure 5.1.2: Ofsted IFP evaluation: Barriers

- IFP in less successful schools was offered only to those who are losing interest in school or with low levels of attainment (e.g. higher levels of WFSMB than the national average)
- Inadequate sharing of information from schools can result in insufficient quality and availability of learning
- Conflict over the responsibility for careers education for those on IFP
- Lack of knowledge of careers teachers of post-16 vocational and training opportunities
- Insufficient joint planning of post-16 provision to build on IFP experiences and qualifications
- Informal contacts and goodwill govern the sharing of data on IFP students between schools and colleges
- Lack of synchronisation in timetabling between institutions

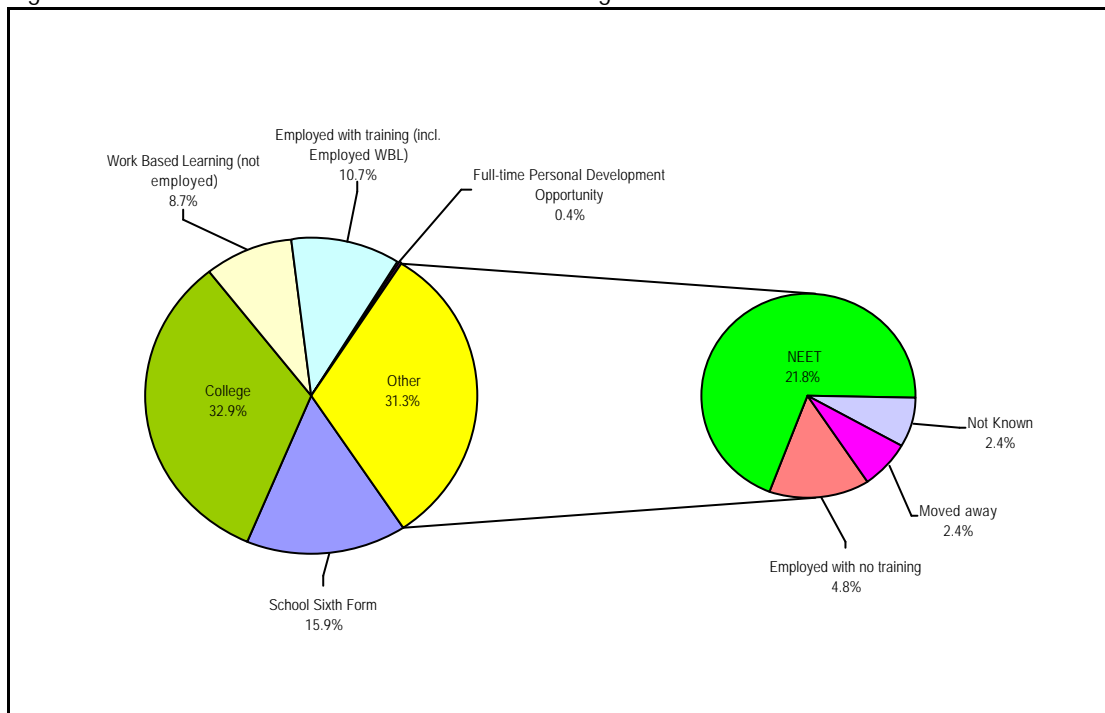
Source: Ofsted (2005)

5.2 IFP in Bradford and District

5.2.1 Effects on Post-16 Transition

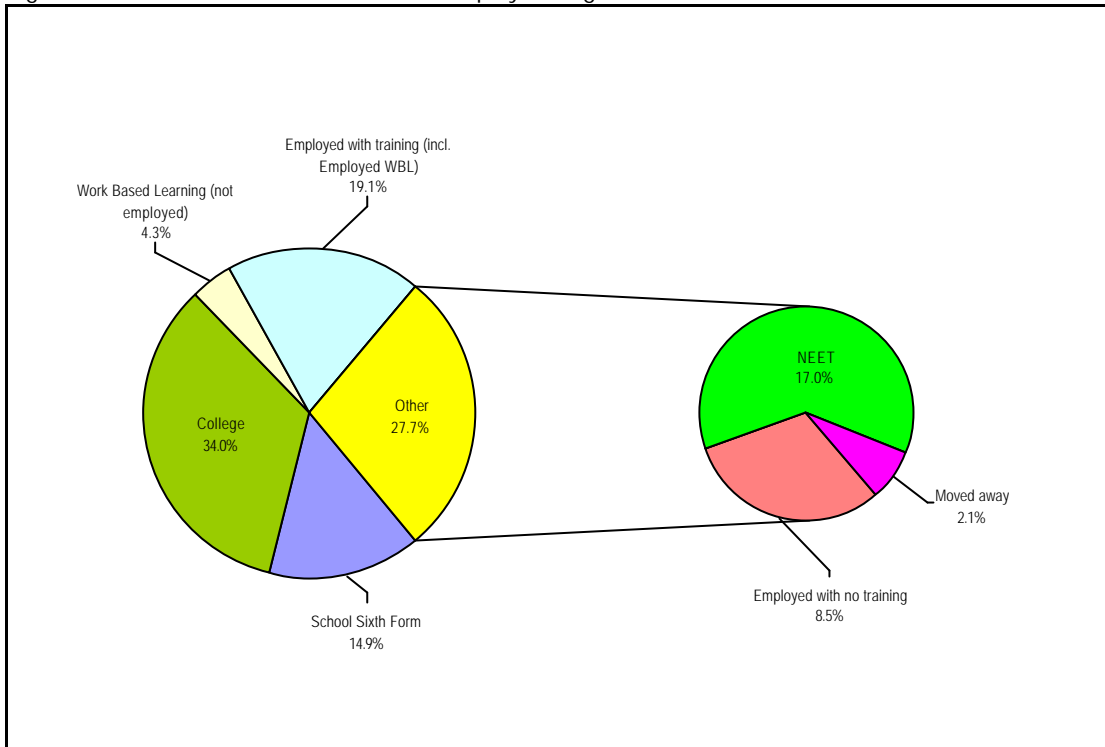
The following charts show higher proportion of young people entering a college destination on each of the IFP charts in comparison to the general cohort. Clearly IFP was very good for getting these young people to apply to and enter college (at a higher than average rate). And in addition it helped to achieve a lower than average NEET rate for the Keighley IFP participants. The charts can be compared with the overall actual and intended destinations charts in section 1.2. Here the percentage of young people intending to go into college post-16 was 20.8% and for school sixth form 49.7%. The actual destinations for those who participated in IFP show higher rates for college and WBL destinations in all cases compared to the general intended destinations for the general cohort as well as the actual destinations for the general cohort in February 2007.

Figure 5.2.1: Destinations as at Feb 07 – Bradford College IFP students of 05/06 Cohort



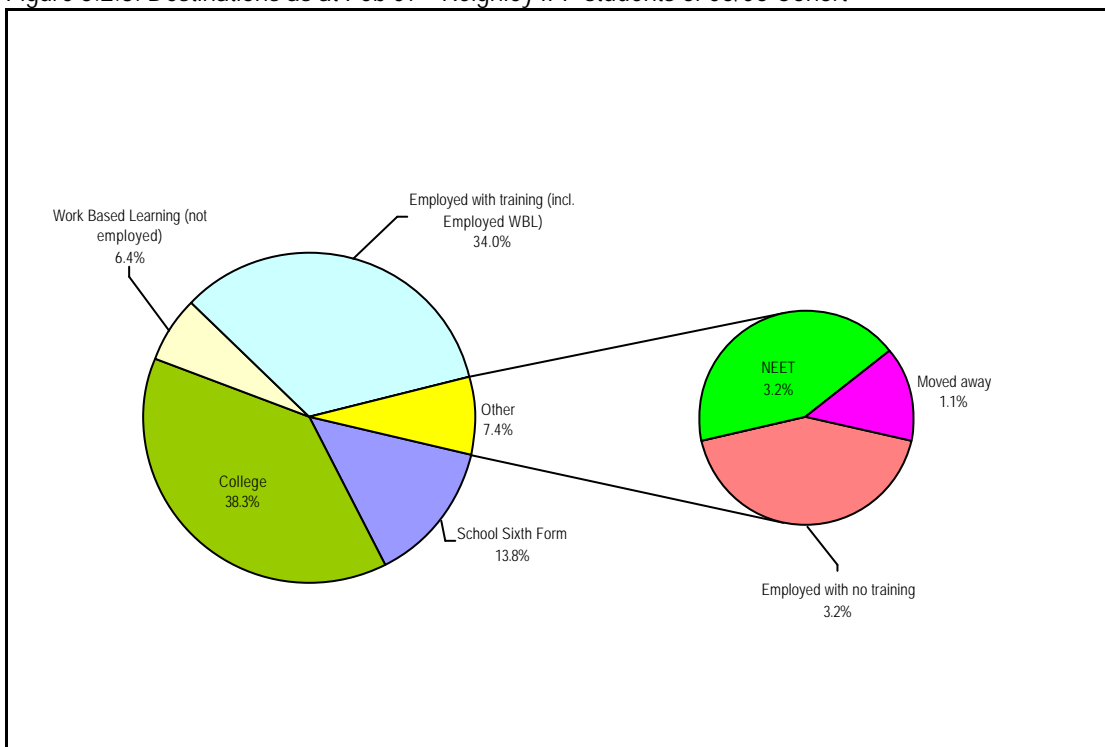
Source: Careers Bradford (2007b)

Figure 5.2.2: Destinations as at Feb 07 – Shipley College IFP students of 05/06 Cohort



Source: Careers Bradford (2007b)

Figure 5.2.3: Destinations as at Feb 07 – Keighley IFP students of 05/06 Cohort



Source: Careers Bradford (2007b)

5.2.2 IFP in Practice

6/7 of the young people who were currently on IFP at the time of interview considered it an influential experience for their choices for post-16. Reasons for this influence included the general experience of the college itself rather than the vocational area in some cases. For others, the practical experience in a particular vocational area was seen to give them a head start in deciding their career, “if someone wants to do it [plumbing] you don’t have to wait til after Year 11 to try it. You’ve saved 2 years if you don’t like it”. In other cases the IFP was simply a preferred learning environment to school due to the types of teaching, the tutors themselves or the way they felt treated by staff. The first two case studies below are examples of the positive effect of IFP and the journeys the young people are taking as a result.

Case Study 1: IFP Positive

Elliot (post-16) is currently studying at Shipley College and ready for his next year of ICT. For Eliot, IFP at the college was key to his successful transition post-16. Elliot explained that he didn't like school and was bullied in Year s 10 and 11. He looked forward to attending college on IFP however. Before his exams in Year 11 Elliot didn't attend school as he got very distracted and did not do very well in his exams. His IFP tutor recommended Elliott for a BTEC Intro to ICT at college, and helped him with his application form. Despite already attending college in Years 10 and 11 Elliot said he was nervous before starting his course and although he describes it as a bumpy ride so far he is looking forward to the next year.

Case Study 2: IFP Positive

Matthew is currently in Year 10 at mainstream school on IFP at Keighley College. He attends every Monday afternoon to do brickwork and is really enjoying it. His Dad is a builder so Matthew said he helped him with advice on what subjects to take. Matthew did find it difficult though to choose between brickwork or joinery and the trial day at college really helped with this. Matthew describes his time at college as much better than school as he is “not stuck in lessons that I don't want to be in”. He says that in college he does what he wants to be doing every time. After Year 11 Matthew wants to do his Apprenticeship and get some more qualifications to be more than just a labourer. Matthew sees himself as slightly ahead of those not attending college who want to go into construction like him. He feels that without this experience he would be less sure and less confident.

Not all experiences on IFP for young people are positive however, and some examples were found through this study. For the young people in Year 10, it was sometimes difficult for them to comment on the influence IFP has had, as they had not fully considered their post-16 choices at the interview stage. Their description of IFP was simply that it was an influence, “but not a major influence”. One young person with a particular negative experience was attending alternative provision at the time, and explained that IFP was just like school for her (see Case Study 3).

Case Study 3: IFP Negative

Rebecca is currently in Year 11 at an alternative education provider, but when she still attended school full-time she was on IFP at college. For Rebecca it was not a positive experience. She studied Health and Beauty at Bradford College for 4 sessions before disengaging. Rebecca explained it was because it was simply not a supportive environment for her, it was too much like school. Rebecca felt that like at school, she got told off too many times when she did nothing wrong. After Year 11 Rebecca intends to go to a different college to do an Art or Drama course and is really looking forward to it. She does not think her previous college experience was the right thing for her at the time.

For staff, the opinions of IFP were quite varied, ranging from reports of excellent partnership working and even planning of joint delivery in one school, to reports that there are still some schools which continue to send no young people to college, and colleges who feel they are only reaching a select cohort of young people. As with the Ofsted evaluative comments in 5.1, the reasons for this largely reflect those for post-16 transition in general. Key comments are summarised in the box below:

Staff comments: IFP

Only certain young people can take part in IFP - those not wanted in school because of difficulties achieving level 2

Schools still see vocational as an alternative curriculum for those who behave badly rather than those underachieving

We can no longer go into school to inform young people about IFP and if we do, it's to a selected audience

How much information do students at school really get about IFP?

Change in learning style for some young people can be difficult to cope with

Partnership-working

If information on student learning styles and needs is not provided we have to start from scratch [at college] and things take longer to settle down

Protocols are needed for the sharing of information about students (those not statemented or attending PRU)

School mentors are the key link for us [college] with schools

Coordinating timetables and mapping qualifications with schools can be difficult

We [college] can't be seen to be stepping on toes, can't be seen to be poaching young people post-16

Joint college inspections involving schools and joint delivery creates true partnerships

IFP at college enhances pre-16 delivery

Partnership working with schools needs to be excellent, communication is the key

Schools sometimes try to dictate the course content at college

Pressure felt from schools for 100% achievement

Other barriers

The cost of pre-16 provision like IFP can be a barrier for us at school

Some schools do not send any students to us anymore, it's competitive as they are setting up their own vocational centres now

Parents have wrong perceptions of vocational qualifications

Colleges can't be as involved with parents as we would like

Staff development at college for 14-16 is needed as it is very different to post-16

There is now less drive from a confederation level for visits and tasters

The IFP seems to hold partnership working and widening of the curriculum as central to its ethos and subsequent success. The research in this study found that where this worked well (such as the Case Study of Good Practice 7 on p.57 in the previous section) and partnerships and joint working were actively sought from all agencies involved, the experience for both young people and staff can be enhanced. However, where lack of communication and distinct issues of trust and bias were felt, the quality of learning achieved by the young people must suffer, such as when information is not shared on the young people, and tutors at college feel that time is wasted while they find details out themselves.

Access to this provision and whether it really broadens the pre-16 curriculum for all, is a theme that emerged through the research. Comments from participants indicated that, as with post-16 option information, some schools were selective about the students who receive it. A number of college staff commented that they felt pressured from schools to have 100% achievement from the students, but at the same time, were aware that the cohort attending was generally the lower achievers and those with behavioural issues.

In order to assess these comments a profile of the young people who attended IFP in 05/06 according to their support needs was formed using data stored on Careers Bradford's CORE+ database⁴. The full tables of support needs for each IFP can be found in the Appendix pp. 81-82. In summary, the data revealed a varied picture for each college that year. Bradford College had the highest proportion of young people with some kind of additional support need identified by their PA (86%), Shipley College's cohort contained 76% and at Keighley College 43% actually had no support need identified. Some of the students had up to 6 support needs identified on CORE+ at the time of the data collection, the most common included:

- Identified as at risk of underachieving
- Eligible for free school meals
- All categories of LDD including statemented
- Attending alternative provision
- Intermittent attender

These types of needs correlate with those identified at the beginning of the report with potential NEET indicators, pointing to an IFP cohort largely consisting of young people with some identified type of vulnerability. It must be noted that this is only one way of profiling the young people on IFP, eligibility for free school meals for example does not conclusively indicate a low achiever or behavioural issues. It does however provide some validity to the comments made by college staff through the research.

⁴ CORE+ is a database managed by Careers Bradford. Registered with the Information Commissioner, CORE+ meets the requirements of the DfES' CCIS specification and contains data on all young people between school year 8 and aged 20 in Bradford and District.

It has already been noted that good practice is evident within the Bradford Partnership, and a particular example at Keighley College can be found on p57. Good practice at Leeds College of Technology was also presented on p.53. The sharing of information between schools and colleges, provision of IAG and open communications between partners are all key elements of good practice for IFP. Additional good practice was also identified from the Ofsted evaluation (2005) and this is found below:

Good practice example (transition to college):

The school produces very thorough and up to date learning needs information and student profiles. These are sent with students, to colleges, at the point of application and interview. Individual education plans, statements of learning need, examination dispensations, and other relevant information are made available to colleges and post-16 providers. The school's learning support unit identifies students who might be at risk of early withdrawal, and discusses such students, at an early stage, with relevant college staff.

Source: Ofsted (2005, p31)

Good practice example (vocational dimension and partnership working):

The IFP partnership supports students in schools and colleges by building good working relationships with employers in the town. The partnership arranges a series of summer schools where employers representing a good range of sectors offer workshops, seminars, tutorials and some visits to premises to help students understand the business or industry. Students learn how the industry works, what skills and qualifications are needed and how links are made with course objectives. In addition, employers underline the importance of key skills. This event has proved very popular.

Source: Ofsted (2005, p14)

Good practice example (advice and guidance associated with IFP):

A variety of vocational opportunities are now in place at Key Stage 4, and the school takes great pains to ensure that individual students join programmes best suited to their interests and abilities. Information about courses is well presented to all students in an options booklet, which is issued after an options evening for students and their parents in March. The college makes a presentation at the options evening, and parents have a chance to find out more about the implications for their children of taking a college course. Careers education lessons enable students to make informed choices. Senior managers and the head of year interview all students and provide effective one to one guidance about courses. The options booklet gives clear explanations of what is involved in college courses and their suitability for students of a wide range of ability. All students, including higher-attainers, are free to choose vocational courses. There are more applicants than places, and the partnership uses a well thought out application form and interview process to ensure courses match the needs and aspirations of individual students.

Source: Ofsted (2005, p27)

Good practice example (support and IAG in college):

In [one] partnership the interests of well motivated students in manufacturing and engineering are effectively sustained through a programme of industry visits organised by the training agency. Work-based initiatives on industry 'taster' days have been established, providing further strong links with IFP courses. These visits and taster days help students put their training into the context of the workplace.

Source: Ofsted (2005, p29)

5.3 Conclusion

As noted by LSN (2006) pre-16 programmes such as IFP have been found to increase the likelihood of an appropriate and effective transition into post-16 education and training for young people. The IFP in Bradford and District was found to be effective in increasing the numbers of young people entering post-16 education and training in college or WBL, and in one case, reducing the NEET percentage for those who participated.

Interviews with current participants revealed that the majority of young people find the IFP an appropriate KS4 option for them, and in most cases directly influenced either their choices of qualification, and vocational area to study, or indeed their experience at college influenced their decision-making in terms of the organisation they wished to attend post-16.

The profile of young people participating in IFP was raised as a concern amongst college staff interviewed, and a comparison of the types of support needs of the young people in IFP in 05/06 in each college supported their experience and perception. IFP is not the right option for every young person, and concerns that only a particular cohort of young people has the choice at KS4 was a common finding. The profile of support needs revealed that over 75% of the participants in two colleges had a support need identified including a number of factors that have been shown to indicate potential NEET.

For IFP to really encourage collaboration and broaden the options for all young people at KS4, a number of good practice principles, strongly reflecting those at post-16 can be recommended: open and honest partnership working and collaboration (ensuring joint delivery, joint ownership and responsibility, efficient data sharing on young people and parental involvement) and provision of IAG in school and college to ensure young people make the correct choice for IFP, and do not miss out on careers education whilst they are in college. IFP was described by a strategic lead in the district as a way to bring schools and providers together to look at provision; however at this stage the extent to which this occurs is reliant on informal and personal relationships between schools and colleges. As a stand alone activity, IFP cannot improve transition, but pre-16 provision such as this, when combined with effective partnership activities and a package of support young people stand a better chance of a successful transition.

6. Conclusion

6.1 *Persistent barriers to transition*

- Access to IIAG is not universal, particularly for the “forgotten” group, and other vulnerable young people attending school without a statement of SEN
- Low parental involvement (particularly for those attending provision out of school)
- Reliance on informal and personal arrangements for collaboration. The research identified many examples of successful transition activities and arrangements, however without standard guidelines and entitlements they remain inconsistent in the district.
- Dominance of a “Trust” agenda with implications for:
 - Data sharing
 - Multi-agency collaboration
 - Clear information about different pathways to progression
- “Insular” outlook of young people
- Unrealistic expectations of KS4/post-16 provision
- Uninformed formal and informal support networks with a high impact on young people

6.2 *Targeted support – who is missing out?*

Statutory support and local practice is extensive for young people with SEN and the collaboration and regular review of the young person throughout their transition from Year 9 to post-16 has been shown to be very successful. Young people attending mainstream provision, particularly vulnerable groups and the identified “forgotten” group in alternative provision are argued to be missing out on IIAG and planned support in both KS4 and post-16 transition stages.

Young people in the care system and particularly at the transition stage between LAC and Leaving Care services for example are also particularly vulnerable. Those identified as having multiple needs and going through a series of multiple transition points in their life were reported to be lacking a range of the key personal and social as well as academic skills needed to make a positive and successful transition. In addition, a lack of careers education means they are often ill-informed about their choices.

At KS4 in particular, IAG was not found to be an influence for young people's choices, with young people instead relying on family, friends and teachers. The quality and impartiality of advice and support was concluded to be inconsistent at this stage.

6.3 Key Success Factors for Transition

- Open and honest partnerships between different agencies
- Presentation of impartial information, advice and guidance about young people's options at both KS4 (for all young people, not just those with a statement of SEN) and post-16 (particularly for the "forgotten" group)
- Parental involvement in transition activities (for some groups determining a young person's transition is just as much about educating the parent/carer as educating the young person). Successful examples in the study revealed the recognition that transition can be a process for all involved and to involve the network of support around a young person can be to ultimately improve their transition
- Flexibility of provision
- District-wide guidance on the requirements, roles and responsibilities of all agencies involved in young people's transition
- Recognition of the complete process of transition from 14-19 – a continuity and consistency of support throughout.

6.4 Implications

The national coordination and the learner-centred personalisation of sub-level 2 provision through the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) (14-19) will go some way to addressing the barriers identified in this report for young people who the traditional GCSE route is not appropriate. The principle of high quality initial assessment of the FLT will aid transition through its aims of efficient sharing of data and identification of learner needs that will ensure a programme suited to the learner. The young person-centred, personalised approach of the FLT will ensure that expectations of the programme of learning are addressed at the start, clear goals will be set and therefore progression options for the young person will be clear and appropriate.

In Bradford, consultation on the principles of the FLT has already taken place, with representatives involved from the voluntary and community sector, e2e suppliers from the sub-region, Working Together Lead Officers, Bradford Education, the LSC and Education Bradford. This is the first step in the beginning stages of what promises to be a partnership – led approach to

appropriate sub-level 2 provision that will aid in achieving more effective transitions for vulnerable young people in the district.

The Bradford NEET Action Plan and work of the NEET Fix activities is also working to aid the successful transition of young people identified as vulnerable to NEET. Collaboration of all agencies involved, flexible programme starts and targeted IIAG are some of the ways in which the success factors recommended in this study are already being implemented in the district.

Similarly, the forthcoming implementation of the 14-19 Prospectus for example will also support the recommended good practice as it will provide all young people with information regarding their options for both KS4 and post-16. Accompanied by IIAG the prospectus should help to address some of the existing barriers to transition involved with different agendas and pressures of education providers which cause biased information and advice being given to young people at times of transition.

At KS4, the introduction of specialised diplomas will aid in ensuring that young people are able to access appropriate and tailored provision for them.

It is evident that a number of different strategies are already in place for the district that will contribute to improving transition for young people both into KS4 and post-16. The study has however revealed that there are still some groups of young people missing out on support and information they need to make effective decisions regarding their transition, and also that a “trust” agenda dominates the extent to which many organisations are able to work in partnership.

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Appendices

Primary data collection – Interview Questions: Young people

What are you doing now? (this might be options being taken in Year 10, the IFP programme, e2e or a college course)

Why did you choose this particular course/programme/option?

How did you decide? Some prompting was sometimes necessary, adding additional questions such as:

Who did you speak to about it, how did they help?

Did you go on any visits/events/open evenings?

What information did you read?

Did you have enough information to decide, what else would have been helpful for you?

What do you intend to do when you finish school/ in Year 10/finish your course?

How did you/do you feel about leaving school:

What are you looking forward to/not looking forward to?

How did you/do you feel about starting college/sixth form/training provider?

What did you/are you finding difficult about deciding what to do next/leaving school?

Depending on programme they are on/provider they are attending:

How is it different to school?

What do you like/not like?

Primary data collection – Interview Questions: Education and Training Professionals

Role in organisation.....role in transition activities

Barriers to transition (KS4, Post-16)

How do you overcome these barriers on your project/course/policy/.....

What are the main influences on a young person going through transition?

Who should be involved in a young person's transition?

How do you involve these people/organisations?

Importance of and issues with parental involvement

How important is multi-agency collaboration in the transition work you do?

How do you involve other agencies?

What barriers do you face in terms of transition (strategic/managerial, resources etc)?

If you could wish for one thing for transition what would it be?

If prior to the interview the researcher was aware of a particular programme or area of good practice, in addition to, or through the above questions the following would be asked:

Background information about the example, how it overcomes barriers to transition, key factors that make the example successful

Primary data collection - Summary of interviews carried out

Providers participating	Staff Interviews	Young People Interviews	Total Interviews
The Challenge College	Personal Adviser Head of Sixth Form KS4 Achievement Leader Head of Sport and Guidance	4 x Year 10 4 x Year 12	12
Buttershaw High School	Personal Adviser Head of Year 10	8 x Year 10	10
Belle Vue Girls School	Personal Adviser Careers Coordinator Head of Sixth Form	3 x Year 9 4 x Year 10	10
Bradford College	<u>SEN</u> Transition Course Tutor Associate lecturer Curriculum Team Leader Pre-16 Education Consultant IFP Tutor Education Liaison	(have case study details of young people) 2 x IFP (Construction) 2 x Level 1 (Carpentry and Joinery)	10
Shipley College	<u>SEN 'Entry'</u> Team Leader <u>Working Class Boys Project</u> Personal Adviser IFP Coordinator	2 x Entry level post-16 2 x Post-16 Entry level 3 x IFP (Year 11) ICT	10
Keighley College	Personal Adviser Pre-16 Curriculum Director Head of Construction	2 x IFP (Year 10) Brickwork, Joinery	5
Bolling Special School	Head Sixth Form Manager Personal Adviser	(Parent)	4
Looked After Team	Personal Adviser		1
Learning Advice & Employment Preparation Team	LEAP Support Workers		2
A & R Training	E2e & Foundation Coordinator NVQ Assessor Personal Adviser	4 x e2e post-16 1 x FMA post-16	8
Youth Offending Team	Manager Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme Supervisor Personal Adviser		3
CJ's Training Base	Training Base Manager Team Leader	2 x Year 11	4
PRISM	Triangle Project Coordinator Senior Projects Manager	4 x Year 10 2 x Year 11	8
NEET Projects	NEET Coordinator, Careers Bradford		1
Pupil Referral Unit (Bradford College Secondary PRU)	Head of Unit Student Support Manager Personal Adviser	2 x Year 11	5
Education Bradford	Confederation Executive Officer Strategic Education Adviser School Improvement Officers x 3		5

Research Participants and organisations

A & R Training	Katie Longley Catherine Ingham
Belle Vue Girls School	Rosie Browne Paul Hazard
Bolling Special School	Mel Blackband Kay Taylor
Bradford College	Jacquie Davison Lisa Dryden Katherine Hague Steven Morley Ann Wardall Tracy Wilkinson
Bradford College Secondary Pupil Referral Unit	Sophia Allen John Linney
Bradford District Care Trust	Vicky Donnelly
Buttershaw High School	Jan Morris
Careers Bradford	Terry Cole Simon Holmes Sheila Johnstone Lila Jovanovich Richard Miller John McDermott Fay McIntosh Sophie Naylor Liz Palmer Balwir Singh Louise Skelton Chris Swanson
CJ's Training Base, The Lighthouse group	Helen Laws Adam Swrop
Education Bradford	Janet Gabanski Helen Griffin Chris Morton Maggie Peel Sam Watson
Keighley College	Eleanor Brown Heather Whitehead
Learning Advice and Employment Preparation Team	Dawn Brannigan Vera Markovic
Looked After Children's Team	Joanne Saxton
Prism (England) Limited	Paul Craven Tricia Stevens Marie Swiatek
Shipley College	Damian Butter Chris Holgate Julie Steel
The Challenge College	Ruth Craven Caroline Murray Damian Tolan
Youth Offending Team	Kewal Singh Kaddra Carol Lightowler Paul O'Hara

Support Groups- Bradford College IFP (254 young people)	%
None specified	14%
~Eligible for Free School Meals	12%
At Risk of Underachievement	10%
School: Alternative Curriculum	9%
LDD - School Action	7%
School: Intermittent Attender	6%
LDD - School Action Plus	5%
Homelife Issues	5%
LDD - Statemented	5%
LDD - Other	3%
Unclear about Career Route	3%
Supervised by YOT	3%
School: Non Attender	2%
Care Leaver (Bradford LCS Team)	2%
Housing Crisis	2%
At Risk of Dropout from Post-16 Course/Job/Training	2%
Emotional Wellbeing Issues	1%
Looked After (Bradford LAC Team)	1%
History of Health Problems	1%
Parent + Caring for Own Child(ren)	1%
~Currently Excluded	1%
Pregnant	1%
English Language Support Needed	1%
Parent but Not Caring for Own Child(ren)	1%
EU Migrant	1%

Support Groups - Shipley College IFP (47 young people)	%
None specified	24%
School: Alternative Curriculum	13%
-Eligible for Free School Meals	7%
At Risk of Underachievement	6%
Unclear about Career Route	6%
School: Intermittent Attender	6%
LDD - Statemented	6%
LDD - School Action	6%
History of Health Problems	4%
School: Non Attender	4%
Homelife Issues	4%
LDD - Other	3%
Supervised by YOT	3%
At Risk of Dropout from Post-16 Course/Job/Training	3%
Emotional Wellbeing Issues	1%
LDD - School Action Plus	1%
Housing Crisis	1%
Traveller	1%
Parent + Caring for Own Child(ren)	1%

Support Groups - Keighley College IFP (93 young people)	%
None specified	43%
LDD - School Action	14%
LDD - School Action Plus	8%
-Eligible for Free School Meals	7%
At Risk of Underachievement	7%
Homelife Issues	4%
School: Alternative Curriculum	3%
LDD - Statemented	3%
Unclear about Career Route	3%
Supervised by YOT	3%
At Risk of Dropout from Post-16 Course/Job/Training	2%
-Currently Excluded	1%
School: Intermittent Attender	1%
School: Non Attender	1%
Looked After (Bradford LAC Team)	1%
Care Leaver (Bradford LCS Team)	1%

NOTE: Some young people had more than one support need listed (up to 6). They have all been included in the data presented here.
Source for all 3 tables: Careers Bradford (2007b)