

Transitioning during COVID-19



Meeting the challenges of transition and young people with SEND during Covid-19 2020

The Careers & Enterprise Company has been talking to a wide range of stakeholders involved in the transition process for young people with SEND to find out what the challenges are during the Covid-19 crisis and how they are being met. We want to share this best practice more widely and this resource will be followed up by publishing further conversations around how 'Easing back...' is being approached by special schools and schools.

We welcome you sharing your ideas too so we can keep this resource updated over the coming months. Please email send@careersandenterprise.co.uk.

You have
highlighted
my biggest
challenge
now.

CDI Careers Leader of the Year
2020 in a special school.



Challenges you are facing

We consulted with a wide range of stakeholders who would usually be involved with transition between 1 – 13 May 2020 via LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook specialist groups and webinars and phone calls.





Summary of some of the challenges you are facing relating to transition.

- Specific challenges for children with SEND such as reducing levels of support from services provided by Local Authorities.
- Increased pressure on families many of whom would have minimal resources.
- Increased levels of anxiety of students and families.
- Greater need for regular, open two-way contact with colleges and all destination providers.
- Families need regular contact and help with paperwork and digital engagement.
- FE colleges may be difficult to reach, and virtual transitioning activities are varied. Families are extremely nervous and anxious about the lack of contact.
- Some are worried about increasing NEETs and some mainstream students with SEND falling through the cracks.
- Questions around how careers advisers are going to be up to date and informed post COVID-19 as things will change, will they get training?



These challenges and concerns are serious and heart-felt and the following examples of best practice show how practitioners in many different settings are meeting the challenges



What is being done to meet the challenges of transition during Covid-19?

- Talking to such a wide range of stakeholders has highlighted many from Careers Leaders of how transition is being navigated.
- From our findings, we have provided a number of practical examples from Careers Leaders below for each key stakeholder group.



Careers Leaders

- Working closely with SENCOs around effective transition and individualised planning.
- Focusing on local LMI and on sectors they feel will be able to offer opportunities likely to emerge during and post Covid-19.
- Focus is on mental health and wellbeing.
- Supporting families to engage with establishments to support transition including around virtual encounters.
- Making multiple and regular phone calls to families to support them when thinking about transition.
- Making plans for example 'Easing back...'
- Speaking to the colleges and sixth forms in the area who are sending bridging information and tasks to students.
- Offering opportunities for students to build employability skills and practice them.
- Enlist the help of your Enterprise Coordinator or Enterprise Adviser to find the right person to speak to at college if it is proving difficult to make contact. Some have suggested going to the marketing department for help.



Employers

- Remain in close contact with employers and key staff to maintain relationships. Employers are positive about re-engaging with internships as soon as is possible.
- Many employers including Network Rail have been offering virtual interviews and packs for parents and families.



Other staff

- Continuing to create careers passports for students.
- In some instances, where possible, transition has been moved to happen later in the year.
- Transition Mentors who are making regular contact with Y11s to provide pastoral and academic support, but the main focus is helping them to think about 'what next' and what support they need for that transition.
- Lead Teacher for Transition is keeping in touch with families and students and FE college and local authority.



FE Colleges are offering:

- Videos created of key people and places and shared with students with SEND and their families.
- Online induction webinars and introduction classes provided by colleges for students.
- Virtual/recorded tours and introductions to key staff within each establishment - to assist familiarity.
- Resources that are accessible for a range of needs including use of communicators/signers.
- Bridging materials.



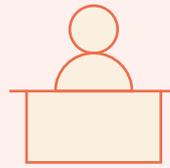
Careers Advisors and Careers Providers are:

- Providing CEIAG remotely.
- Deferring CEIAG until the Autumn.
- Organising therapy / additional support remotely via video.
- National Careers Service is hosting Virtual Jobs Fairs on Facebook and Twitter.
- Careers Providers – have been offering blogging / vlogging / virtual contact with students and families via FaceTime, Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook.
- Making plans to permanently continue with a blended guidance solution.
- Offering remote / virtual training in chunks as an alternative to face to face, developing digital versions of resources so students could access them anywhere, developing new courses which reflect the situations students will face from the summer, delivering phone based career coaching as an alternative to face to face, not using visual contact methods because of safeguarding, weekly sessions, targeting Year 10/11/12s, taking part in new discussion forums and partnerships.
- Liaising with destination providers around the learner needs.



Supporting families, parents and carers

- Offer families review meetings virtually.
- Offering online careers fairs for the whole family and finding that family engagement levels have risen dramatically.
- The Job Coach is in contact with them more informally and liaising closely with their learners and parents/carers.
- Keeping in touch with every family.



Students

- Schools are talking to the colleges about virtual tours and bridging activities, and are working with the students to prepare them to talk to tutors and support workers at the college over the phone or online but a big challenge for students.
- Provided with coaching / support for transition conversations with providers and providing progression coaches.
- Curriculum Leads sending transition information to students too.
- Supporting students through virtual college/ apprenticeship interviews and helping them look for opportunities and prepare their CVs.
- Speaking with parents/carers and learners about their anxieties and assisting to alleviate these where possible.
- Where internships are on offer, Job Coaches are continuing to support students learning and development through daily virtual sessions and tasks.



Local Authority

- Examples of exploring the lack of outcomes achieved despite them being expressed on EHC Plans and working to create a new delivery model that will improve outcomes including the increased use of Inclusive Apprenticeships.
- Other Local authorities have a Transitions Team so all students in Special Schools are identified and the next stages of their career is mapped out, for example they have a Supported Internship pipeline.

To access the list of all Transition challenges, please [click here](#).



Case study

National Grid and the EmployAbility - Let's Work Together Supported Internship programme

We have been holding daily Zoom calls with our interns since we started working from home just before lockdown. The interns all had to learn how to use Zoom as did we! They have risen to every challenge we have presented to them; in particular one of our interns did not think he could do video calls/telephone calls but has absolutely excelled. His mum emailed saying she didn't think he would manage it but he has! Another success story is one of our other interns parents emailed saying initially he thought he would have to fully support his son in working from home but after a couple of days he was amazed that his son was setting an alarm (something he hadn't done previously), getting himself ready and online in time for his 09.30 Zoom teaching session/check in with us. He said he now just gets on with it and he doesn't hear from him whilst he is working away on his BTEC.

We have used the National SEND Employment Forum/DFN Foundation 'Finding your Future' Campaign videos as a discussion point on our video calls and have continued to send the links to our interns and their parents. We send our interns and parents a monthly EmployAbility update where we tell them how well the interns are doing and share useful suggestions that we have come across via different sources whilst in lockdown; mostly around well-being etc. We have set our interns a cooking challenge last week and this week where they share as a group what they decided to cook, how and share any photos etc. They also score it out of 10. Today we hosted an 'End of placement Celebration' via Zoom so that our interns could share their end of placement presentations with site team members, school representatives and placement leads and mentors. It was excellent and school representatives were amazed by the drastic improvement in the interns' confidence levels. We have job seeking sessions booked with Pertemps and Think Forward in order to ensure we are giving our interns the best possible opportunities in looking for employment.

From Paula Jeffries, job coach in Solihull and Martina Christie, job coach in Wokingham

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What next?

Please continue to share what you are doing with us - email: SEND@careersandenterprise.co.uk

We are developing a national SEND Community of Practice as a learning community to share best practice. It will provide the opportunity to learn from colleagues and Careers Leaders in other settings working with young people with SEND. To find out more about how you can be involved in our SEND Community of Practice, please contact your Careers Hub Lead or Enterprise Coordinator.

Resources

- Department for Education document Understand how to follow safeguarding procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Full set of resources focused on Transition and students with SEND and Autism from
<https://www.reachoutasc.com/resources/transition-to-new-class>
- A guide for transitioning back to school: With schools potentially being asked to phase pupils back to school from as early as June, take a look at some of our top tips for transitioning back to school after lockdown. This handy resource contains information for teachers, parents and pupils as well as a range of visual resources that can be used at home or in school.
<https://www.beyondautism.org.uk/about-autism/resources/>
- Resources for Careers Leaders from Matt Tope Enterprise Coordinator
http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/careersportal/info/25/the_8_gatsby_benchmarks
- Key stages: key stage 3 to key stage 5 - information and support on different aspects of mental health and wellbeing.
<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/coronavirus-information-and-support>
- Key stages: key stage 3 to key stage 5 – videos with tips on gaining confidence, dealing with anxiety, and coping strategies from other young people.
<https://riseabove.org.uk/topic/my-mind/>
- Key stages: key stage 3 to key stage 5 - advice on supporting grieving children during the coronavirus outbreak.
<http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/covid-19.aspx>
- A downloadable guide to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and students during periods of disruption
<https://www.annafreud.org/media/11160/supporting-schools-and-colleges.pdf>
- Resources from an award-winning, innovative school, rated by Ofsted as outstanding and put together by SEND teachers. The resources include apps and programmes.
<http://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/page/?title=Resources&pid=3>
- Home Schooling children with SEND - A series of information resources to help parents, carers and families support pupils with SEND at home during the period of school closures: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/centre-inclusive-education/homeschooling-children-send>