

About this paper



This paper describes the evidence base for transition programmes for young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Schools, colleges and providers of careers and enterprise programmes are invited to use this evidence to inform the programmes that they are running and developing.

The paper draws together academic and 'grey' literature (such as policy papers, speeches and programme evaluation reports), with the aim of, first, clarifying the impacts from transition programming and, second, exploring what effective practice looks like.

You can read our detailed review of the evidence on *Transition programmes for young adults with SEND. What works?* on the Careers & Enterprise Company website.

www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/research/Transition-programmes-for-young-adults-with-SEND-What-works?



The Careers & Enterprise Company. (2017) *Transition programmes for young adults with SEND. What works?*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

In brief



The evidence suggests that transition programmes for those young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can have a significant and observable impact on behaviour, attainment and progression. We can describe these interventions as effective (a 3 on the Early Intervention Fund scale) or consistently effective (4) as we have a number of high quality studies and qualitative reviews, although there is some variety in the evidence base across the different interventions that comprise transition planning. However, the size of the effect is typically **small to moderate**.

Key features of the evidence include the importance of putting the individual with SEND and their family at the centre of transition programmes and the importance of facilitating supported work experience.

Executive Summary: Transition programmes for young adults with SEND). What works?





Introduction

All young people can face difficulties in finding employment, but finding a job can be even more complicated for the 14% of young people with disabilities. Young people described as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face unique challenges in progressing from school to further learning and the workplace.

This group are frequently disadvantaged in society and are the most likely group of young people to be absent or excluded from school. Students labelled with SEND are also less likely to achieve good outcomes both in terms of their attainment and progression. For example, they are more likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training) than their peers, less likely to hold higher, managerial, administrative and professional occupations and more likely to be in occupations that are expected to decline in the near future such as manual work.

The Careers & Enterprise Company believes that young people should be given the best support available to develop their careers and to make choices about education and employment. At the heart of the Company's ability to do this is our commitment to listening to and developing the evidence base. This paper sets out the findings of a rapid review of the current evidence on transition programmes for young adults with SEND. We hope that it will be useful to schools and careers and enterprise providers in shaping what they provide for young people with SEND and how they think about using evidence.

The National Audit Office report Oversight of Special Education for Young People aged 16-25 estimates that supporting people with a learning disability into employment will not only improve their independence and self-esteem but could also increase that person's income by between 55 and 95 per cent. They further suggest that providing a young person with the relevant life and employability skills so that they can live in semi-independence could reduce lifetime support costs to the public by approximately £1 million. Only 7% of people with learning disabilities are currently in paid employment. Poor employment outcomes for young people with SEND are linked to both a lack of suitable jobs and to limited aspirations and opportunity awareness.

There has been considerable research examining the issues and challenges that young people with SEND experience and the important challenges in adjustment for families in their relationships with the young people undergoing transition. Such research typically highlights that young people with SEND often fail to achieve the necessary qualifications to participate in post-compulsory education or access most jobs. This raises questions about the availability of appropriate

post-school provision. It also highlights that young people with SEND often deal with an additional transition between the support and advocacy arrangements in schools and those in place in post-secondary learning, work or the community and that these young people have to consider how to disclose and manage their SEND within a new context.

Research with young people aged 14-18 reports that young people with SEND are less likely than others to feel able to achieve their potential, and are more likely to have considered dropping out of learning and to worry they will fail. While the aspirations of young people with SEND are higher than previous cohorts, many experience disappointment and frustration in adult life. Some feel that as they move to adulthood it is more difficult to access the support they need in order to pursue career options and to help with transitions from education to employment and adult life. Some research suggests that transition support is insufficiently targeted at the particular needs of disabled young people, including any additional support needs. Young people with SEND may not be offered the continual long-term support they need. This can also lead to young people being lost in the system and being without support.

Four sets of factors seem important in determining the outcomes of the transition process:

1. Young people's capacities and characteristics
2. The level of familial inclusion and support
3. The nature and effectiveness of local support systems
4. The range of local opportunities available to young people, such as college courses, employment and training options.

Executive summary



Transition programmes for young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aim to provide a successful move from school to further/higher education, training, employment or self-employment. Traditionally learners with SEND have demonstrated poor outcomes. Transition programmes provide opportunities to improve these outcomes by allowing young people to learn about themselves, the skills that are needed for life and the world of work. The evidence suggests that some of the elements of these programmes, particularly work experience, supported internships/employment, employee preparation programmes, self-determination training and family involvement are well evidenced by a series of research studies and by multiple literature reviews which demonstrate positive outcomes for participants. Other elements, for example interagency practices, are less well evidenced but can still be described as potentially effective.

Existing studies have observed impacts associated with transition programmes across personal attributes (personal effectiveness, career readiness, employability skills and social capital) as well as personal outcomes in education and employment.

1. Start young and maintain support across the life course or until the young person is established in the labour market.

It is important that transition programmes are started early in secondary school. Like all young people, those with SEND need time and space to explore their strengths and needs, engage with face-to-face guidance, explore and develop their own skills, access meaningful employer and employee encounters and have supported work experiences over a longer period of time than someone without SEND. This needs to be carefully planned, coordinated and managed and requires the interplay of multiple teams, organisations and/or agencies. There is evidence to suggest that taking a 'developmental' approach to transition programmes (where the individual with SEND is continually supported by a dedicated individual or team throughout school and into post-school activities) is more likely to result in a successful transition than what has been termed the 'booster' approach (where the individual with SEND is responsible for their own progression and seeks help as and when they need it).

2. Ensure access to support and relevant developmental activities (this can include career guidance, teacher support, agency support and specific skills training).

Young people with SEND and their families should be aware of all the relevant support and developmental opportunities available to them in their area and where necessary access to these should be facilitated. Schools should ensure dedicated adult support for young people with SEND.

3. Involve families in the transition.

There is strong evidence to suggest that involving the individual with SEND's family in transition programming is very important to the success of the programme. Families not only have insight into the young person's unique strengths, needs and capabilities but are also likely to be involved in supporting them through the transition. It is important therefore that they are included in the planning.

4. Provide encounters and experience with employers, working people and workplaces.

As with all young people, multiple encounters with work facilitate effective transitions after school. Young people with SEND are significantly more likely to be employed after school when they have had some form of work experience. To be effective, work experience should involve mentoring or individual job coaching in the workplace, have a clear, individualised/personalised training plan for the individuals with SEND and include reinforcement of work-based learning outside of work.

5. Ensure that career and employability learning and support continues in the workplace.

Young people with SEND will continue to require work that is aligned to their evolving strengths, interests and needs and that retains precise expectations and feedback. Clear, personalised training plans that make use of on the job training are required with ongoing assessments of support needs. Mentoring or individual job coaching by trained staff is of benefit.