



Activity Agreements Opportunities for All

The influence of Activity Agreements on early transition planning

Context

Young people in Highland, who, without additional support, are unlikely to make a successful transition to further learning, training or employment, are identified early by the school and Highland Council 16+ staff, and transition plans put in place.

Linda has Global Developmental Delay resulting in severe learning difficulties. She is currently in S6 at a small High School, in a rurally remote part of the local authority area.

Transition planning was discussed at the start of Linda's S5 academic year, at her *Childs Plan meeting*. Linda had reached her academic limit at Access 2 level, lacked confidence and would need additional support to make the transition from school. As part of Opportunities for All, Activity Agreements were discussed as the most appropriate option for Linda post-school and it was agreed that Activity Agreement staff would maintain contact with her so that an informed referral could be made nearer the time she would be leaving school.

Activity Agreements are only accessed by those who are no longer on the school role and have reached their sixteenth birthday.

Key elements

An individualised transition plan was created for Linda to help her prepare for the wider post-school learning environment, and eventually towards work. This involved her travelling to Ullapool once a week to attend a 'Made in Ullapool' candle making workshop tailored to ASN clients. This was funded through social work and supported by school. Linda also continued her school timetable of Access 1 and 2 qualifications and a work experience placement in a local hospitality venue where she baked, cleaned, helped lay tables and prepare for a senior citizens lunch club twice a week. When she turned 16, and at the point of her leaving school, Activity Agreements staff would support Linda to carry on with and build on the transition activity in Ullapool. A key delivery principle of Activity Agreements is the flexibility whereby learning can be undertaken in a location most suitable for the young person.

Due to the success of this approach and the positive impact on Linda it was decided by social work and the school that the most appropriate route for Linda would be to continue at school as a pupil, whilst undertaking an enhanced level of activity out with the school through the Activity Agreement approach, with the aim of better preparing her for her eventual transition.

Impact

Whilst retaining the positive support of the school environment and contact with her peer group, the extended provision out with the school environment enabled Linda to experience a new and wider peer group. It was felt that Linda was restricted in the community as it is a very small community within and out-with the school. Accessing support in Ullapool is making a huge difference to Linda's confidence. She is developing a peer group of other young people with ASN of a similar age which does not exist in her home village.

Activity Agreements provide the support of a 'Trusted Professional' to ensure participants continue to engage in learning and are able to access learning suited to them. Linda's Guidance Teacher is currently supporting Linda and co-ordinating her programme. When she leaves school social work will undertake the Trusted Professional role for her Activity Agreement.

The Activity Agreement provision in Ullapool also allowed Linda to access other services which are not available in her home village such as the swimming pool, shops and cafes. This helped Linda develop independence and improve her personal and social skills which had been a difficulty for her due to her condition and her rural location.

Linda's transition from school to post-school activity is being underpinned by the key Activity Agreement principles of early intervention, partnership working and a person-centred approach. The school and social work value this approach as the most appropriate route for Linda. She is now likely to remain in school for the remainder of the year before engaging with an Activity Agreement.

Highland Council is also developing an early intervention transition programme in partnership with Highlife Highland and Calman Trust. This will support young people who have disengaged with education and are likely to be eligible for, or need the support of an Activity Agreement when they leave school.

Linda's Support for Learning teacher said "using this approach has had a positive impact on all aspects of Linda's life, most particularly because of her improved confidence".