RESEARCH

Post-16 Transitions: a Longitudinal Study of Young People with Special Educational Needs: Wave Two

S Dewson, J Aston, P Bates, H Ritchie
Institute for Employment Studies
Prof. A Dyson
University of Manchester

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Introduction

This is the second wave of longitudinal research with young people with special educational needs (SEN) to record and track their progress as they move from compulsory schooling to early adulthood. The first wave of research with young people with SEN, and their parents and carers, was undertaken in 2000-01 when they were in curriculum Year 11. This second wave of research went back to these young people, and their parents and carers, in the 2002/03 academic year and has sought to build on and update the earlier study.

Aims and objectives of the study

The overall aims of the research were to:

- Provide a comprehensive overview of the experiences, achievements and attitudes of young people with SEN during their post-16 transitions and beyond.
- Identify the strengths, weaknesses and barriers to further education, higher education, training, employment and independent living.

This research is based on:

- a literature review
- two quantitative surveys of young people and their parents or carers, and
- a series of 16 in-depth qualitative case studies with young people, their parents and carers and others involved in the post-16 transition process, such as Connexions advisers, college tutors, and social workers.

The sample

Interviews were carried out with 1,874 young people and 1,686 parents and carers. Most young people interviewed as part of Wave 2 were white (90 per cent) and approximately two-thirds of the sample were young men. The majority of young people

responding to the survey had difficulties relating mainly to cognition and learning (54 per cent). Around one-fifth of young people had communication and interaction difficulties, and a similar proportion presented behavioural, emotional and social development needs. Just over one in twenty young people in the survey had sensory and/or physical disabilities. Forty per cent of the whole sample had a statement of SEN whilst at school. Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were most likely to have a statement whereas young people behavioural, emotional and social development needs were the least likely to have one. Seventy-eight per cent of the sample had attended a mainstream school.

Key findings

School and outcomes

- Transition planning review meetings are a statutory obligation for young people with statements of special educational needs. Less than half of all young people taking part in the Wave 2 survey could recall attending a transition planning review. Not surprisingly young people with a statement of SEN and those who had attended a special school were much more likely to recall (or remember attending) a transition planning review than those without a statement, or those who had attended a mainstream school. Young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were the least likely to recall attending a transition planning review.
- One-third of young people without statements recalled attending a transition planning review meeting although there was no statutory obligation to have had one.
- Most people recalling a transition planning review thought it had been useful, with school careers advisers and other school staff being reported as the most helpful people at the review. Very few young people recalled that the Careers Service or Connexions were present at their transition planning review.
- Over three-quarters of all young people recalled having a general discussion with someone from the Careers Service or Connexions about their future. In the main, these discussions had provided information and explained the options that were available to them post-16. Those who had not found these discussions useful reported that they had not provided the right sort of information or enough information.
- Young people were most likely to report that their parents were the most helpful to them when making their post-16 transitions from compulsory schooling. However, whilst generally feeling involved in the transition process, the majority of parents and carers felt that they had received little

help or information from the young person's school regarding their post-16 options.

- Most young people taking part in the survey have a positive regard for their time at school, for example, by giving them confidence and teaching them things that would be useful in a job, although many thought that school had not helped them to decide what they wanted to do next.
- Most young people had gained a Level 1 equivalent qualification from school. Young people with statements of SEN, who had attended a special school, and/or who had behavioural, emotional or social development needs were the least likely to have gained qualifications from school.

Transition from Year 11

- Almost half of all young people in the survey were currently studying at school or college whilst just over one-quarter were in employment at the time of the survey. Almost one in five young people in the survey were unemployed or inactive.
- Young people who were continuing in education post-16 were most likely to recall attending a transition review meeting, have had a statement of SEN, attended a special school, and have communication and interaction difficulties, or sensory and/or physical disabilities.
- Young people without a statement of SEN, who had attended a mainstream school, who could not recall attending a transition plan, and who had behavioural, emotional and social development needs were most likely to be in employment at the time of the survey
- Young people in work were primarily engaged in elementary occupations and the majority were not engaged in any work-related or government-supported training *eg* Modern Apprenticeship.
- Young people without a statement, and those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were more likely than those without a statement, or other types of SEN to have been unemployed at the time of the survey.

Support received

- Most young people have had some sort of contact with professional services since Year 11, the majority of which have been medical.
- One in three young people have had a meeting with someone from the Careers Service or Connexions since completing compulsory schooling.
- Many parents have sought additional information and advice relating to education, employment, social services and the young person's special educational need since they had

completed Year 11, however, several reported that they experienced problems getting additional information and advice on these issues because staff from different services did not work together, or because they received conflicting advice from staff working in different services.

- Parents and carers continue to be extremely important sources of support for young people with SEN.

Other outcomes since Year 11

- Just over half of all young people have achieved new qualifications, or have worked towards new certification since Year 11. Young people without statements and those from mainstream schools were more likely to have gained new qualifications over this time frame.
- Formal qualifications, such as GCSEs and GNVQs were more likely to have been achieved by people without statements and those from mainstream schools than those with statements or those who had been to a special school. These young people were more likely to have achieved less formal qualifications and certificates.
- Most young people report several soft outcomes since Year 11, including feeling more independent, having more friends, and having a clearer idea of what they wanted to do in the future.
- Most parents believe that education had given the young person greater confidence and taught them subjects that were work-relevant.

Past and future

- The majority of young people and parents generally believe that things have gone well for them since they completed Year 11.
- In the main, parents and carers are positive about the young person's future and believe that the young person receives enough support in planning for this future.
- One in five parents, however, do not believe that things have worked out well for the young person, nor do they feel positive about the future and the way the young person is supported in planning for it. This is particularly the case amongst parents and carers of young people with statements of SEN, who attended special schools, or who have behavioural, emotional or social development needs.

Evidence from the case studies

- The case studies present a more detailed and troubled picture of transition than the surveys. In many ways, this is because of the skewed nature of the case study sample, which sought to illustrate the transitions of young people with severe and

profound difficulties and those which presented particular challenges to the transition process.

- In almost all of the case studies, there was at least one provider, agency or individual making great efforts to ensure that the young person progressed.
- There was some evidence from the case studies that agencies worked well together (though not always) to address the wide range of young people's needs regarding their academic progression, or social and personal needs. However, there was rarely one professional, or champion, who had an overview of the young person's case (particularly post-16) and who was actively involved in shaping provision to meet their individual needs.
- Examples of relatively smooth transitions seem to be the exception rather than the rule.
- Planned transitions seem to work best where there is least at stake. For those young people with no real option other than to stay in education, the transition is effectively deferred for two to three years whilst the young person continues along a pre-ordained track.
- Other young people experienced a range of disruptive factors when making the transition, not least a lack of real choice, or a lack of formal support and advice mechanisms/services to assist the decision-making process.
- Parents and carers were found, not surprisingly, to be a particularly important resource in the transition process, and one which is not always fully harnessed and utilised.
- In many of the case studies, there was evidence of progression for the young person in at least one domain *ie* in their current activity, acquisition of skills or qualifications, or their personal and social life.

Conclusions

From the survey and the case studies, two groups of young people stand out:

- The first group relates to young people with largely uncontested impairments (*eg* sensory and/or physical disabilities) that have been identified at school. These young people generally have a statement, have attended a special school (or special provision in a mainstream school) and have had multi-agency intervention related to their impairment. Essentially, these young people constitute a fairly well-known population for whom there are clear transition pathways, although many are experiencing deferred transitions in post-16 education. The issues for them are whether the pathways they are on are appropriate, whether they promote genuine progression and whether the high level of service co-

ordination these young people need (and that they have experienced pre-16) actually survives the transition phase.

- The second group of young people are those with less well-defined or evident needs *eg* less severe learning difficulties, and behavioural, emotional or social development needs who effectively form part of a broader population of educational low-attainers. They are most likely to have attended mainstream schools, are less likely to have had statements of SEN or well-defined transition pathways, and the level of statutory support they have received to date appears to be low. Many have left education and have entered or are seeking to enter the bottom end of the labour market. The issue for these people is whether the mainstream 'systems' within which they operate, including the education system and the labour market, are sufficiently powerful to overcome the (sometimes significant) difficulties that these young people face. There is considerable evidence already that this may not be the case.

Of course there is a much larger group of young people who fall between these two groups. These young people have a range of special educational needs, including communication and interaction, and cognition and learning difficulties. These may or may not be attributed to various 'conditions' or to more contested and less 'visible' impairments. They may or may not have had a statement of SEN, may well not have had any significant involvement from other agencies and constitute a population for whom transition pathways are less well defined, or understood. The issues for this group of young people are likely to centre around the appropriateness of the available transition pathways that they are following, and the level and effectiveness of such support as is available.

This study has reported the experiences of young people two years after they have completed statutory schooling. Given that these young people are likely to take time to work their way through the transition process and that many of them are experiencing what might be called a 'deferred transition', it is too early to reach conclusive judgements about the quality and effectiveness of the processes they are experiencing, or the outcomes they have achieved. It is likely to become clearer in successive waves of research whether what is happening is a slow and steady progression towards a meaningful and productive adulthood, a largely non-productive process of 'churning' and stagnation, or a complex mixture of the two.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a second wave of longitudinal research with young people with special educational needs (SEN) to record and track their progress as they move from compulsory schooling to early adulthood. The first wave of research with young people with SEN, and their parents and carers, was undertaken by the Centre for Formative Assessment Studies at the University of Manchester in 2000/01. These young people had been on SEN Stage 2 for two years or more, or were on higher SEN stages (regardless of time), and were in curriculum Year 11 during that academic year (these stages relate to the Code of Practice in force in 2000/01). This second wave of research involved going back to these young people, and their parents and carers, in the 2002/03 academic year and has sought to build on, and update the earlier study. This research was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and was undertaken by the Institute for Employment Studies in partnership with MORI and Professor Alan Dyson of the University of Manchester.

1.1 Aims and objectives of the study

The overall aims of the research have been to:

- Provide a comprehensive overview of the experiences, achievements and attitudes of young people with SEN during their post-16 transitions and beyond.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of, and barriers to, further education, higher education, training, employment and independent living.

The key objectives for this second wave of research were to:

- Identify educational outcomes from school for young people with SEN.
- Identify their activities on leaving school.
- Identify the support mechanisms available to young people with SEN as they begin early adult life, and

establish the sources of this support (*eg* support in work, education, training, careers advice/Connexions, health and community services *etc.*).

- Identify any intermediate outcomes from their post-16 activities. These may include hard outcomes *eg* qualifications, job moves *etc.* and soft outcomes, *eg* improved motivation, confidence, independence *etc.*[1]
- Identify current living arrangements.
- Identify the extent of inclusion into mainstream society.
- Review the expectations and aspirations of young people with SEN to ascertain if they have been met.
- Assess parental involvement with, and views on, outcomes and the transition process.

1.2 Methodology

This study is based on:

- a literature review update
- quantitative surveys with young people and their parents or carers, and
- a series of 16 in-depth qualitative case studies.

The literature review was intended to update the earlier review carried out by the Centre for Formative Assessment and to provide the policy context for this study.

1.2.1 Wave 2 survey

In Wave 1 of the research, carried out in 2000/01, interviews were conducted with 2,313 young people and 2,365 parents/carers. As there had been a substantial period of time between the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys, a high rate of attrition was expected. In view of the need to ensure an adequate sample size for analysis, as well as the follow-up interviews with young people and their parent or carer who took part in the Wave 1 survey (the Wave 1 sample), the second stage of the survey involved additional interviews with a new sample of young people and their parents/carers (the top-up sample). Appendix One provides full technical details of the survey approach taken in Wave 2.

[1] Dewson *et al.*, (2000), *Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: A Review of Current Practice*, DfES Research Report RR219

Main-stage fieldwork

The aim in the main stage fieldwork was to achieve paired interviews with both the young person and their parents/ carers in the first instance.

However, this was not possible in a small number of cases and interviewers were instructed not to conduct a parent/carer interview unless they were able to interview the young person as well.

Fieldwork was carried out from March 2003 to December 2003. In total, 1,876 interviews were achieved with young people in Wave 2, from an issued sample of 3,732, giving an overall adjusted response rate of 68 per cent.

From an issued sample of 3,722 leads for parents/carers, 1,688 participated in the study, which represents an adjusted response rate of 63 per cent.[1] Table 1.1 illustrates the sample outcome in more detail.

Weighting

Table 1.2 reports the achieved sample at Wave 2 against estimates of the number of year-11 students in 2000 by school type and whether they had a statement of special educational need.[2]

As can be seen below, the number of young people in the Wave 2 sample without statements and from mainstream schools are under-represented, while students with statements are over-represented. This has been corrected for in the data set through the use of cell based weighting.[3]

All percentage figures in this report relate to weighted data, whilst all total figures (Ns) are unweighted, unless otherwise

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[1] Although 1,688 parent/carer interviews were achieved, two of these interviews have been deemed subsequently as unusable. All parent/carer data presented in the report relate to 1,686 successfully achieved interviews.

[2] The estimates are based on DfES figures collected from the Annual School Census. However in 2000, the data was not collected in a way that makes it possible to know how many were on stages 2 to 4 of the old SEN Code of Practice or how many of the SEN pupils were in Year 11. It has therefore been necessary to estimate this based on the ratio observed within the overall sample from the Wave 2 PIF, which has been designed to be representative of the population.

[3] In the 120 cases where data were not available on SEN level, weighting was based on the school type alone.

Table 1.1: Response rate analysis

Young People	Overall Wave 2	Wave 1 sample	Top-up sample
Issued sample	3,732	2,132	1,600
Achieved interviews	1,876	1,169	707
Unadjusted response rate	*50%*	*55%*	*44%*
Invalid sample	100	49	51
Not available during fieldwork	100	57	43
Moved	582	355	227
Other	177	79	98
Adjusted response rate	*68%*	*73%*	*60%*
Refused	519	249	270
No contact	378	174	204
Parent/carer	Overall Wave 2	Wave 1 sample	Top-up sample
Issued sample	3,722	2,126	1,596
Achieved interviews	1,688	1,090	598
Unadjusted response rate	*45%*	*51%*	*38%*
Invalid sample	113	56	57
Not available during fieldwork	104	45	59
Moved	653	402	251
Other	163	55	108
Adjusted response rate	*63%*	*70%*	*53%*
Refused	580	282	298
No contact	421	196	225

Source: IES/MORI 2003

stated. Where relevant, some percentage figures may not add up to 100, due to rounding.

1.2.2 In-depth case studies

In addition to the surveys, detailed case studies of 16 young people were also undertaken. A fuller account of the approach taken in the case studies is provided in Appendix Two. The purpose of these case studies was to track and understand the process of transition for the young person in three key areas, though of course, these areas tended to interact with each other. These areas were:

- progression from school
- development of their social life
- movement towards independent living.

Table 1.2: Estimates of the number of secondary level students with SEN and Wave 1 distributions

	Wave 2		
	N =	%	Population %
Secondary school non-statemented (levels 2 to 4)	593	34	54
Secondary school statemented	638	36	24
Special school statemented	505	29	22
Special school – other	18	1	1
Total	1,756	100	101

Base for Wave 2 excludes cases in which the level of SEN was not known.

Source: IES/MORI 2003, DfES 2000

Within each area, it was important to understand what had happened in the young person's past (particularly since the first wave of the longitudinal study), what they were doing at Wave 2 and what they expected and hoped for the future. Essentially, the case studies aimed to explore:

- the facilitators of transition
- the inhibitors (or barriers) to transition, and
- the role of the young person as agent in their own transition.

It was unreasonable to expect that a small sample of 16 case studies could represent the whole population of young people with (or, more correctly, who had been identified at school as having) special educational needs. Nonetheless, it was important that the sample reflected the range of types of special educational need, the range of severity and complexity of need and the type of school provision. It was also necessary to ensure that the sample was appropriately diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, social class, current activity and access to Connexions services. The sample was also selected so that it would reflect three notional transition pathways (fragments). Namely those of:

- young people who have a difficulty which is limited in its impact and who, with appropriate support and facilitation, should be able to make a successful transition
- young people who have severe and profound difficulties who are likely to remain highly dependent throughout adulthood
- young people who have a real prospect of making progress towards a successful transition but whose difficulties present major challenges to this progress.

Although each of these groups is important, it is the more challenging second and, particularly, third groups who constitute the greatest test of policy and practice and therefore the sample was weighted towards these groups. This is important in interpreting the case study findings. There may well be many young people who are identified as having special educational needs at school and who go on to further education, employment or training in a more-or-less unproblematic fashion. The focus of the case studies however, was not on these young people and therefore the picture that emerges from the case studies has to be set in the wider context of the survey data as a whole.

1.3 Structure of this report

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter two presents an overview of the current (policy) context for young people with SEN.
- Chapter three describes the characteristics of the young people, parents and carers who took part in the Wave 2 surveys.
- Chapter four explores what happened to young people in the last few years of compulsory schooling, including the incidence of transition planning, the role of careers support, preparation for post-16 transitions and outcomes from school.
- Chapter five discusses young people's current activities and identifies the advice and support that young people and their parents or carers received when planning their transition. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the relevance of transition planning on current activities.
- Chapter six looks more closely at the supply of, and demand for, formal and informal sources of support since the young person completed compulsory schooling.
- Chapter seven identifies the main hard and soft outcomes since leaving compulsory schooling. These include any qualifications gained since Year 11 and also other personal gains.
- Chapter eight moves on to explore young people's leisure activities and social lives and assesses the role played by friends. This chapter also looks at the issue of independent living both now and in the future.
- Chapter nine reflects on the past, discusses plans for the future and identifies the young person's next intended activity.

- Chapter ten draws together the conclusions from the study and makes recommendations for future policy considerations.

All chapters draw on evidence from the surveys of young people and their parents and carers, and from the in-depth case studies. Additional evidence from the case studies is presented in Appendix Three.

2. Policy Context

This section provides the context for this study in terms of recent developments in transition processes in general, policy responses to those developments and specific issues that relate to young people with special educational needs. The report on the first wave survey (Polat *et al*, 2001) contained a comprehensive review of the literature relating to transitions for young people with SEN. There is no intention here to replicate that review, rather to update it where more recent research has entered the public domain.

2.1 Transitions

In the English education system, the statutory requirement to attend school ceases in the June of the academic year in which the young person reaches the age of 16 (DfEE, 1997a). This in most cases coincides with the end of Key Stage 4 (the 14-16 phase of education), with the end point of the National Curriculum and with the point at which most young people sit GCSE and GNVQ examinations and therefore have the opportunity to acquire nationally-recognised credentials.

As a result, young people have to make a transition from statutory schooling to one of a range of options which are, to varying degrees, available to them. In broad terms, these are usually seen as constituting three main pathways:

- *Education*. The young person can pursue an academically-oriented education, probably in school sixth form, sixth form college, or further education (FE) college.
- *Training*. The young person can seek to develop more vocationally-oriented skills and knowledge, perhaps in a FE college or with a training provider.
- *Employment*. The young person can enter the labour market and find work.

In practice, these pathways, of course, overlap considerably (for instance, when training is provided in the workplace) and the boundaries between them are often indistinct (for instance,

when educational options have a strong vocational orientation). There is also a fourth broad pathway which is defined negatively as being 'not in education, employment, or training' (sometimes referred to as 'NEET'). Young people, for instance, may leave school but be unable or unwilling to find employment; they may undertake an unwaged activity such as caring for a child or parent, or they may work within the 'informal' economy by, for instance, undertaking criminal activity.

Moreover, although the move from school to one of these four pathways is the most obvious form of transition, it is by no means the only one. The boundaries may be less clear-cut, but there are other ways in which the end of statutory schooling marks a key step on a multi-dimensional transition from childhood to adulthood (Coles, 1995). For instance, by age 16 most young people will have taken some steps towards living independently of their families by exercising their own choices, managing their own money and spending more time outside the family home. Most will be playing an active part in taking major decisions about their futures, so that the more formal transition processes will be guided (and perhaps entirely determined) by their ambitions and preferences. They will be developing more adult relationships with their friends and some of their relationships may well have a sexual dimension. Although as yet unable to vote, they may well be developing a fuller sense of their own citizenship, with a greater awareness of and involvement in political issues and, possibly, some involvement in community activities beyond their own family and the immediate circle of their friends.

Again, this simple account disguises a complex reality. Young people do not move along the multiple dimensions of transition at the same rate and individuals may well move more quickly along some dimensions than along others. There are also significant differences that are related to a wide range of factors such as geography, economic circumstances, educational attainment, social class, ethnicity and gender and these factors themselves interact with each other. Moreover, the concept of 'adulthood' is itself culturally-specific, so that it cannot be assumed that all individuals and groups see themselves as moving towards precisely the same goals. Nonetheless, the broad dimensions of independence, personal and social development and citizenship, although subject to very different interpretations, offer a helpful framework within which to understand the transition process.

2.1.1 The current context for transition

In recent decades, the context within which these transitions have taken place has changed significantly. The most obvious

change has been in the structure of the youth labour market. After the post-Second World War boom, the English manufacturing industry, in common with that in many parts of the 'developed' world, went into a significant decline and the balance of industrial composition shifted markedly from manufacturing to service industries (Lindsay, 2003). This in turn had implications for rising unemployment, increasing labour market 'flexibility' (such as part-time employment) and declining male participation in the workforce. There were particular implications for young people. Whilst employment generally grew in this period, youth unemployment rose spectacularly; from 1960 when the unemployment rate for under-25s was between two and three per cent, the figure had risen to over 21 per cent by the early 1980s (Coles, 1995). As a result, young people delayed their entry into the labour market and instead became more likely to follow the education and training pathways, by staying on at school, entering further education or participating in a range of vocational training schemes. Whereas in the late 1970s nearly half of 16-year olds entered the labour market directly, by the late 1990s, this figure had shrunk to ten per cent (Pearce and Hillman, 1998).

Currently, therefore, young people are much more likely than their predecessors to have what Coles (1995) calls 'extended' or 'fractured' transitions. At best, more young people are likely to find themselves spending substantial periods of time in education and training after the end of statutory schooling, before finally entering the labour market in their late teens or early twenties. They may, during this time, be making steady progress in terms of skills, knowledge and accreditation, but there are, of course, implications in the meantime for their capacity to live independently and achieve other markers of adulthood. At worst, however, young people find themselves in a 'magic roundabout' situation (Roberts, 1995). They are retained in repeated cycles of training with little obvious progression, becoming unemployed, or moving episodically between spells of training, spells of short-term employment and spells of unemployment. Again, the implications for their capacity to live independently, grow in maturity, establish stable relationships and become active citizens may be significant.

2.2 Policy responses

Successive governments have responded to this changing situation in two broad ways. First, they have increased the opportunities and incentives for young people to follow the education and training pathways by expanding further and higher education and encouraging the development of a range

of work-related training schemes. In turn, this has meant finding ways of ensuring that these expanded forms of provision could be funded and that young people had the financial means and incentives to pursue them. The current attempt to enable half of all young people to go to university (DfES, 2003c), therefore, can be seen as part of an ongoing programme for expanding the education and training pathways that can be traced back at least as far as the Youth Training Schemes of the 1980s.

Second, governments have sought to make this expanded range of opportunities both coherent and progressive. This has involved, for instance, developing programmes and credentials (such as GNVQs) which straddle the education-training boundary and lowering the barriers between institutions in terms of the kinds of qualifications they can offer and the extent to which qualifications are transferable between them. It has also involved ensuring that this more coherent system opens up pathways for young people which propel them towards higher levels of skills development and accreditation so that they are ultimately able to enter the labour market with a good prospect of finding employment. The clearest markers of these trends were, perhaps, the establishment of first the Further Education Funding Council in 1992 and then the Learning and Skills Council in 2000. Between them, these councils not only progressively brought the post-16 sector under a single umbrella, but also ensured that funded provision in that sector was oriented towards accreditation and progression into the labour market. This agenda continues to be taken forward by the government's 14-19 strategy (DfES, 2003a).

Of particular significance from the point of view of young people with special educational needs was the establishment by the Learning and Skills Act 2000 of the Connexions Service. Within the context of a commitment to all young people, this new service is intended to have a clear focus on supporting the transition of those young people most at risk of 'fractured' transitions and, moreover, of sustaining that support to a point in their lives where progression through education and training and into the labour market is likely to be a reality, for the majority at least. For most young people, this means that they will have access to Connexions between the ages of 13 and 19, but for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, support can be provided up to the age of 25.

For individual young people (and particularly those with the greatest difficulties) Connexions is potentially an important element in ensuring that the new range of education and training opportunities cohere into genuinely progressive routes through the transition process. This study explores the

degree to which Connexions is becoming present in the lives of the young people with SEN. However, it is important to remember that the young people taking part in the survey and the case studies were beginning the transition process in school before Connexions was launched. The new service also got off to a staggered start which meant that it was fully operational in only a minority of areas as these young people reached the end of Year 11.

2.2.1 Transitions and young people with special educational needs

In many ways, the issues facing young people with SEN as they make the transition at 16 plus are the same as for all other young people. However, there are some special factors that need to be recognised. For instance, the four pathways described above have historically been configured somewhat differently for at least some young people with SEN. They are, in particular, likely to have access to specialist forms of provision *ie* special school sixth forms, specialist FE colleges, special courses in mainstream colleges, specialist training providers. The corollary of this is that they may find it more difficult to gain access to some mainstream forms of provision and their actual choices at age 16 may be severely constrained (Heslop *et al*, 2001; Morris, 2002; Routledge, 2000). Moreover, for those with the most severe and complex disabilities, mainstream qualifications and open employment opportunities are out of reach. The notion of progression towards these goals is, therefore, highly problematic and at some point such young people have tended to fall into a particular form of the 'NEET' pathway which effectively takes the form of care in the home and in highly sheltered settings.

A further difference is that, for some young people with special educational needs, there are more formal procedures to support transition than for the rest of their peers. Those young people who have a statement of special educational needs (usually, those with more significant levels of SEN) are entitled to annual reviews of their provision and progress. Since 1994 (DFEE, 1994; DfES, 2001), there has been a requirement that these reviews should be explicitly focused on transition planning as the young person nears the end of statutory schooling. In principle, the young person, parents and carers, the school and all relevant professionals (including, latterly, Connexions advisers) draw up a plan for the young person's next step and ensure that appropriate support and provision are in place. However, in practice the transition planning procedures have not operated as smoothly as might have been hoped (Heslop *et al*, 2001; Morris, 2002; Polat *et al*., 2001). Recent studies continue to suggest that,

without very considerable effort on the part of the school, young people and their families may feel insufficiently involved in planning and that the process may fail to deal with the issues of most concern to them (Carnaby *et al.,* 2003, Ward *et al.,* 2003). There are indications, moreover, that not all young people who are entitled to a transition plan actually receive one and, in any case, there is no entitlement for young people with SEN who do not have a statement.

There are further problems for these young people. Hudson (2003) has recently summed up the situation for those with 'learning disabilities' as one in which their transitional difficulties are likely to be greater than those experienced by their peers, are likely to be more complex and extended (not least because of continuing dependency on the family) and are likely to be attenuated by social isolation, sexual inexperience and unemployment. It seems likely that much the same could be said of young people with many types of special educational need. In particular, young people who struggle at school and/or who are disabled are amongst those most at risk of 'fractured' transitions (Pearce and Hillman, 1998) and thenceforward of limited life chances. In a situation where ever-higher levels of qualifications and skills become essential passports into the labour market, these are often, of course, precisely the young people who have fewest resources to bring to market (Roulstone, 2002). Partly because of this and partly because of the other difficulties they experience, young people with SEN find other aspects of the transition process problematic. Some of them, for instance, are likely to remain dependent on their parents (Bjarnason, 2002; Morris 2002; Riddell, Baron and Wilson, 2001) with the consequent difficulties in establishing independent lives and an increased potential for family conflict. They may find it difficult to exercise control over their lives, escape adult surveillance and have their voices heard by professionals (Morris, 2002; Riddell, Baron and Wilson 2001). More practically, they may find it difficult to access independent living accommodation (Hendey and Pascall, 2002) or to develop independent social lives (Bignall and Butt, 2000; Murray 2002).

There are also problems in terms of the configuration of the services which many of these young people will continue to need after the age of 16. The move from child to adult services not only means a change in personnel working with the young person, but also a move into services that are differently oriented. This is nowhere more obvious than in what happens to the status of 'having special educational needs'. Technically, this term can only be applied to children and young people who are at school (DfES, 2001b). In further education, young people with similar difficulties are governed by the Learning and Skills Act 2000 definition of 'learning difficulties or

disabilities', whereas for the Health Service and benefits system, 'disability' is the key term. This is not simply a matter of semantics. The criteria for the application of these labels differ so that 'having SEN' at school is no guarantee of falling into the learning difficulties and/or disability categories post-school. Moreover, in the school years, there is a clear sense in which education plays a lead role for many (if not all) children and young people with SEN in identifying need and working for the co-ordination of provision by all the necessary agencies. Post-school, the young person enters a world where the norm is that services are provided on demand rather than as of right and in many cases, therefore, there is no clear lead agency.

2.3 Service delivery

In recent decades, there have been cultural shifts which are gradually taking the emphasis away from a medicalised and deficit notion of disability towards a view that disabled people have rights to participate in society on the same terms as all other citizens. This includes the view that they should exercise the same degree of control over their lives that all other people do. This movement is reflected in the policy of successive governments, for instance, in the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act, in the work of the Disability Rights Task Force (DRTF) (1999) and in the strategy outlined by the government in response to that work (DfEE, 2001). Significantly, both the DRTF report and the government's response frame the aim of disability policy in terms of 'inclusion' and set out a series of actions across a wide range of public policy which are intended to enable disabled people to participate in mainstream society on equal terms.

These actions are most obvious in schooling, where 'inclusion' (understood as participation in mainstream schools) is also a watchword (DfES, 2001a). However, similar developments can also be traced in the provision of health, social and other 'personal' support services (see, for instance DfES, 2003b; DH, 2001) where the emphasis shifts from separate, 'silo-based' services towards more integrated provision, focused on the needs and wishes of users and emphasising maintenance in mainstream society. There are similar developments in terms of the labour market. Jobcentre Plus, New Deal for Disabled People, Access to Work and a reshaped benefits system offer a range of support to enable adults to find and maintain employment.

The move towards more integrated service delivery has recently been given added impetus by the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003b, 2004a) and the subsequent

introduction of a Children's Bill. The *Every Child Matters* agenda proposes a series of measures designed to bring services together: the designation of Directors of Children's Services offering leadership across the Education-Social Services divide in local authorities, the establishment of more Children's Trusts bringing a range of agencies together with pooled budgets, the formulation of common targets for children's services, the development of better information-sharing systems and so on. These developments are being taken forward further in respect of children with SEN through the government's new strategy, *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004b). In addition to proposals for promoting the integration of service delivery in line with *Every Child Matters*, the strategy makes specific commitments to improve the quality of transition planning, set national standards for the transition from children's to adult services, expand educational and training opportunities and develop new opportunities for transition to work.

The implications for transition are clear. Children and young people who are identified as having special educational needs have increasingly in recent years, been able to expect support to access mainstream pathways and activities rather than segregation in 'special' provision. Beginning at school, they are more likely to remain in mainstream settings and to have better-integrated children's services built around their needs and wishes. As they approach transition, they have begun to be supported through a planned transition process, leading to 'progressive' education and training and eventually into the labour market. There, a range of programmes and structures has begun to emerge aimed at enabling them to access employment opportunities. Two of the developments discussed above should have particular benefits for these young people *ie* the creation of a more coherent and flexible further education and training sector; and the establishment of a supportive Connexions Service more focused on those at risk of 'fractured' transitions. In principle, at least, they should be less likely to find themselves channelled into 'dead-end' segregated provision and supported much more effectively in making a transition that is recognisably like that of their 'mainstream' peers.

There are, however, two caveats to note in terms of the cohort who form the subject of this study. First, their final years of schooling and first years in the post-school world coincide with a period of transition in government policy itself. The government's inclusion policy, for instance, announced in 1997 (DfEE, 1997b) scarcely had time to take effect before these young people's secondary school placements were decided. Likewise, the Connexions Service, with its staggered start, had no opportunity to make an impact on school-based transition

planning for the majority of these young people and will only gradually have replaced more traditional Careers Services after they reached the end of statutory schooling.

The second caveat is that the new, more inclusive approach to disability and difficulty is located at a particularly challenging time in terms of developments in the labour market and the education system. The restructuring of the labour market, with the consequent shrinkage of demand for unskilled labour (particularly, heavy labour) and the increase in demand for high levels of skill and qualifications places young people with limited skills and qualifications at a significant disadvantage. In turn, the orientation of the school system towards the production of a highly-skilled, highly-qualified workforce (the so-called 'standards' agenda) makes schools and colleges highly demanding institutions with a clear focus on achievement which can, if not managed properly, make them alien places for young people who do not achieve highly. At best, young people with special educational needs have enough support and encouragement to enable them to access something like the same opportunities as their peers. At worst, the improvements in the support they receive are never quite adequate for them to be able to meet ever-higher demands in schools and beyond.

3. Characteristics of Young People and their Parents/Carers

This chapter begins by briefly exploring the characteristics of the young people and their parents/carers who took part in the Wave 2 survey. It also considers the nature of the young people's special educational needs in Year 11 and how these needs have changed since then.

3.1 Demographic and household characteristics

Almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of the young people taking part in the survey were male, and approximately one in ten students came from non-white ethnic groups (Table 3.1).

Among those students who are from minority ethnic groups, the highest proportion (six per cent) are from Asian

Table 3.1: Gender and ethnicity of young people

Gender	**N =**	**%**
Male	1,170	63
Female	704	37
Total	1,874	100
Ethnicity		
White	1,690	90
Asian	116	6
Black	40	2
Mixed / Other	28	2
	1,874	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

backgrounds, followed by Black and mixed/other ethnic backgrounds (both two per cent).[1]

3.2 Type of special educational need(s) in Year 11

Parents/carers were asked a series of questions about the special educational needs that the young person had during Year 11 (Table 3.2) and how these needs had changed since that time. The more common forms of needs were learning-related, specifically dyslexia and moderate or mild learning

Table 3.2: Parent/carer recall of type of special educational needs in Year 11 (multiple response)

	N =	%
Dyslexia	401	24
Moderate learning difficulties	434	24
Mild learning difficulties	341	23
Behavioural, emotional or social difficulties	281	17
Speech and language difficulties	325	15
Severe learning difficulties	229	11
Medical problems	213	11
Specific learning difficulties	178	10
Physical disabilities	167	8
Hearing impairments	127	7
Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity	100	6
Dyspraxia	94	5
Visual impairments	87	4
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	88	4
Profound and multiple learning difficulty	65	3
Other	108	6
Don't know	19	2
Don't know but learning related	18	1
None	17	1
Total cases	1,686	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

[1] The proportions of young people within specific ethnic minority groups are too small to allow for any robust analysis at a more detailed level. Consequently, in later tables ethnicity is only reported according to whether the young person was from a white or 'other minority ethnic' group and where there are key differences.

difficulties. The less common forms related to sensory or physical disabilities: eight per cent of parents/carers reported that the young person had physical disabilities; and slightly smaller proportions reported that the young person had hearing or visual impairments (seven and four per cent respectively).

It is possible to get a sense of the degree to which young people had multiple needs by considering the number of specific special educational needs that were reported by the parent/carer. Half of parents/carers who were able to identify the specific types of needs held by the young person reported more than one specific need (Table 3.3). Just over one in ten parents/carers reported that the young person was affected by four or more specific types of need.

Parents were asked if they could identify the main special educational need experienced by the young person. The results (detailed in Table 3.4 and Table 3.5) show that the most common special educational need cited by parents/carers was a 'learning difficulty'. Over half of parents/carers responding to this question (54 per cent) noted that the young person experienced problems primarily in the area of cognition and learning (Table 3.5).

Data on whether the young person had a statement of special educational needs were also collected. A statement of special educational needs[1] is a document that sets out the young person's needs and any special help or support that the young

Table 3.3: Parent/carer recall of number of specific special educational needs

	N =	%
One	811	49
Two	449	27
Three	203	12
Four or more	187	11
All cases	1,650	100

Base – excludes those not reporting any specific need. Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

[1] A statement of special educational needs is a legal document, drawn up by an LEA, that sets out a young person's needs and any special provision required to meet those needs. Statements are for young people whose needs cannot reasonably be provided for within the resources normally available to Mainstream schools. An LEA is under a duty to arrange the educational provision set out in a statement.

Table 3.4: Parent/carer recall of young person's main special educational needs in Year 11

	N =	%
Dyslexia	298	18
Mild learning difficulties	226	16
Moderate learning difficulties	277	16
Behavioural, emotional or social difficulties	124	8
Severe learning difficulties	136	6
Specific learning difficulties	63	3
Dyspraxia	45	3
Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity	49	3
Physical disabilities	65	3
Hearing impairments	53	3
Speech and language difficulties	68	3
Medical problems	54	3
Profound and multiple learning difficulties	35	2
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	44	2
Visual impairments	21	1
Other	74	5
Don't know	19	2
Don't know but learning related	18	1
None	17	1
Total	1,686	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

Table 3.5: Parent/carer recall of main SEN difficulty at school (broad definition)

	N=	%
Cognition and learning	917	54
Communication and interaction	363	21
Behaviour, emotional and social development	284	19
Sensory and/or physical	122	6
Total	1,686	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

person should have.

Table 3.6 shows that just over half (51 per cent) of young people taking part in the survey did not have a statement of SEN. Just over four in ten young people participating in Wave 2 had a statement of SEN.

Table 3.6: Statement of special educational needs

	N =	%
Statement	1,143	42
No statement	611	51
Not known	120	7
Total	1,874	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003, Pupil Information Form 2003

A comparison of whether the young person had a statement is made against the broad categories of special educational needs in Table 3.7. It appears that young people are more likely to have a statement of SEN if they have sensory and/or physical disabilities (69 per cent of these young people have statements) and less likely to have a statement of SEN if they

Table 3.7: Main SEN difficulty at school, by incidence of a statement at Year 11

	Total N=	State–ment %	No state–ment %	Not known %	Total %
Communication and interaction	363	52	44	4	100
Cognition and learning	917	46	51	3	100
Sensory and/or physical	122	69	29	5	100
Behaviour, emotional and social development	284	33	62	4	100
Total	1,686	46	51	4	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003, Pupil Information Form 2003

have behavioural, emotional or social development needs (just 33 per cent of this group have a statement of SEN).

Data were also collected on the type of school that the young person attended. The majority of young people (78 per cent) were previously studying in mainstream schools (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Type of school attended

	N =	%
Special	539	22
Mainstream	1335	78
Total	1,874	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

Table 3.9: Main SEN difficulty at school by school type

	Special		Mainstream	
	N =	%	N =	%
Communication and interaction	146	28	217	18
Cognition and learning	231	44	686	58
Sensory and/or physical	50	10	72	5
Behaviour, emotional and social behaviour	91	18	193	19
Total	518	100	1,168	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

Comparing the type of school the young person attended against their main special educational need (Table 3.9) it can be seen that young people who attended mainstream schools were proportionally more likely to have cognition and learning difficulties as their main special educational need than those attending special schools (58 per cent compared to 44 per cent). Conversely, young people who attended special schools were proportionally more likely to have communication or interaction problems or sensory and/or physical disabilities than those who attended mainstream schools.

The overwhelming majority of young people who had attended a special school had statements (95 per cent), while less than one-third of young people attending mainstream schools had statements of SEN (31 per cent).

3.3 Changes to needs since Year 11

Approximately four in ten parents/carers (41 per cent) reported that the special educational needs of the young person had changed since Year 11 (Table 3.10). Of those reporting a change in the young person's special educational needs over half (57 per cent) suggested there had been an improvement, while just under one in ten (nine per cent) suggested that the condition had deteriorated.

The group most likely to report a change in needs since Year 11 were those who had behavioural, emotional or social development needs while the groups least likely to be associated with a change were those with severe learning difficulties or physical disabilities (Table 3.11).

Table 3.10: Change in SEN status

	N =	%
No Change / Don't know	1,015	59
Change reported	671	41
Of which		
A lot better	358	57
Slightly better	205	29
Neither better nor worse	35	5
Worse	70	9
Don't know	3	*
Total	671	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

* - less than 0.5 per cent

Table 3.11: Change in SEN status by main SEN type in Year 11

	Yes %	No %	Don't know %	Total N =
Behavioural, emotional or social difficulties	60	38	2	124
Mild learning difficulties	55	41	3	226
Specific learning difficulties	54	45	2	63
Medical problems	50	46	4	54
Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity	48	48	4	49
Moderate learning difficulties	42	55	3	277
Speech and language difficulties	42	58	0	68
Dyspraxia	40	57	2	45
Visual impairments	39	50	11	21
Dyslexia	36	62	2	298
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	32	68	0	44
Hearing impairments	30	70	0	53
Profound and multiple learning difficulties	29	71	0	35
Severe learning difficulties	22	75	4	136
Physical disabilities	19	79	2	65
Other	41	42	17	74
Don't know	20	36	44	19
Don't know but learning related	20	70	10	18
None	21	54	25	17
Total	41	54	4	1,686

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

Over half (55 per cent) of those reporting that the young person had a mild learning difficulty suggested that there had been a change in the circumstances since Year 11, while among those reporting severe learning difficulties, however, the proportion is less than a quarter (22 per cent).

Although the base figures are low, the results in Table 3.12 suggest that among those categories in which parents/carers were the most likely to report a change (behavioural, emotional or social difficulties/mild learning difficulties) the change in the young person's condition was likely to be positive. However, in the categories in which a change was less often identified (*eg*

Table 3.12: Specific changes in SEN, by the main type of special educational need in Year 11

	A lot better %	Slightly better %	Neither better nor worse %	Worse %	Don't know %	Total N =
Mild learning difficulties	72	22	2	1	2	125
Speech and language difficulties	63	25	4	8	0	25
Behavioural, emotional or social difficulties	61	27	2	7	2	67
Dyslexia	53	36	8	3	0	115
Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity	52	22	9	17	0	25
Medical problems	50	23	4	23	0	27
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	50	8	8	33	0	13
Moderate learning difficulties	49	39	5	7	0	112
Specific learning difficulties	47	40	3	10	0	34
Dyspraxia	44	44	6	6	0	16
Visual impairments	38	50	0	13	0	8
Physical disabilities	36	18	9	36	0	12
Severe learning difficulties	35	26	13	26	0	29
Hearing impairments	33	47	13	7	0	15
Profound and multiple learning difficulties	0	29	29	43	0	8
Other	78	9	0	13	0	29
Don't know	60	0	0	40	0	3
Don't know but learning related	80	20	0	0	0	4
None	100	0	0	0	0	4
Total	57	29	5	9	1	671

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

severe learning difficulties/profound learning difficulties and physical difficulties) a high minority of those reporting a change in condition stated that the condition had become worse.

3.4 Parental background

A series of questions were asked in the parent survey regarding their personal employment and educational backgrounds, in order to assess their influence (if any) on the progression of their children.

An overwhelming majority of respondents to the parent/carer survey were the mothers of young people participating in the study (80 per cent), and a further 15 per cent were their fathers. Nearly three-quarters of respondents were married (71 per cent), while 14 per cent were separated or divorced and eight per cent were living with a partner.

Table 3.13 reports the educational background of the parents/carers surveyed, in terms of the age at which they left full-time education, and Table 3.14 assesses the employment status of parents/carers. Where there are two parents/carers responsible for the young person, the highest education

Table 3.13: Parental school leaving age

	N =	%
15 years	383	22
16 years	738	45
17-18 years	292	17
19 or over	272	16
Total	1,685	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

Table 3.14: Parental employment status

	N =	%
Manager/Professional	289	18
Skilled	576	35
Semi-skilled	193	12
Unskilled	239	15
Not in Employment	383	21
Total	1,680	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

leaving age and the highest skilled occupational groups are reported.

Looking at the age at which the parent/carer left school, the largest sub-group, representing nearly half of the sample (45 per cent) reported leaving school at 16; a further one-fifth (22 per cent) left school before the age of 16, while a third of parents/carers reported continuing in full-time education beyond post-16 schooling.

In terms of employment, 80 per cent of all parents/carers reported that at least one parent/carer was in paid work. Nearly one-fifth of all parents/carers (18 per cent) reported that their highest occupational group was managerial or professional; over one-third (35 per cent) reported the highest occupational group as skilled employment, while the remainder was divided between semi-skilled and unskilled employment, (12 per cent and 15 per cent respectively). Twenty-one percent of the parent/carer sample reported that they were not in employment. These categories have been used as a proxy for socio-economic groups throughout the remainder of the report.

3.5 Survey reporting

Throughout the remainder of this report, the survey findings have been considered against key socio-demographic characteristics, namely:

- gender
- ethnicity
- statemented/ not statemented
- school type (*ie* special or mainstream)
- main SEN type (at Year 11)
- (parental/carer) socio-economic group.

Where differences in these key characteristics have been identified, they are reported. All percentages reported relate to weighted survey data, whilst total numbers relate to unweighted responses.

4. School and Outcomes

A primary aim of this study was to provide a comprehensive overview of the experiences, achievements and attitudes of young people with SEN during post-16 transitions and beyond. Before looking at post-16 activities, it is important to establish the degree to which young people planned for their future, and indeed the degree to which they were helped to do this by statutory services and other, less formal sources of support. This chapter examines the planning phase, prior to completion of Year 11, and looks at help received from schools and other key service providers. It then goes on to assess the role of parents in aiding the transition before exploring young people's views on the school experience.

4.1 Preparing for the future and transition planning

It is a statutory requirement that all young people with a statement of special educational needs should have a formal plan to steer and manage their transition from school to post-16 activities. Young people with other special educational needs may also undergo formal transition planning and receive a transition plan but there is no statutory responsibility to provide them with these. Under normal circumstances, a transition plan is devised following the Year 9 annual review and is updated at subsequent annual reviews. The purpose of the plan is to draw together information from a range of individuals within and beyond the school, in order to plan coherently for the young person's transition to adult life.

4.1.1 Recall of transition planning

Fewer young people with statements of SEN could recall attending a meeting to plan for their future than might have been expected (Table 4.1). When asked if they had been involved in a 'transition planning review', 'annual review' or 'school leaver's review', two-thirds (64 per cent) of young people who had a statement of SEN recalled having such a meeting. One-fifth of young people with statements reported that they had not had this type of meeting. However, although

Table 4.1: Young person's recall of attending transition planning review

	All		Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school (statemented)	Mainstream school (non-statemented)
	N =	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	984	47	64	34	70	58	33
No	527	33	19	45	14	24	45
Don't know/can't remember	363	20	17	22	16	18	22
N =	1,874	—	1,143	611	539	638	593

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

not a statutory requirement, one-third of young people without a statement of SEN (34 per cent) said they remembered having a meeting to plan for their future. A greater proportion of young people who had attended a special school (and who thus had more severe special educational needs) could remember some sort of formal transition planning (70 per cent) than those in mainstream schools with statements of SEN (58 per cent). One-third of young people who had attended a mainstream school but who did not have a statement of SEN remembered planning their transition in a formal way.

Parental/carer recall of their child attending a transition review meeting was broadly similar with 45 per cent of all parents/carers saying that their child had attended such a meeting after which a transition plan was drawn up. As with young people, parents/carers of young people who had a statement of SEN and/or who attended a special school were more likely to recall such a meeting than those with children without statements and/or those attending a mainstream school.

The incidence of recalling some form of transition planning review or meeting differed according to SEN type (Table 4.2). Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities (and thus more likely to have a statement of SEN) were most likely to report that they had attended such a meeting (60 per cent) whilst those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were the least likely to do so (40 per cent). Once more, parental/carer recall of transition planning according to SEN type broadly corresponds to the young person's recall. However, fewer parents/carers of children

Table 4.2: Young person's recall of attending transition planning review, by SEN

	Communi–cation and Interaction %	Cognition and learning %	Sensory and/or physical %	Behaviour / emotional / social development %	All
Yes	55	47	60	40	48
No	21	34	26	42	32
Don't know/can't remember	24	19	15	18	20
N =	363	917	122	284	1,686

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

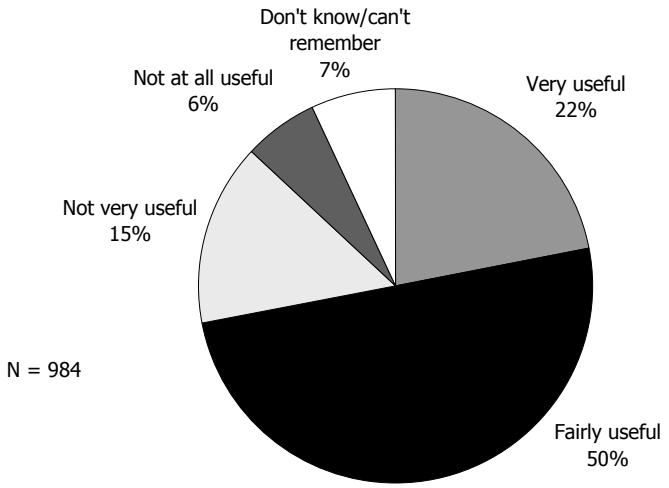
with behavioural, emotional and social development needs (30 per cent) remembered their child attending such a review meeting compared to the young person's recall.

4.1.2 Usefulness of transition planning

Almost three-quarters of young people who remembered attending a transition review meeting thought that it had been fairly or very useful (Figure 4.1). One in five young people, however, reported that the meeting was 'not very useful' or 'not at all useful'. No key differences were observed in relation to the usefulness of the transition planning meeting according to the type of school attended, whether the young person had a statement of SEN or indeed according to their SEN type.

The transition planning review appears to have been more useful in terms of information provision rather than helping

Figure 4:1: Perceived usefulness of the transition planning review



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 4.3: Reasons for usefulness of transition meeting

	N =	%
Explained the options available to me	372	59
Provided information	352	56
Helped with decision making	191	30
Helped to progress into work/further education	178	28
Planned other support	76	11
Other	51	8
N = 639 respondents		

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

the young person to make choices and decisions. Over half of all young people who reported that the transition review meeting had been useful, stated that the meeting had explained the options available to them and had provided information (Table 4.3).

Just one-third reported that the transition review meeting had helped them in their decision-making, and/or to progress into work or further education. Young people with communication and interaction difficulties, and those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were more likely than young people with other special educational needs to report that the review meeting had been most useful for planning other support that they would need when making their post-16 transition although this still represents only a fifth of these groups (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Reasons for usefulness of transition meeting, by SEN (per cent)

	Communication and Interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour / emotional/ social development
Explained the options available to me	61	59	58	53
Provided information	64	55	42	50
Helped with decision making	31	27	18	38
Helped to progress into work/further education	29	27	44	33
Planned other support	20	7	9	17
N =	131	321	52	82

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 4.5: Reasons why transition planning review was not useful

	N =	%
Did not provide enough information	57	29
Did not provide the right sort of information	53	28
Did not help with making decisions	35	20
Confusing	38	17
Did not explain the full range of options	30	13
Not enough planning for other support	20	9
Young person had already made decision	14	7
Other	13	7
Don't know/ can't remember	21	10
N = 201		

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Just over one-quarter of young people who reported that the transition review meeting had not been useful said that the meeting had not provided enough information. A similar proportion said it had not provided the right sort of information and around one-fifth said it had been confusing, and/or had not helped with decision-making. The other main reasons for dissatisfaction with the transition review meeting were that it had not explained the full range of options, and/or planned sufficiently for how the young person would be supported (Table 4.5).

4.1.3 People involved in transition planning

The most commonly reported attendees at the transition review meeting were:

- school staff
- parents/carers, and
- the school careers adviser.

Almost half of all young people who recalled attending a transition review meeting reported that these people had also been present (Table 4.6). Only one in five young people recalled that the SENCO or someone from the Careers Service or Connexions had attended the meeting. Although many young people may have reported their SENCO as school staff, the number recalling that the Careers Service had attended is much lower than might have been expected given the purpose of the meeting. Over half of those without statements said a

Table 4.6: Others involved in the transition meeting

	All		State-mented	Not state-mented	Special school	Main-stream school
	N =	%	%	%	%	%
School staff	515	47	56	37	70	37
Parents/carers	492	46	62	22	70	35
School Careers Advisor	413	44	39	52	38	47
SENCO	227	20	27	10	20	20
Careers Advisor/Connexions personal adviser	192	20	19	22	21	20
Social Worker/Services	89	8	12	1	20	2
Another family member	15	2	2	1	2	1
Doctor/health worker	15	1	2	0	3	0
Friends or partner	22	2	2	3	2	3
Other	53	5	7	2	7	4
Don't know	71	7	7	7	7	7
N =	984		730	207	376	608

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

school careers adviser had been at the meeting compared to only 39 per cent of those with statements. Similarly those in mainstream schools were also more likely to recall the involvement of the schools' careers adviser (47 per cent) than those in special schools (38 per cent). Less than ten per cent of young people who remembered having a transition review meeting reported that social services had also been present.

Parents and carers were much more likely to have been involved in the transition review meeting for young people who had a statement of SEN compared to those who did not (Table 4.6). Only 22 per cent of young people who did not have a statement recalled that their parents had been present at the review meeting compared to 62 per cent of those with a statement. Young people who had attended a special school were also much more likely to report that their parents and other school staff had been involved in the transition review meeting than those who had attended a mainstream school.

Parents/carers were much more likely to have attended the transition review meeting of young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities compared to young people with other special educational needs, and particularly young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs (65 per cent compared to 37 per cent; Table 4.7). Young

Table 4.7: People involved in the transition meeting, by SEN (per cent)

	Communication and Interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour/ emotional/ social development
School staff	53	48	50	47
Parents/carers	54	46	65	37
School Careers Adviser	44	43	35	55
SENCO	18	19	29	22
Careers Advisor/Connexions personal adviser	19	23	24	16
Social Worker/Services	13	4	15	11
Another family member	2	2	0	1
Doctor/health worker	1	1	6	1
Friends or partner	1	3	2	4
Other	4	4	12	7
Don't know	6	7	6	9
N =	214	485	79	131

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were most likely to recall that a school careers adviser had been present at the transition review meeting.

Parents/carers from lower social class groups were also less likely to have been involved in the young person's transition review meeting. Fifty five per cent of young people whose parents/carers were employed in managerial/professional jobs reported that their parent/carer had attended the transition review meeting compared to just 35 per cent of young people with parents/carers in unskilled occupations.

Parents/carers more commonly reported that they attended review meetings to discuss their child's transition plan than appears to be the case from the young person's point of view. Seventy-one per cent of parents/carers reported that they had attended an annual review meeting to discuss the young person's transition plan. Having said this, although parents/carers were more likely to report that they had attended a meeting to discuss the transition plan overall, the differential involvement of parents/carers according to whether or not the child had a statement of SEN, attended a special or mainstream school, had particular special educational needs and/or were from different social class

Table 4.8: Most helpful person at the transition meeting

	N =	%
School Careers Adviser	272	32
Other school staff	223	24
Parents/carers	151	15
Careers Service/Connexions personal adviser	115	13
SENCO	107	11
Social Worker/Services	16	2
Other	22	2
Total	913	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

remains clear. Parents/carers were more likely to be involved in transition planning if the young person:

- had a statement of SEN
- attended a special school
- had sensory and/or physical disabilities, and
- came from a higher socio-economic grouping.

School careers advisers and other school staff were reported to be the most helpful people at the meeting by over half of all young people who could recall attending a transition review meeting (Table 4.8). Parents/carers, Careers Service / Connexions personnel and SENCOs were all reported to be the most helpful people at the meeting by at least ten per cent of young people who had undergone formal transition planning.

School careers advisers were particularly applauded by young people without statements of SEN, young people in mainstream schools and those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs in relation to how helpful they had been at the transition review meeting. Young people with statements of SEN and those who attended special schools were slightly more likely to cite their parents/carers as the most helpful person at the transition meeting than those without statements and who attended mainstream schools.

4.2 Coverage of transition planning

A broad range of issues are addressed as part of the transition planning phase ranging from how to continue in education to

Table 4.9: Coverage of transition planning meeting

	All		State-mented	Not state-mented	Special school	Main-stream school
	N =	%	%	%	%	%
Continuing my education	458	46	49	43	52	42
What information I needed to make choices	443	45	44	47	39	48
How to develop hopes and aspirations for the future	307	32	30	33	28	33
Ways that other people/ agencies would work together to help me	142	14	15	11	17	12
Local arrangements for support, advocacy, advice	129	13	14	11	13	12
Speaking up for myself	118	12	12	12	13	12
Information about benefits	95	10	10	9	12	8
Transport issues	103	9	12	5	15	7
Health or welfare needs	103	9	13	4	18	5
Other independent living skills	81	7	10	4	13	5
Leisure and social opportunities	73	7	8	6		
Any technological aids I needed	61	6	7	3	7	5
Transferring from children to adult health/social services	50	4	7	0	12	1
Future housing options	39	4	5	1	8	2
Adult sexuality/relationships	35	3	4	3	6	2
Other	45	5	4	6	3	6
Don't know/can't remember	156	15	17	12	82	13
N =	984		730	207	376	608

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

forming adult relationships. During the survey, young people were asked to list the main issues or topics covered in the transition review meeting and the results are presented in Table 4.9.

Almost half of all young people who could remember attending the transition meeting reported that it had covered how they could continue with their education, and a similar proportion said it had supplied the information they needed to make choices about the future. Nearly one-third of these young people also recalled that the meeting had included how to develop their hopes and aspirations for the future. Other topics that were covered in the transition meeting included:

- inter-agency support
- local arrangements for support, advocacy and advice
- speaking up for themselves
- benefits advice.

More than ten per cent of young people reported that these issues were covered in their transition review meeting. Not surprisingly, young people with a statement of SEN were slightly more likely to have discussed transport issues, health or welfare needs, other independent living skills, and transferring from child to adult health and social services than young people without a statement. This was also the case for young people in special schools compared to their counterparts in mainstream schools. Young people in special schools were also more likely to recall talking about continuing their education compared to young people in mainstream schools (52 per cent compared to 42 per cent).

Parental/carer recall of what was contained within the transition plan also broadly agrees with that of the young person. Parents/carers were more likely, however, to emphasise that the plan included how the young person would continue their education (63 per cent of parents/carers said this was included in the plan compared to 46 per cent of young people) and how other agencies would work together to help their child (reported by 28 per cent of parents/carers compared to 14 per cent of young people).

Table 4.10 illustrates the topics covered during the transition planning review according to young people's SEN. It is interesting to note that, in the main, similar proportions of young people covered the same issues in the review, regardless of SEN. Having said this, young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were less likely to recall discussing continuing their education as part of their review, than young people with other types of SEN.

Conversely, young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were more likely to recall discussing how to develop hopes and aspirations for the future than other SEN groups.

Table 4.10: Coverage of transition planning meeting, by SEN (per cent)

	Communication and Interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour / emotional/social development
Continuing my education	51	46	54	41
What information I needed to make choices	48	45	45	41
How to develop hopes and aspirations for the future	30	29	47	32
Ways that other people/ agencies would work together to help me	17	12	19	15
Local arrangements for support, advocacy, advice	17	11	10	13
Speaking up for myself	11	12	11	12
Information about benefits	13	8	7	9
Transport issues	11	8	16	9
Health or welfare needs	12	8	15	11
Other independent living skills	8	7	12	9
Leisure and social opportunities	6	7	7	9
Any technological aids I needed	5	5	17	5
Transferring from children to adult health/social services	5	5	5	4
Future housing options	3	3	8	4
Adult sexuality/relationships	6	2	5	3
Other	1	6	4	6
Don't know / can't remember	15	15	10	18
N =	214	485	79	131

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

4.3 Careers support

4.3.1 Recall of careers support

Young people were asked more specifically about the careers support they had received in Year 11 of compulsory schooling and over three-quarters of young people taking part in the Wave 2 survey recalled having a discussion with someone from the Careers Service or Connexions about their future. However, more than one in five young people also reported that they had not had any such discussion or could not remember having it (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11: Young person's recall of Year 11 discussion with Careers Service/Connexions personnel

	N =	%
Yes	1,450	78
No	301	16
Don't know/can't remember	123	6
Total	1,874	100

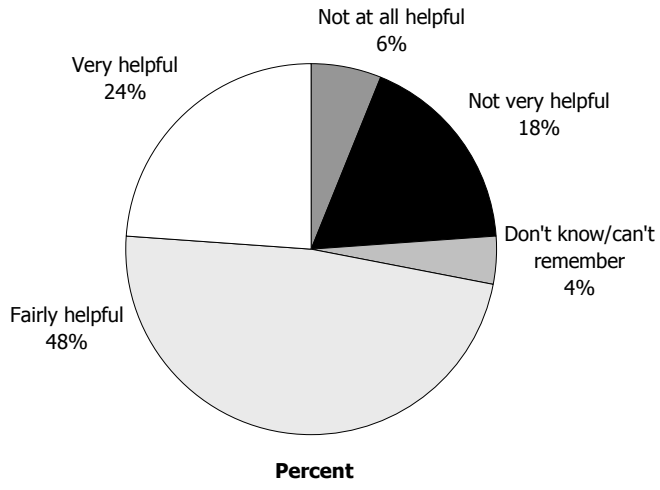
Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Young people in mainstream schools were slightly more likely to recall having this type of discussion with someone from the Careers Service/Connexions than young people in special schools (80 per cent of young people in mainstream schools compared to 70 per cent of young people in special schools could recall this type of meeting). However, no other real differences were observed for any other particular sub-groups of young people. Although approximately twenty per cent of young people in the survey were studying in LEAs covered by a Connexions partnership during Year 11, similar proportions of young people in Connexions areas (80 per cent) and non-Connexions areas (77 per cent) recalled having a specific discussion with someone about their future or career.

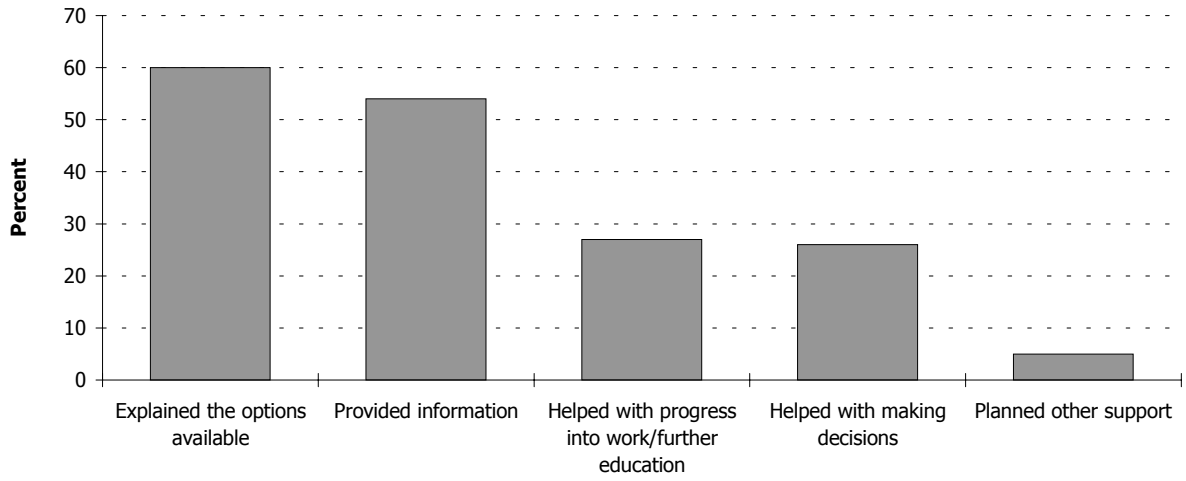
Almost three-quarters of young people who recalled having a discussion about their future with someone from the Careers Service or Connexions said that this discussion had been fairly or very helpful (see Figure 4.2) and no real differences were observed according whether young people had statements of SEN or not, or attended special schools or mainstream schools

Figure 4:2: Helpfulness of Year 11 discussion with Careers Service/Connexions personnel



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Figure 4:3: Reasons why Year 11 discussion with Careers Service/Connexions was helpful



Source: IES/MORI 2003

etc. Young people in Connexions areas were slightly more likely to report that they had found this meeting fairly or very helpful (78 per cent) compared to young people in non-Connexions areas (70 per cent).

4.3.2 Helpfulness of careers support

Most young people reported that this future-focussed meeting with the Careers Service/Connexions had been helpful because it had explained the options available to them and had provided information. More than half of young people who could recall having such a discussion, and had found it helpful, reported this to be the case (see Figure 4.3). Far fewer young people reported that these discussions had helped them to progress into work or further education (just over one-quarter of all young people who could remember having such a discussion and who had found it to be helpful). No real differences were observed for young people in Careers Service areas or Connexions partnerships areas.

Turning to why the discussions with the Careers Service/ Connexions had been unhelpful (24 per cent of all young people recalling such a discussion reported this to be the case), between one-quarter and one-third of young people said this was because the meeting did not provide the right sort of information (32 per cent) or did not provide enough information (27 per cent; see Table 4.12). Approximately one-fifth of young people who found the meeting to be unhelpful also reported that it did not help them in their decision-making and/or did not explain the full range of options available. A similar proportion of these young people found the meeting to be confusing. Once again, no real differences

Table 4.12: Reasons why Year 11 discussion with Careers Service/Connexions was unhelpful

	N =	%
Did not provide the right sort of information	105	32
Did not provide enough information	88	27
Did not help with making decisions	69	21
Did not explain the full range of options available	68	20
Confusing	62	19
Not enough planning for other support	24	7
Young person had already made decisions	16	5
Tried to make young person do something they did not want to do	14	4
Did not listen/take young person seriously	9	3
Other	65	19
Don't know/ can't remember	23	6

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

were observed between Careers Service areas and Connexions partnership areas.

4.4 Preparation and support for post-16 transitions

Young people taking part in the Wave 2 survey were asked to comment more generally about their transition from (compulsory) schooling to their subsequent activities. Importantly, the survey sought to determine, according to young people themselves, who had helped them to make such a transition, who had been most helpful, and why.

Table 4.13 shows clearly that parents/carers are most commonly engaged in helping young people to prepare for their post-16 activity. Sixty-six per cent of all young people said their parents had helped them to prepare for what they would do after Year 11. Approximately one-third of young people cited school staff and/or the school careers adviser as helping in their transition whilst one-fifth of young people surveyed said that the Careers Service or a Connexions personal adviser had helped them to prepare for their post-16 transition. Interestingly, young people in Connexions areas were more likely to mention receiving formal careers help (27 per cent) than those in non-Connexions areas (18 per cent). SENCOs were mentioned by only 13 per cent of young people as having helped them to prepare for what they would do after Year 11.

Table 4.13: Provider of help to prepare for post-16 activities (multiple response)

	All		State-mented	Not state-mented	Special school	Mainstream school
	N =	%	%	%	%	%
Parents/carers	1,226	66	64	69	60	68
Other school staff	724	36	44	30	54	32
School Careers Adviser	617	33	33	33	34	32
Careers Service/ Connexions personal adviser	387	20	22	18	24	19
Friends or partner	297	17	13	21	8	20
SENCO	273	13	18	10	12	13
Other family member	191	11	8	13	5	13
Social Worker/Services	99	4	7	2	12	2
Doctor/health worker	40	2	2	2	4	2
Other	40	2	2	2	2	2
None	99	6	5	6	6	6
Don't know /can't remember	35	1	3	0	5	0
N =	1,874		1,143	611	539	1,335

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

There was little variation in the sample of young people with regards to who helped them prepare for what they would do after Year 11. Some of the key differences between young people with statements of SEN and those without relate to the help they received from school staff (more prevalent amongst young people with statements than those without), the role of friends, partners and other family members (seemingly greater for young people without statements than those with them), and the help they received from the SENCO (young people with statements have reported more frequently that SENCOs had helped them in their post-16 transition than those without a statement). Broadly similar patterns can be observed for young people who attended special schools when compared to those in mainstream schools.

There were very few major differences according to the SEN type in the help young people received to prepare for their post-16 activities (Table 4.14). Young people with communication and interaction difficulties and those with sensory and/or physical disabilities appeared to be more likely than young people with cognition and learning difficulties, and behavioural, emotional or social development needs to have received help from school staff. Young people

Table 4.14: Help to prepare for post-16 activities, by SEN (per cent)

	Communication and Interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour / emotional/ social development
Parents/carers	69	66	74	63
Other school staff	46	35	48	31
School Careers Adviser	35	33	34	29
Careers Service/Connexions personal adviser	20	22	24	18
Friends or partner	15	19	9	13
SENCO	15	13	14	9
Other family member	6	12	10	10
Social Worker/Services	8	2	11	4
Doctor/health worker	2	1	7	5
Other	2	2	5	2
None	5	5	4	10
Don't know /can't remember	1	1	1	3
N =	363	917	122	284

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were also less likely to report receiving help from the school careers adviser or Careers Service/Connexions personnel when preparing for post-16 activities than young people with all other types of SEN.

Almost half (45 per cent) of young people have, not surprisingly, reported that their parents/carers offered the most help when they were deciding what they would do after Year 11 (Table 4.15). Young people without statements of SEN were more likely to say that their parents/carers had been the most helpful person (50 per cent) than those with statements (39 per cent). Similarly, more young people from mainstream schools (48 per cent) found their parents/carers to be the most helpful in preparing for transition than young people in special schools (33 per cent).

Only 16 per cent of all young people said that (other) school staff had been the most helpful in preparing for the post-16 transition, whilst a similar proportion said that the school careers adviser had played this role. Interestingly, young people with statements and those who had attended special schools were more likely to report that school staff and the school careers adviser had been the most helpful to them in

Table 4.15: Most helpful person when preparing for post-16 activities

	All		State-mented	Non-state-mented	Special school	Mainstream school
	N =	%	%	%	%	%
Parents/carers	741	45	39	50	33	48
Other school staff	295	16	20	12	29	12
School Careers Adviser	277	16	16	15	18	15
Careers Service/ Connexions personal adviser	142	7	9	6	8	7
SENCO	122	6	9	5	5	6
Friends or partner	62	4	3	5	1	5
Other family member	45	3	1	5	1	4
Social Worker/Services	25	1	2	1	3	1
Doctor/health worker	5	*	*	0	1	0
Other	26	1	1	1	1	2

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

* - less than 0.5 per cent

Source: IES/MORI 2003

planning for the transition than those without statements and those in mainstream schools.

Just seven per cent of young people said that the Careers Service/Connexions personal adviser had been the most helpful when preparing for post-16 activities. Once more, young people in Connexions areas were slightly more likely to report that this was the case (13 per cent) compared to young people in non-Connexions areas (six per cent).

When asked about the type of help these people had provided, to prepare young people for their post-16 activities, it appears that most help came by way of providing information rather than with decision-making or help to progress into work or further education. Young people were most likely to report that they had provided information (46 per cent) and/or had explained the options available to them (also 46 per cent). Thirty-nine per cent of young people reported that these people had helped them to make decisions about their future and a similar proportion said that they had helped them to progress into work or further education. Just 16 per cent of young people had received help to plan for additional support needs (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16: Help provided when preparing for post-16 activities

	N =	%
Provided information	759	46
Options explained	753	46
Helped to make decisions	639	39
Help to progress into work/further education	619	38
Planned other support	275	16
Gave encouragement/moral support/confidence	50	3
Other	34	2

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

4.5 Parental involvement in career and education choices

During the survey, parents and carers were asked to comment on the extent to which they felt they were helped and informed by the young person's school about the career and education options available to them on leaving school (Table 4.17 and Table 4.18). Disappointingly, 60 per cent of all parents and carers said that they felt they had received little or no help and information with regard to the young person's future options. This figure was higher still for parents and carers of young people who did not have statements of SEN at school (70 per cent), had children who had attended a mainstream school (66 per cent), or who had behavioural, emotional and social development needs (68 per cent).

Table 4.17: Extent to which school helped to inform parents of post-16 options

	All		Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school
	N =	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal	233	12	18	7	23	9
A fair amount	466	27	32	22	38	23
Not very much	466	29	27	31	24	31
Not at all	451	31	21	39	14	35
Don't' know	23	2	1	2	1	2
N =	1,639		1,064	518	490	1,149

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 4.18: Extent to which school helped to inform parents of post-16 options, by SEN type

	Communication and interaction %	Cognition and learning %	Sensory and/or physical %	Behaviour/emotional /social development %
A great deal	14	12	16	11
A fair amount	28	27	34	20
Not very much	30	30	31	26
Not at all	26	30	18	42
Don't know	2	2	1	1
N =	347	895	119	278

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Where parents and carers had received some help and information about post-16 options (39 per cent of all parents/ carers), this had come primarily from:

- teachers (51 per cent of those who recalled receiving help and information said it came from this source)
- school careers advisers (33 per cent)
- SENCO (24 per cent)
- other source (ten per cent), and
- Careers Service/Connexions (nine per cent).

The majority of parents and carers (73 per cent) did, however, report that they felt they were very or, at least, fairly involved in the process of assisting the young person's transition from school to life after Year 11 (Table 4.19 and Table 4.20). Parents and carers of young people with statements and those who

Table 4.19: Parental view on their involvement in post-16 transition process

	All		Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school
	N =	%	%	%	%	%
Very involved	839	48	53	46	54	47
Fairly involved	427	25	27	23	27	24
Not very involved	233	14	12	16	11	16
Not at all involved	168	12	7	15	6	13
Don't know	19	1	1	0	3	0
N =	1,686		1,097	531	518	1,168

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 4.20: Parental view on their involvement in post-16 transition process, by employment status (per cent)

	Managerial / professional	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	Not in employment
Very involved	64	50	47	38	41
Fairly involved	18	25	27	31	25
Not very involved	11	14	13	16	18
Not at all involved	6	10	13	15	15
Don't know	2	1	0	0	2
N =	289	576	193	239	383

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

had attended a special school were even more likely to report that this had been the case (80 per cent and 81 per cent respectively). Moreover, parents/carers in managerial or professional-level employment (as an indicator of socio-economic group) were much more likely to have felt involved in the post-16 transition process than parents/carers in unskilled occupations or those not in work (82 per cent compared to 69 per cent and 66 per cent respectively).

Almost half of parents and carers who reported that they had not been much involved in the young person's transition from school to post-16 activities stated that they had experienced barriers to doing so. These related primarily to a lack of communication and information from the school, or a lack of invitation or encouragement to become involved in the transition process.

Case Studies – transition planning at school

The case studies provided a deeper insight into the ways in which schools prepared young people for the future, and the extent to which transition planning was felt to have been effective. Zoe[1] for instance, is a young lady with moderate learning difficulties associated with a range of medical difficulties. She has been in public care since she was abused as a young girl. Her special school held all the appropriate review meetings and involved Connexions and Social Services in the planning process. In principle, Zoe could have left school for work-based training or the local FE College, but in practice, her need for security led to her staying on at the school's sixth form. However, this is a decision with which Zoe is very comfortable and which the professionals involved all feel was the right one.

[1] All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part in the case studies.

In cases such as these, transition at age 16 is largely meaningless, since there is only one option that meets the young person's needs and wishes and that option is seen by all involved as the correct one. For these young people, the transition process is effectively deferred for two or three years and intensive planning for future options becomes part of their post-16 programme.

In other cases, transition is not deferred and appropriate levels of preparation and support are offered. However, there may be few real alternatives. Peter, for instance, is one of those young people whose difficulties were identified relatively late in his school career. Only towards the end of Year 8 of his comprehensive school did he receive a statement for Asperger's Syndrome and for the first time began to receive support. The effect of the statement, however, was to trigger the formal processes of planning and review. Peter received input from Connexions - though from a mainstream rather than a SEN adviser on the grounds that the local service only had enough specialists to service special schools and units. Fortunately, his parents were proactive in planning for the future and keen that he should stay on in education. His school identified an appropriate option in the form of a two-year work preparation course at an FE College. In principle, there were other options available for Peter, but in practice, none of them was appropriate. Although he began to enjoy school more once he received support, the school sixth form at the time was narrowly academic. As the SENCO put it:

"We are a very open sixth form now but I think two or three years ago we weren't quite as open and you had to get five A-C grades before you could start A level …We as a sixth form are very low on vocational qualifications. We tend to be an academic sixth form so really we offer academic subjects by and large and I think, I don't think he got five A-C's."

Work-based training was also an option in principle, but in practice Peter's social and organisational difficulties made this impractical. All those involved are agreed that his current placement worked out well. However, it is not clear that there were any viable alternatives. In his mother's words:

"If there hadn't been that course available, I really don't know what would have been appropriate."

More generally, examples of relatively smooth transitions from the case studies seem to be the exception rather than the rule. Marcus, for instance, who has profound and multiple learning difficulties, (PMLD) requires constant one-to-one assistance and is currently attending the sixth form unit of the special school which has provided all of his schooling. The unit is housed in a nearby Sixth Form College but is staffed by special school staff. In this way, it seeks to provide the best of both worlds in terms of specialist provision on the one hand and opportunities for wider social interactions and experiences on the other. In this situation, there were probably no other realistic options for Marcus and transition planning in the sense of scoping out choices has not really been necessary. Despite this, however, the move to the sixth form unit did not go well because of the unfamiliarity of some staff with Marcus's needs and difficulties in making appropriate

equipment available. Although the problems have now been sorted out and the placement is generally regarded as successful, it took over half a year for this to happen. Marcus's mother is philosophical about the apparent lack of preparation, putting it down to the fact that he is breaking ground for young people with PMLD in this college. On the other hand, the difficulties of the transition process had taken a toll on her mental health and had left her with a negative view of how that process had been handled.

Where there has been turbulence in, or a complete breakdown of schooling pre-16, transition planning inevitably suffers. Li, for instance, is a young man with moderate learning difficulties, though these are compounded by his lack of confidence, by the fact that he does not speak English at home (he is of Chinese ethnic origin) and by some apparent social difficulties. He had no statement, but towards the end of his schooling, his comprehensive school placed him in a Pupil Referral Unit. He was not happy there, felt he was bullied by other pupils and did not get on with the teachers, so he stopped attending. As a result he had little or no preparation for transition – or at least, none that had any impact on him. Since his parents spoke little English, they were in no position to advocate on his behalf and Li was thrown back on his own resources to sort out his future. He eventually found his way onto a painting and decorating course at an FE College. His account of how this came about is illuminating:

'One of my friends showed me because he was at the college and he came to see me and he said there is a course going on and I ought to join and I thought I had to fill out all these forms, but I didn't fill out any forms, I just jumped on the course and the teacher said it was alright."

What is significant here is that the formal processes of preparation and planning for transition were of little significance for a young man who was progressively disassociating himself from schooling. His choice is determined not by professional support and rational decision-making, but by his own lack of confidence and the influence of his friends.

Making sense of the range of experiences is difficult, not least because families and professionals sometimes gave very different accounts of the same events while some young people were unable to give coherent accounts of what had happened to them. Nonetheless, some themes are clear. Above all, in this sample at least, the smooth, planned transition process is the exception rather than the rule. Although there is evidence of plans being made and schools doing all they had to do in terms of organising reviews, involving parents and co-ordinating the inputs of other agencies, the process worked best where least was at stake. In other words, if all were agreed that there was no real option beyond staying on at school, the transition process was effectively deferred for two or three years and the young person continued along a pre-ordained track.

Elsewhere, a range of factors disrupted the transition process. For some young people, there was no real choice and the single option on offer may or may not have been appropriate. For others, there

were choices but young person and family had to identify these choices for themselves with greater or lesser degrees of support from professionals. In other cases, planning and choosing were undertaken, but there was inadequate preparation by the receiving provider. Some young people found schools or Careers/Connexions workers unsympathetic to their own view of their futures. In other cases, relationship with the school had broken down, there was no effective planning and preparation and they were cast back on their own resources.

4.6 Perceptions/experience of school

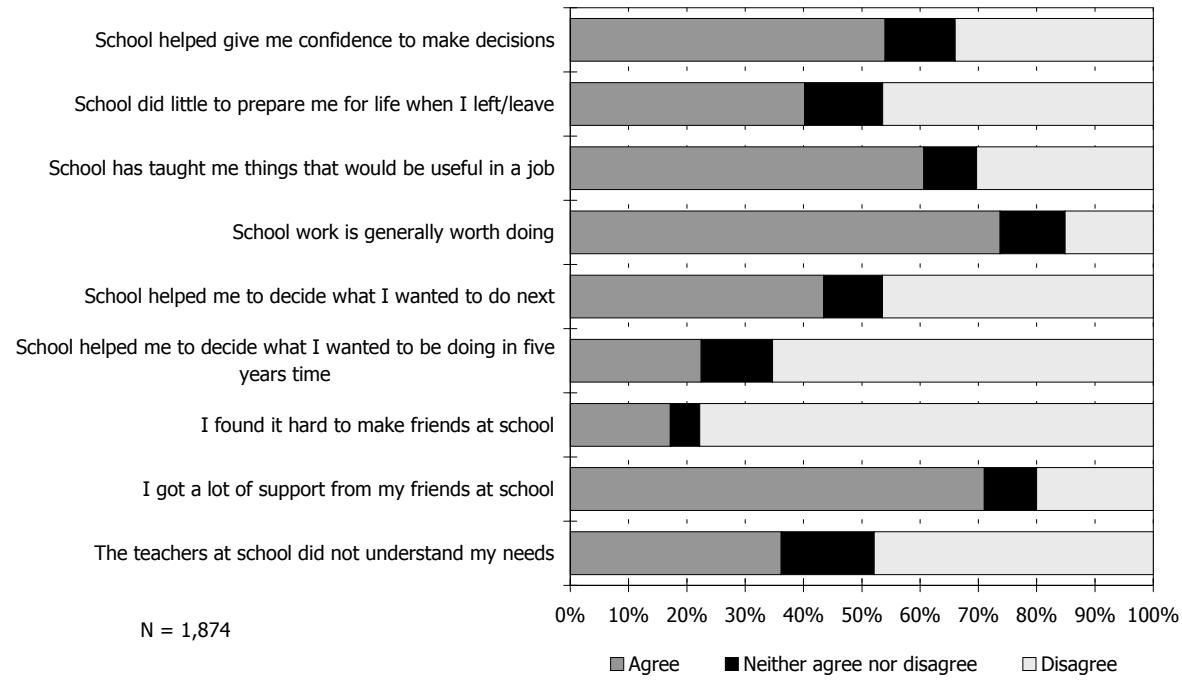
Most of the young people interviewed during the Wave 2 survey seemed to have a positive regard for their time at school. Young people were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about their school experience and the results are presented in Figure 4.4.

Over half of all young people responding to these questions agreed that:

- school had given them the confidence to make decisions
- school had taught them things that would be useful in a job
- school work was generally worth doing.

More disappointingly though, less than half of all young people agreed that school had helped them to decide what to do next, or indeed that it had helped them to decide what they

Figure 4:4: Young person's views on school experience

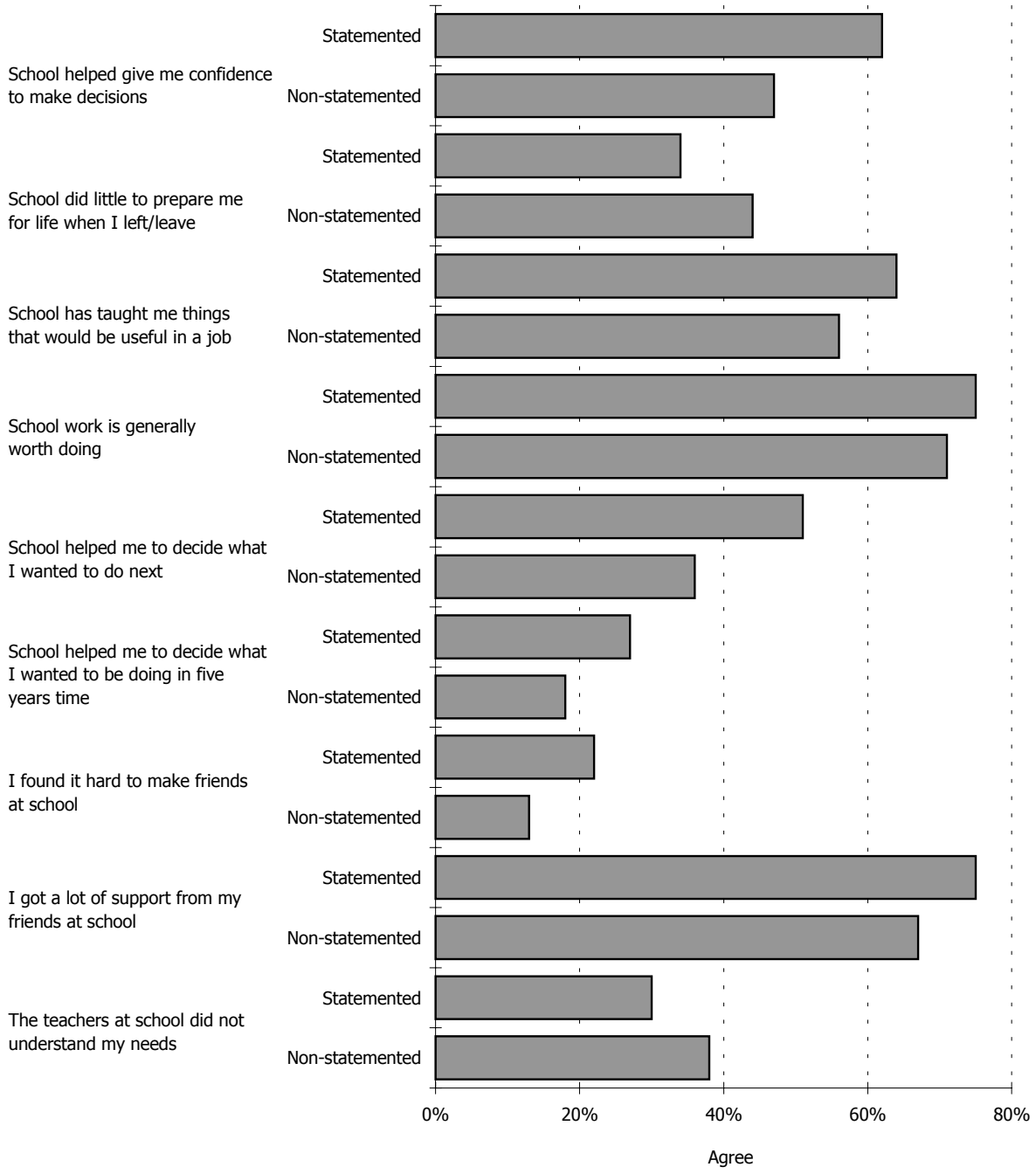


Source: IES/MORI 2003

wanted to be doing in five years time. Just over one-third of young people agreed that the teachers at school did not understand their needs and that school did little to prepare them for life after they had left.

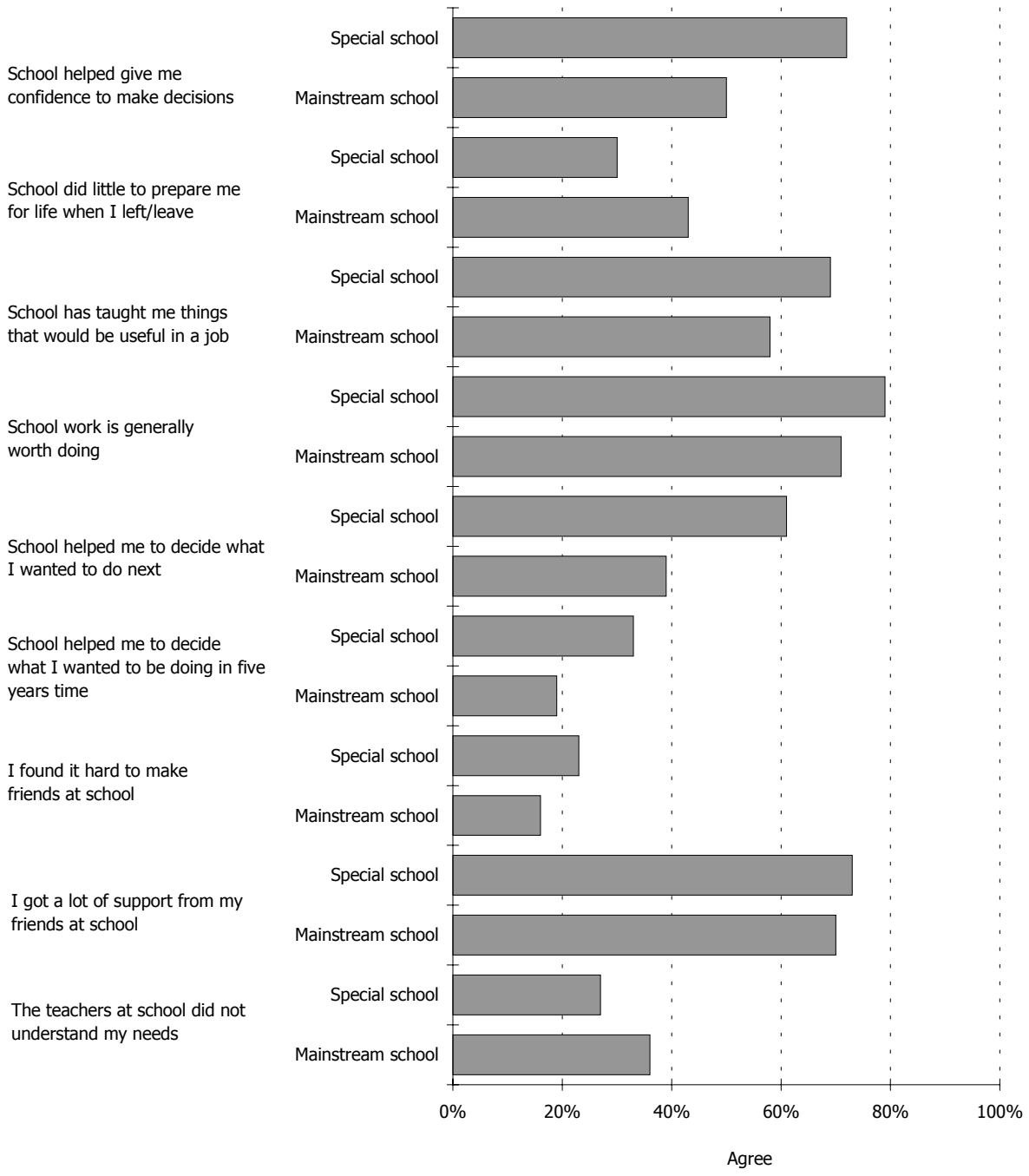
Young people who had statements of SEN and those who attended a special school were more likely to report positively about their school experiences than their counterparts without statements and those in mainstream schools. This is illustrated clearly in Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6.

Figure 4:5: Young People's views on school experience, statemented or non-statemented



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Figure 4:6: Young People's views on school experience, special or mainstream school



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Case studies – school experiences

The characteristics of young people with SEN are hugely variable and they attend a wide range of types of school provision. Young people in the case study sample, for instance, had attended mainstream schools with varying levels of support, special units in mainstream schools, a range of types of special schools and a 'tutorial centre'. It is not surprising, therefore, that their experience of school and the role played by their schools in the transition process are themselves highly variable.

In some cases, school embodied the best of 'traditional' special education. Sophie1 for instance, is a young woman with severe and complex learning difficulties who was 18 at the time of interview, but had attended the same small special school since the age of five. Her mother described the school in the following terms:

"I mean it's a very good school, we think it's a very good school. The head teacher is exceptional and we're not alone in saying that you know. She is very good with staff and cheerful and with the County Council so I think we've been very lucky there."

This 'exceptional' head was able to offer the sort of personalised support which young people and their families needed. In this context, the formal processes of review and planning simply formed part of a close and continuing stream of interaction between school and family.

Sophie's difficulties present significant educational problems to her teachers, but ones that are well-understood and can be met by a committed staff. However, young people who present behavioural, emotional or social difficulties appear to be much more difficult for teachers to deal with and these young people face the real threat of a breakdown of the relationship with school. Carl is a young man with severe autism who attends the sixth form of a special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. As he entered the teenage years, he began to present acute behavioural problems in terms of violence to family, teachers and other pupils. He also began to engage in sexually inappropriate behaviour. The school was on the point of excluding him and was only dissuaded from doing so when it secured extra funding from the LEA to provide one-to-one support. As Carl's needs have eased, he has remained in the school post-16, and at the time of interview was attending a link course at a local FE college with which the school had a good working relationship. Plans were already in place for him to complete the transition to the college full-time in the following year.

However, not all such problems had equally positive outcomes. A number of young people we spoke to had had somewhat turbulent school careers, particularly in the latter stages where their difficulties and frustrations reached crisis point. Matthew, for instance, described himself as having dyslexia, though it appears to have been his behavioural difficulties which caused the greatest problems for his teachers. After an unsuccessful time at primary school, his difficulties were identified by his secondary school. He was not regarded as having sufficiently severe problems for the school to seek a statement, but he nonetheless received a level of support which both he and his mother regarded as valuable. Despite this, Matthew found relationships with his teachers and his peers difficult. He was bullied and himself became a bully in turn. He misbehaved in lessons and was given to outbursts of temper in which he might hit other pupils. The school's approach was supportive, but as his SEN teacher told us, ultimately it was ineffective:

[1] All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part in the case studies.

"In school he had quite a lot of high profile attention from a lot of experienced teachers but we seemed unable to help him in that it never went beyond the moment. Whatever advice you gave him, whatever skills you tried to teach him, he could not use them in the situation so in the moment he would nod and yes, he understood, but when he went out into the true testing ground which was his relationships with other people, he couldn't activate or use the help we had given him."

In fact, Matthew's behaviour became worse, though by the time it reached crisis point, the school decided it was too late to go through the time-consuming statutory assessment processes. Instead, they negotiated with Matthew's family to place him on a link course with a local FE College. However, this placement too broke down and, we were told, after Matthew had been involved with a group of other students on the fringes of some criminal activity, he was asked to leave.

All of the young people so far in this section managed to find a 'champion' who offered them and their families personal support and was in a position to marshal resources to support the young person in school. However, not all young people were so fortunate. Stuart is visually impaired and his mother talked of the lack of understanding displayed by the school, even though some of the external trappings of support were clearly in place:

"…we found the SENCO extremely unhelpful. We didn't feel that she was sympathetic to his needs, certainly didn't understand his difficulties with relationships. You know she was very quick to just tell him what to do rather than facilitate, rather than to see how he could be in the situation. They had an Aspergers link unit and most of the school saw him as having Aspergers syndrome, you know and so just ignored him. She didn't sort of look for ways of involving him with the unit or with people. She would give him a list of things he ought to do and didn't recognise that he had the assistant sitting next to him in all the classes [and that] made him sort of different."

Eventually, on the advice of a specialist peripatetic teacher, Stuart moved to a specialist college, where he became much happier.

It is dangerous to generalise too far from these cases. For instance, in the sample of 16, special schools appear to be experienced marginally more positively by young people and their parents than are mainstream schools. On the other hand, the populations of the two types of school are not directly comparable in such a small sample. Nonetheless, some themes do seem to emerge in terms of school experience:

Schools can and do provide high levels of support which maintain young people in education, bring about personal, social and academic growth and create a stable platform from which transition can begin.

As in Carl and Matthew's cases, support may centre around a teacher or support assistant with the necessary time and commitment.

Providing support in a consistent and appropriate manner is not straightforward. Mainstream schools in particular may have difficulties because of the range of adults involved with the young person and the relatively 'open' nature of the environment.

For many young people with SEN, behavioural, emotional and social development needs are part of the overall range of difficulties which they present – regardless of whether they are formally labelled as 'having BESD'. These sorts of difficulties present challenges for schools and it is not uncommon for schools to find that they can no longer cope. This, as we saw with Carl, can be the case in special schools as well as in mainstream schools.

There is also a tendency for problems to be identified late in the young person's schooling, sometimes so late that the statutory assessment procedures are seen as impracticable. This seems to be a result of difficulties genuinely changing as children become adolescents, and schools' reluctance (reinforced by the structure of the SEN assessment system) to bring to bear higher-level interventions until lower level ones have demonstrably failed. It is not surprising, therefore, when these interventions do fail and there is little the school can do but move the young person on to some other form of provision.

As a result, the later years of schooling are in some cases characterised by turbulence rather than stability, to the point where some young people (Matthew is a case in point) reach the stage where they are effectively out of education.

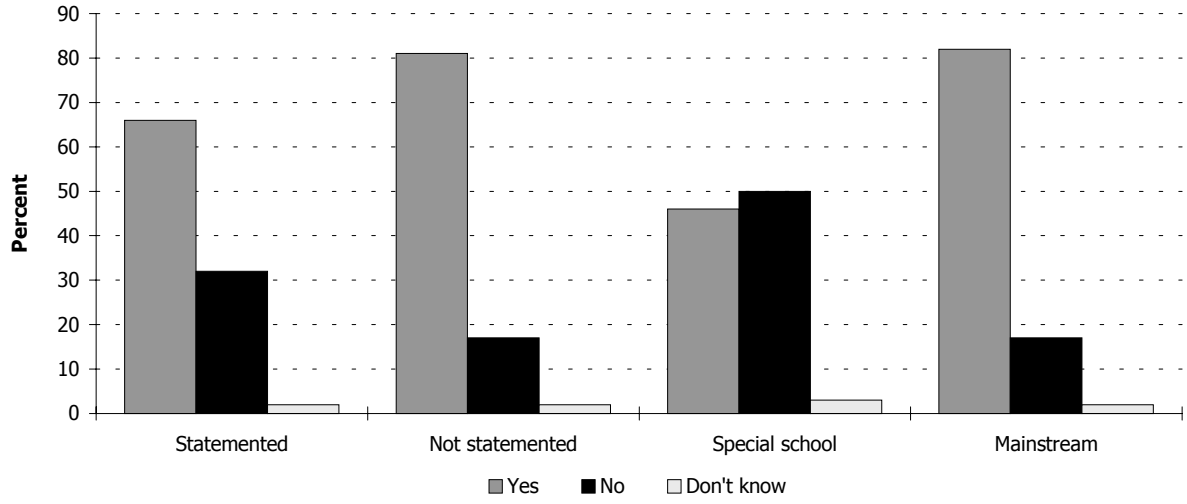
4.7 Qualifications from school

4.7.1 Qualifications gained

Almost three-quarters of young people interviewed for the Wave 2 survey (74 per cent) reported that they had gained some sort of qualification in their final year of compulsory schooling. There were no observed differences according to gender or ethnicity in relation to the proportion of young people gaining qualifications at school, however, some key differences were observed for level of SEN and school type (see Figure 4.7).

It is clear that young people with statements are less likely to have gained any sort qualification in Year 11 compared to young people without statements of SEN as would be expected. Similarly, young people who attended mainstream schools were more likely than those who went to a special school to gain qualifications in Year 11.

Figure 4.7: Whether gained qualifications at Year 11, all groups

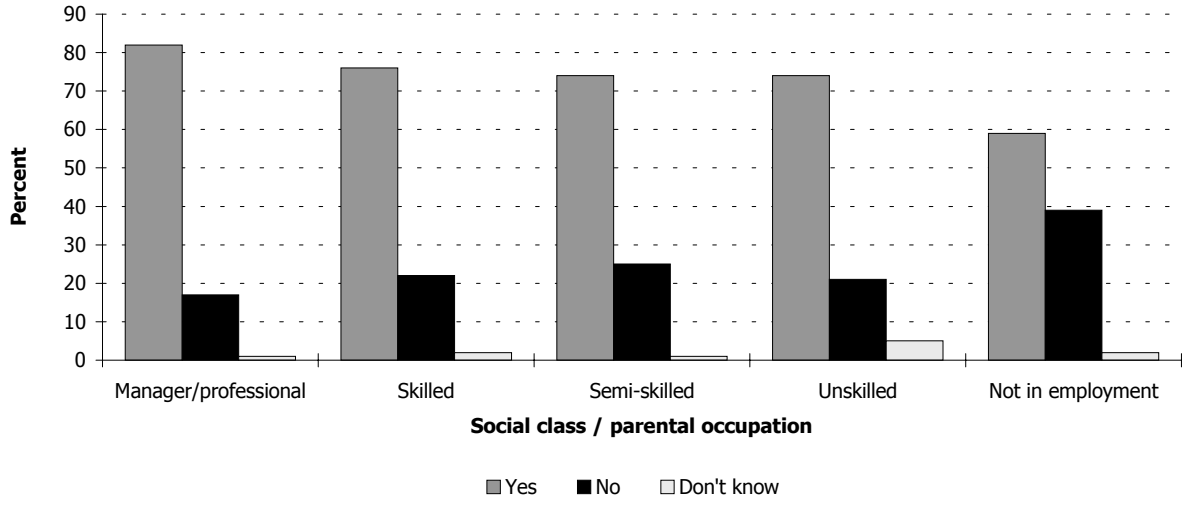


Source: IES/MORI 2003

Moreover, young people who attended a mainstream school were as likely to get qualifications regardless of whether they had a statement of SEN or not (just over 80 per cent of young people in mainstream schools, both with statements and without statements, gained some sort of qualification in Year 11 compared to just 46 per cent of young people attending a special school).

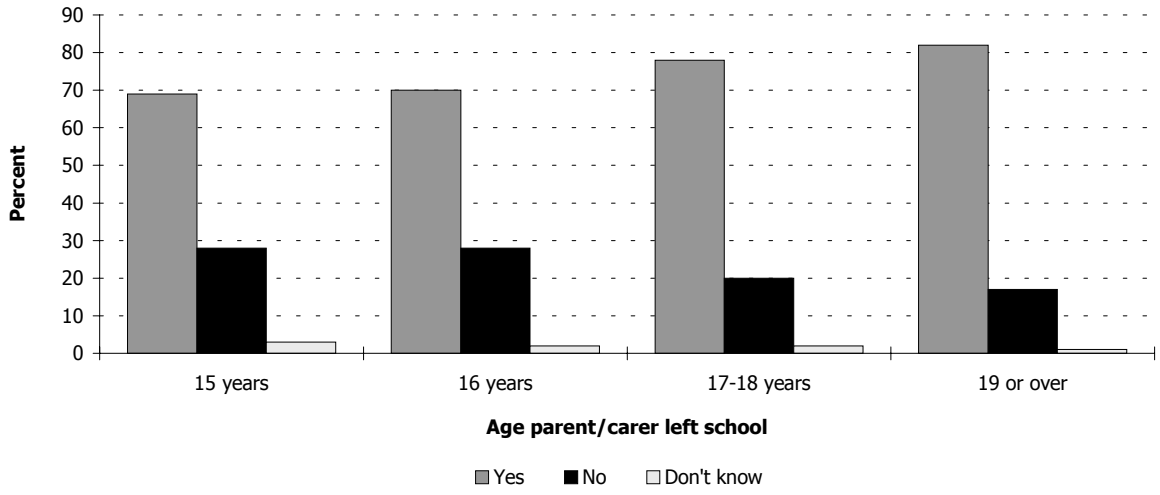
Perhaps not surprisingly, the incidence of gaining qualifications in Year 11 appears closely linked with social class and the age at which young people's parents/carers left school (see Figure 4.8 and Figure 4.9). Young people from higher social class groupings (*ie* managerial/professional level) were more likely to have gained qualifications than those in the lower

Figure 4.8: Whether gained qualifications at Year 11, by social class



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Figure 4.9: Whether gained qualifications at Year 11, by age parent/carer left school

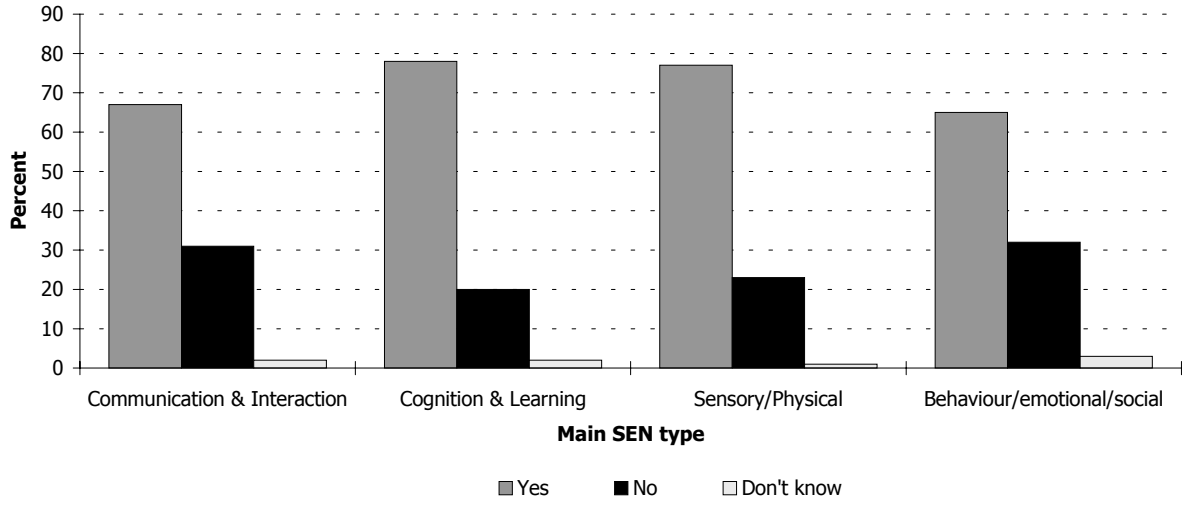


Source: IES/MORI 2003

groupings (*ie* unskilled and not employed). Young people were also more likely to have gained qualifications in Year 11 if their parents/carers had left full-time education at age 19 or over, compared to those who left at age 15.

The likelihood of young people gaining qualifications also differed according to SEN type (see Figure 4.10). Young people with cognition and learning difficulties and those with sensory or physical disabilities were more likely to gain some qualification in Year 11. Whilst young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were the least likely to gain any sort of qualification at the end of compulsory schooling.

Figure 4.10: Whether gained qualifications at Year 11, by SEN

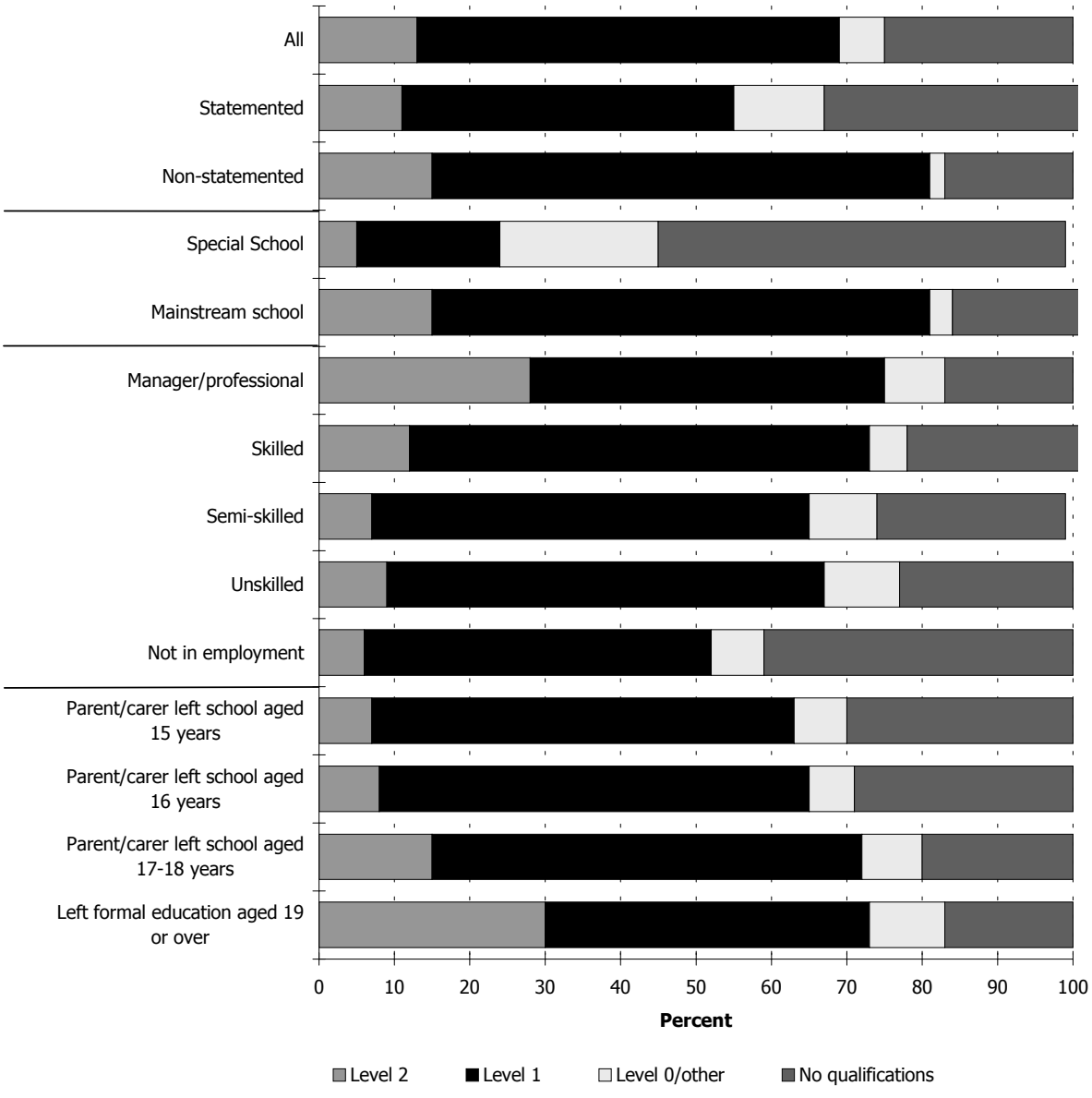


Source: IES/MORI 2003

4.7.2 Level of qualification gained

The majority of young people with SEN taking part in this survey (56 per cent) left Year 11 with a Level 1[1] equivalent qualification. Just over one in ten young people achieved a Level 2 qualification *ie* five or more GCSEs at grades A-C (see Figure 4.11). Young people appeared to be more likely to gain (slightly) higher level qualifications if:

Figure 4.11: Level of qualification gained



Source: IES/MORI 2003

[1] Level 1 qualifications include fewer than five GCSEs at level A to C, GNVQ foundation level and BTEC general certificate. Level 2 qualifications include five or more GCSEs at grades A to C, GNVQ intermediate level and equivalent.

- they attended a mainstream school, regardless of the presence of a statement
- they belonged to higher socio-economic groupings, and/or
- their parents left school at age 19 or over.

4.8 Chapter summary

- Less than half of all young people could recall attending a transition planning review.
- Transition planning review meetings are a statutory obligation for young people with statements of special educational needs. Not surprisingly young people with a statement of SEN, and those who had attended a special school were much more likely to recall (or remember attending) a transition planning review than those without a statement, or those who had attended a mainstream school.
- A significant proportion of young people with statements of SEN could not recall attending a transition planning review meeting.
- Some young people without statements recalled attending a transition planning review meeting although there was no statutory obligation to have had one.
- Young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs are the least likely of all types of SEN to recall attending a transition planning review.
- Most people recalling a transition planning review thought it had been useful.
- School staff, parents and carers, and school careers advisors were most likely to have been present at the transition planning review.
- Parents of young people without statements, those who attended a special school, or those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were less likely to have been present at the transition planning review.
- Very few young people recalled that the Careers Service or Connexions were present at their transition planning review.
- School careers advisers and other school staff were reported to be the most helpful people at the transition planning review.
- A broad range of issues was covered as part of the transition planning review from continuing in education to forming adult relationships.

- Over three-quarters of all young people recalled having a discussion with someone from the Careers Service or Connexions about their future.
- Young people in Connexions areas were slightly more likely to report that their formal careers discussion had been helpful compared to those in non-Connexions areas.
- Young people are most likely to report that their parents were the most helpful to them when making their post-16 transitions from compulsory schooling.
- The majority of parents and carers feel that they received little help or information from the young person's school regarding post-16 options.
- Most young people taking part in the survey have a positive regard for their time at school and many report positive soft outcomes.
- Many young people, however, report that school did not help them to decide what they wanted to do next.
- Most young people received some sort of hard outcomes from school ie qualifications and certificates.
- Young people with statements of SEN, who attended a special school, and those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were least likely to have gained qualifications from school.

5. Transition from Year 11

This chapter looks at the activities in which young people with SEN are currently engaged. It identifies the main sources of advice and support that young people received when making post-16 decisions and goes on to reflect on the relevance of transition planning on their current activity.

5.1 Current activity

Almost half (46 per cent) of all young people taking part in the survey were currently studying at school or college (and most were in Year 13). Just over one-quarter (28 per cent) were in employment and a further six per cent were in some sort of government-supported training *eg* Entry 2 Employment or a Modern Apprenticeship. Fourteen per cent of all young people were unemployed at the time of the survey. Very few young people were inactive due to ill-health or because of caring responsibilities and less than one per cent were attending a day care centre (Table 5.1).

When these data are compared to the Youth Cohort Study (Table 5.2), it appears that fewer young people in this sample are in education than young people of a similar age in the population generally (46 per cent compared to 63 per cent in the YCS) and more young people in this sample are in work (28 per cent compared to 19 per cent in the YCS) or out of work (14 per cent compared to six per cent in the YCS as a whole).

The incidence of disability, or health problems amongst young people in the population generally does not have a particularly strong impact on their current activity. If the activities of respondents to this survey are compared to young people with disabilities and/or health problems responding to the YCS, the disparities remain; young people in this survey are still less likely to be in education, and more likely to be in or out of work than their peers generally.

Table 5.1: Current main activity

	All		Male	Female	White	Non-white
	N =	%	%	%	%	%
Studying (*eg* at school or college)	942	46	42	52	44	67
In paid employment	476	28	31	22	30	10
Unemployed	235	14	16	11	15	12
On a Modern Apprenticeship, National Traineeship, or other government-supported training	112	6	7	5	6	5
Looking after the family or home	34	2	1	5	2	2
Ill/health problems	29	1	1	2	2	0
Working but not getting paid for it (incl. voluntary work)	8	*	*	*	*	*
Attending a day care centre	4	*	*	0	*	*
Other	34	2	1	2	2	3
Total	1,874	100	1,170	704	1,690	184

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

* - less than 0.5 per cent

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Looking at gender, more women than men were studying in school or college (52 per cent compared to 42 per cent) whilst conversely, more men than women were in work (31 per cent compared to 22 per cent). Men were slightly more likely to be unemployed than women, although fairly similar proportions were on government-supported training.

In relation to ethnicity, young people from non-white ethnic groups were more likely to have continued in education than their white counterparts and were less likely to be in work.

Table 5.2: Main activity, Youth Cohort Study (per cent)

	All	Disability or health problem	No disability or health problem
Full time education	63	57	63
Full-time and Part-time job	19	20	19
Out of work	6	11	6
Government supported	9	7	9
Other/not stated	4	4	3

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: YCS Cohort 11 Sweep 2, DfES

Much greater differences in activity pattern have been observed according to the existence of a statement of SEN, the type of school attended and the type of special educational need (Table 5.3 and Table 5.4). Young people with statements were almost twice as likely as those without a statement of SEN to have continued in education. Whilst over a third of young people without statements were continuing in education, young people without a statement were almost as likely to have been in employment at the time of the survey as they were to have been studying at school or college. Young people without a statement of SEN were also more likely than those with a statement to have been unemployed at the time of the survey.

Not surprisingly, these patterns were mimicked by young people according to the type of school they had attended. Young people from special schools were more likely to have continued in education, whilst those from mainstream schools were almost as likely to be in work as they were to have continued their studies. Mainstream school attendees were also twice as likely as those who had attended a special school to be unemployed at the time of the survey. These data seem to suggest that some young people, and particularly those with statements and/or who attended a special school, have deferred their post-16 transitions by remaining in education whilst a significant proportion of those without statements

Table 5.3: Current main activity, by statement and school type (per cent)

	State–mented	Not state–mented	Special school	Mainstream school
Studying (*eg* at school or college)	60	36	76	38
In paid employment	20	33	9	33
Unemployed	9	18	8	16
On a Modern Apprenticeship, National Traineeship, or other government-supported training	5	7	2	7
Working but not getting paid for it (incl. voluntary work)	1	*	1	*
Attending a day care centre	*	0	1	*
Looking after the family or home	1	3	0	3
Ill/health problems	2	1	1	1
Other	2	1	2	2
Total	1,143	611	539	1,335

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

* - less than 0.5 per cent

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 5.4: Current main activity, by SEN (per cent)

	Communi–cation and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour / emotional / social development
Studying (school or college)	57	46	71	32
In paid employment	18	31	11	32
Unemployed	12	10	9	26
On a Modern Apprenticeship, National Traineeship, or other government supported training	7	8	1	3
Looking after the family or home	1	2	1	2
Ill/health problems	2	1	3	2
Working but not getting paid for it (incl. voluntary work)	1	0	0	1
Attending a day care centre	0	0	1	0
Other	2	1	3	3
Total	363	917	122	284

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

and/or who attended a mainstream school may have fallen (or are in danger of falling) through the net and be outside of education, employment or training (NEET).

The activity patterns of young people according to their SEN type also differ quite significantly (Table 5.4). More than half of young people with communication and interaction difficulties, or sensory and/or physical disabilities were continuing with their studies as were almost half of young people with cognition and learning difficulties. Almost one-third of young people in this latter group and a similar proportion of those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were in employment at the time of the survey, a much higher proportion than young people with other types of SEN. The most likely group of young people to be unemployed, however, were those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs. Approximately one in four of these young people were without occupation or activity, compared to approximately one in ten of young people in all the other SEN groups.

Social class also seems to bear some relation to a young person's current activity. Table 5.5 shows that young people in higher socio-economic groups were more likely to be studying than young people in any other socio-economic group. Conversely, young people from lower socio-economic groups

Table 5.5: Current main activity, by social group (per cent)

	Manager / professional	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	Not in employment
Studying (school or college)	64	43	36	37	54
Unemployed	7	13	17	19	15
On a Modern Apprenticeship, National Traineeship, or other government supported training	6	8	7	4	7
In paid employment	21	31	36	36	14
Working but not getting paid for it (incl. voluntary work)	*	*	0	1	*
Attending a day care centre	*	*	0	0	*
Looking after the family or home	0	1	2	2	4
Ill/health problems	1	2	1	1	2
Other	1	2	1	0	2
Total	289	576	193	239	383

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated
* - less than 0.5 per cent

Source: IES/MORI 2003

(particularly those in the semi-skilled or unskilled groups) were as likely to be in work as they were to be education, and more likely than young people in the other socio-economic groups to be unemployed.

Interestingly, young people who could recall having a transition planning review (and thus plan) were also more likely to be engaged in some sort of positive activity *ie* education, training or employment, at the time of the survey (84 per cent compared to 72 per cent overall). Young people without a transition plan were almost twice as likely to be unemployed as those with a transition plan when they were surveyed (Table 5.6).

The following sections look more closely at the key activity 'sectors' in which young people with SEN are now engaged.

5.2 Education

5.2.1 Educational establishment

Almost half of all young people taking part in the survey were in education at that time (46 per cent), and the majority of these (93 per cent) were studying full-time, regardless of gender, ethnicity, SEN type *etc.*

Table 5.6: Current main activity, by transition plan (per cent)

	Transition plan		
	Yes	**No**	**Don't know**
Studying (*eg* at school or college)	53	36	46
Unemployed	11	19	14
On a Modern Apprenticeship, National Traineeship, or other government supported training	6	5	7
In paid employment	25	31	27
Working but not getting paid for it (incl. voluntary work)	*	1	0
Attending a day care centre	*	0	*
Looking after the family or home	1	4	2
Ill/health problems	2	2	1
Other	2	2	1
Total	984	527	363

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

* - less than 0.5 per cent

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 5.7 below shows that most young people who were continuing in education (57 per cent) were studying at a Further Education (FE) or tertiary college, followed by smaller numbers of young people remaining in schools (17 per cent)

Table 5.7: Educational establishment

	N =	**%**
College of Further Education or tertiary college	508	57
School	172	17
Sixth Form college	104	11
Specialist college for learners with learning difficulties/ disabilities	68	6
Residential school	13	1
Independent or other college	12	1
Residential Training Colleges	7	1
Private training centre	4	*
University	4	1
Other	41	4
Don't know	9	1
N =	942	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

* - less than 0.5 per cent

Source: IES/MORI 2003

and sixth form colleges (11 per cent). Six per cent of young people in education reported that they were studying at specialist colleges for learners with learning difficulties/ disabilities.

Young people who had a statement of SEN whilst in compulsory schooling were more likely than those without statements to be continuing their studies at school or within a specialist college for people with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), and less likely to be at an FE or tertiary college (Table 5.8).

A similar pattern was observed for young people who had attended a special school compared with those from a mainstream school. Not surprisingly, young people with different SEN types were also attending different types of educational establishment.

Young people with communication and interaction difficulties, and those with sensory and/or physical disabilities, were more likely than those with cognition and learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social development needs to have remained at school post-16 or be attending a specialist

Table 5.8: Educational establishment, by SEN (per cent)

	Communication and Interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour / emotional / social development
College of Further Education or tertiary college	49	63	40	53
School	21	14	27	19
Sixth Form college	12	10	15	12
Specialist college for learners with learning difficulties/ disabilities	8	4	10	7
Residential school	2	1	2	1
Independent or other college	1	1	1	2
Residential Training Colleges	1	0	1	0
Private training centre	1	0	0	0
University	0	1	1	0
Other	4	5	2	5
Don't know	1	0	1	1
N =	232	444	87	108

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

college for people with LDD, and were less likely to be at an FE or tertiary college.

5.2.2 Advice received

Looking at who helped or advised young people with regard to following their current course of study (see Table 5.9), it is clear that parents and carers played a significant role, with over half of all young people reporting that they received help from them when choosing what to study. School staff, school and college careers advisers, and other college staff were also commonly mentioned by almost one-quarter to one-third of all young people as sources of help and advice regarding their studies and choice of course.

Just over one in ten young people currently in education mentioned that they had received (impartial) help or advice about doing their current course from the Careers Service or Connexions.

Interestingly, young people in Connexions areas were more likely than young people in non-Connexions areas to cite this type of help and advice (19 per cent of young people in Connexions areas had received this type of formal help and advice compared to 11 per cent of those in non-Connexions areas).

On closer inspection, it is possible to see that some young people relied more heavily on their parents and other informal sources of advice and help than others when choosing their course. Table 5.9 shows that young people without statements of SEN were more likely than young people with statements to have received help or advice from parents/carers, friends or partners, and other family members.

Conversely, people with statements more frequently turned to school staff and SENCOs for advice and help than was the case amongst those without statements. Young people who attended mainstream schools were also more likely than those who had attended special schools to use informal sources of advice and support ie parents, friends, other family members, in relation to the choice of course. On the other hand, young people who could recall attending a transition review meeting, and thus drawing up a transition plan, were more likely than those without a

Table 5.9: Provider of help/advice with current course

	All		Male	Female	State–mented	Not state–mented	Special school	Main–stream	Transition Plan Yes	Transition Plan No	Transition Plan Don't know
	N =	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Parents/carers	495	53	54	52	51	57	48	56	54	59	45
Other school staff	327	32	29	37	40	21	19	24	40	22	25
Careers Adviser at school/college	220	23	22	24	23	22	22	23	27	18	18
Other college staff	210	22	23	21	22	22	19	24	23	19	24
Friends or partner	133	16	17	15	11	22	6	21	13	16	24
Careers Service/Connexions personal adviser	118	12	12	13	12	10	13	12	14	11	10
Someone else in your family	75	8	10	7	7	10	5	11	8	8	11
SENCO	89	8	7	10	11	4	11	7	10	7	5
Other	53	6	5	7	5	7	6	6	6	6	6
Don't know/can't remember	80	8	8	9	9	7	13	6	7	8	13
N =	942		541	401	677	219	411	531	560	203	179

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

transition plan to have sought advice and help from formal sources ie school staff, school or college careers advisers and SENCOs, with regard to choosing their course. Essentially, it seems that where there is a statutory obligation to undertake formal transition planning, *ie* for statemented pupils, school staff and SENCOs play a greater role in the provision of help and advice. Conversely, where there is no formal requirement to plan for the post-16 transition, school staff are much less likely to be involved in helping young people with their choices. This may relate to capacity within schools such that (scarce) resources are targeted towards those for whom the school has a statutory responsibility. Schools may not have the capacity to extend this type of help and advice to those beyond the statutory remit.

Parents and carers are clearly important sources of help and advice to young people when choosing their course of study, and from Table 5.10 it is possible to see that almost one-third of all young people believe they were the most helpful people in this endeavour. However, taken together, exactly half of all young people currently in education reported that school and college staff (including SENCOs and school or college careers staff) were the most helpful when choosing their course. Just six per cent of young people cited the Careers Service or Connexions personal adviser as the most helpful person when making decisions about future study.

Formal sources of advice and help from schools and colleges with regard to future course choice were more important to young people with statements than those without, to young people who attended special schools than those who attended

Table 5.10: Most helpful person when choosing course

	N =	%
Parents/carers	259	31
Other school staff	184	19
Other college staff	132	15
Careers Adviser at school/college	101	12
Careers Service/Connexions personal adviser	48	6
Friends or partner (boyfriend/girlfriend)	41	5
SENCO at school	36	4
Someone else in your family	18	2
Other	43	5
N = 862		

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

mainstream schools, and to those who had a transition plan over those who did not. Young people with sensory and physical disabilities were also more likely than any other SEN type to report that these formal sources of advice and support were the most helpful.

Whilst choosing their current course of study, young people most frequently reported that they received:

- information
- an explanation of the options available
- help to make decisions
- help to progress into further study/education.

Many young people were also helped to plan how they would be supported in their further studies. Table 5.11 illustrates the type of help young people received. Very few young people reported that they had received help and advice on more emotional issues, for example, providing encouragement or building confidence *etc.,* when choosing their course.

Table 5.11: Advice received when choosing the course

	N =	%
Provided information	439	51
Explained options available	354	41
Helped me to make decisions	329	38
Helped me to progress into work/further education/training	278	33
Planned how I would be supported	136	16
Gave me encouragement	19	2
Gave me support/understood my needs	16	2
Gave me confidence	4	1
Took me to interviews/college	9	1
Helped plan for independent living	2	*
None/nobody helped	5	1
Other	18	2
Don't know/can't remember	37	4
Total N =	862	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

* - less than 0.5 per cent

Source: IES/MORI 2003

5.2.3 Ease of transition

The majority of young people (66 per cent) who were studying at the time of the survey reported that they had found it very or fairly easy to start their course (see Table 5.12). However, one in five young people who were still studying said that they had experienced some difficulty starting the course.

Table 5.12: Ease/difficulty of starting course

	N =	%
Very easy	272	28
Fairly easy	349	38
Neither easy nor difficult	95	10
Fairly difficult	135	15
Very difficult	52	5
Don't know/can't remember	39	3
N= 942		

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

When asked what or who had eased the transition into post-16 learning (Table 5.13) young people most frequently reported that teachers and tutors had made this move easier for them (61 per cent of those finding the transition easy responded in this way). Not surprisingly, support from family and friends also rated highly as having eased the transition into further studies. The availability of transport was another ameliorating factor mentioned by almost one-fifth of young people who had found the transition easy. Only three per cent of young people reported that the Careers Service or Connexions had eased their move into further studies.

The difficulties that young people experienced in making the transition from school (reported by 20 per cent of those staying in learning post-16) related primarily to heavier workloads and the need to adapt to change, and getting to know new people and a new environment. Interestingly, some of these problems may have been addressed by greater 'emotional' or informal advice and support when young people were making decisions about their course (see section 5.2.2).

Table 5.13: Factors affecting ease of transition

	N =	%
Teachers/tutors	378	61
Family support	189	30
Friends/peers	126	21
Other students	105	17
Transport availability	108	17
Other people's attitudes	42	7
Being able to get around	34	6
Good health	37	5
Availability of equipment or facilities	29	5
Sufficient financial resources	29	5
Connexions personal adviser	23	3
Staying at same place/in same building	13	2
Other	18	3
Don't know/can't remember	54	8
N = 621		

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

5.3 Employment and training

5.3.1 Type of employment and training

Approximately, one-third of young people taking part in the survey were currently in employment or some form of work-related government-supported training (Table 5.14). Most of these young people were engaged in elementary occupations, such as labouring, low-level catering, cleaning or security (39 per cent), or the skilled trades, for example, bricklaying and plumbing (28 per cent). A further 16 per cent of employed young people were working in retail and customer service occupations. As might be expected, more men than women were employed in elementary occupations, with women being much more likely to be engaged in retail and customer service-related jobs. Similar proportions of men and women, however, were found in elementary-level occupations.

The majority of young people engaged in work or training at the time of the survey were in permanent jobs (82 per cent) with just 15 per cent reporting that their work was temporary.

Table 5.14: Occupation/training type

	N =	%
Professional	5	1
Associated professional and technical	12	2
Administrative and secretarial	17	4
Skilled trades	168	28
Retail and customer service	97	16
Process, plant or machine operator	53	9
Elementary occupations	230	39
Other	5	1
N =	588	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Approximately one-quarter of young people in employment were on a Modern Apprenticeship or National Traineeship when they were surveyed, and just under one-fifth reported that they were on the New Deal or some other sort of government-supported training course (Table 5.15). A small proportion (five per cent) of this group were in supported employment.

Most young people who are in work, though, are not undertaking any sort of formal training programme (61 per cent). Young people who recalled having a transition planning review and a transition plan were more likely to report that they were on a Modern Apprenticeship or National Traineeship than those without a transition plan (30 per cent compared to 20 per cent).

Table 5.15: Type of training

	N =	%
Modern Apprenticeship	123	21
National Traineeship	23	4
Work-based training through the New Deal	25	4
Other government supported training	25	4
Supported employment	31	5
None of the above	350	61
Don't know	16	3
N =	588	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

5.3.2 Ease of transition

In terms of their experience of finding their job/position, the majority of young people in work or work-related training reported that it had been easy to do so. However, almost one-fifth of those who were in work or training at the time of the survey said that they had experienced some difficulty finding their position (Table 5.16).

Once more, the only (minor) difference observed related to the presence, or otherwise, of a transition plan. Young people with a transition plan, who had found work or a training placement, were more likely to say it had been easy to do so (77 per cent) than those who had no transition plan (65 per cent).

When asked what or who had made finding their job/training easy, the key factors that young people offered were:

- Family support (44 per cent of those who said it was easy finding their job/training reported this was due to family support).
- Friends/peers (26 per cent said friends/peers had made it easier for them to find work).
- Transport availability (nine per cent cited transport as an easing factor).
- Careers Service/Connexions personnel (eight per cent suggested these services had made it easier to find work/training).
- Good health (seven per cent related good health to how easily they had found work).

Table 5.16: Ease/difficulty of finding job

	N =	%
Very easy	181	30
Fairly easy	236	41
Neither easy nor difficult	56	10
Fairly difficult	74	12
Very difficult	38	6
Don't know/can't remember	3	1
N =	588	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

5.3.3 Method of jobsearch and advice received

Friends and family played an important role when looking for work/placements and almost half of young people in work or training said they had found their job through these personal (and informal) contacts (Table 5.17). Almost one-fifth of young people had applied to employers directly in order to find their current job whilst one in ten had found their job/placement by applying to an advertisement in the newspaper. A similar proportion (nine per cent) of young people in work or training had visited the Careers Service or Connexions in order to find employment (eight per cent of young people in Connexions areas and ten per cent of young people in non-Connexions areas).

Not surprisingly, given the informal nature of most of their job search activities, almost half of all young people in work have cited their parents/carers as the most helpful source of advice when looking for work. Friends and partners were reported to be the most helpful by just over one in ten young people currently in work or training, whilst a similar proportion said that the Careers Service or Connexions personal adviser had been the most helpful to them in their jobsearch. Once again, similar proportions of young people in both Connexions areas and non-Connexions areas reported this to be the case.

Table 5.17: Method of job search

	N =	%
Through friends or family	279	47
Applied directly to employers	104	17
Applied for jobs advertised in newspapers	53	10
Visited a Careers Service/Connexions Service	59	9
Visited a Jobcentre	32	5
School or college careers service	28	4
Training and Employment Agency Office	24	4
Through work experience/part-time work	17	3
Yellow Pages	7	1
Visited a Jobmarket	3	1
Tutor at college	4	1
Other	10	2
N =	588	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 5.18: Most helpful person when looking for work

	N =	%
Parents/carers	250	49
Friends or partner (boyfriend/girlfriend)	65	13
Careers Service/Connexions personal adviser	57	11
Other family member	42	8
Jobcentre	34	7
Careers adviser at school/college	25	4
Other college staff	14	3
Other school staff	12	2
SENCO at school	3	1
Other	8	2
N =	511	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Very few young people who were in work or training at the time of the survey reported that school or college staff had been the most helpful people when looking for work (Table 5.18).

Table 5.19 lists the type of help young people received from others when looking for work or a placement. In the main, young people received:

Table 5.19: Advice received when looking for work

	N =	%
Helped me to progress into work/further education/training	236	46
Provided information	210	41
Helped me to make decisions	156	31
Explained options available	112	21
Planned how I would be supported	47	8
Encouragement/pointing me in right direction	16	4
Helped with CV/application forms	10	2
Gave me support/help	3	1
Other	10	2
Don't know/can't remember	9	2
Total N =	511	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

- help to progress into work/training
- information
- help to make decisions
- an explanation of the options available to them.

A (not insignificant) number (eight per cent) of young people who were in employment at the time of the survey had help to plan how they would be supported whilst in work or training.

5.4 Unemployment/inactivity

5.4.1 Reason for inactivity

Seventeen per cent of young people taking part in the survey were unemployed or classified as economically inactive *ie* ill, working but not getting paid for it, looking after the family or home, or attending a day care centre. These young people were asked again about their current activity, not only in terms of what they were doing at the time but also to gauge whether they were waiting or intending to start some other activity.

Table 5.20 shows that 15 per cent of these young people were waiting for a job or education/training course to start, 58 per cent were looking for work and five per cent were actually looking for an education or training course.

Males seem to be more likely than females to have been looking for work at the time of the survey, as do young people without statements of SEN compared to those with statements, and young people from mainstream schools compared to those in special schools.

Females, young people with statements and those who had attended a special school were less likely to be engaged in looking for work, or waiting for a job or course to start than males, those without statements and those who had attended a mainstream school. Looking at Table 5.21, it is clear that the majority of this smaller group of young people had poor health or had caring responsibilities themselves and were unable to engage in, or look for, work, education or training at the time of the survey.

Table 5.20: Current status

	All		Male	Female	Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream
	N =	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Waiting for job to start	8	3	3	3	1	3	0	3
Looking for work	173	58	66	42	49	62	46	59
Waiting for education/training course to start	35	12	12	11	10	12	8	12
Looking for an education or training course	12	5	3	8	1	6	2	5
None of these	82	23	16	36	38	17	44	20
N =	310		198	112	146	139	60	250

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 5.21: Reasons for current inactivity

	N =
Poor health	28
Looking after home/children	22
Not yet decided what job or course to do	13
Need more qualifications or skills to get a job or training	9
Not yet found a suitable job or course	8
Housing problems	4
Family problems	3
Available transport is not suitable	2
Currently having a break from study	3
None of these	12
Don't know	2
N = 81	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

5.4.2 Jobsearch methods and advice received

Young people who were looking for work, or who were waiting to start a job at the time of the survey tended to have used the Jobcentre to find work. Other common methods of jobsearch included applying to jobs advertised in the newspaper and using friends and family to help them to find work.

Just under one-third of those who were looking, or had looked for work, had used the Careers Service or Connexions to do so. This figure seems quite low given the age of these young people (Table 5.22).

Young people who had looked or were looking for work cited their parents or carers as helping them the most in their jobsearch (31 per cent). Just over one-quarter of young people who had looked for work reported that the Jobcentre Adviser had been the most helpful to them when looking for work. Similar numbers of young people looking for work cited their Careers Service or Connexions Personal Adviser, or their friends and partners as being the most helpful in their jobsearch activity (Table 5.23).

Table 5.22: Method of job search

	N =	%
Jobcentre	146	81
Jobs advertised in newspapers	90	50
Family or friends	88	49
Careers Service/Connexions Service	53	29
Job on the internet	27	15
Direct contact with employers	24	14
Training and Employment Agency Office	18	11
Job Club	5	2
School or college careers services	3	2
Jobmarket	3	2
Disability employment adviser	3	1
Other	11	7
N = 181		

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Table 5.23: Most helpful person in job search

	N =	%
Parents/carers	55	31
Jobcentre Adviser	39	26
Careers Service/Connexions personal adviser	22	13
Friends or partner (boyfriend/girlfriend)	21	15
Someone else in your family	9	6
Careers Adviser at school/college	9	4
Other college staff	2	1
Other	3	2
Total N =	161	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

From Table 5.24 it is possible to see that most of the help young people received when they were looking for work related to:

- the provision of information
- explaining the options available
- helping them to progress into work, and
- helping them to make decisions.

Table 5.24: Advice received when looking for work

	N =	%
Provided information	84	52
Explained options available	50	30
Helped me to progress into work/further education/training	40	22
Helped me to make decisions	35	21
Planned how I would be supported	13	7
Other	6	4
Helped me with application forms	5	4
Provided motivation	5	3
Gave me encouragement/moral support	4	3
Don't know	5	3
N =	161	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Just under one in ten young people who had looked for work said that they had received help in planning how they would be supported in work.

Case studies — current activity

Deferred transitions

The case study data presented in Chapter 3 showed how some people experience what may be called a 'deferred transition'. There are young people, particularly those with severe and complex difficulties, for whom the end of Year 11 is a relatively insignificant milestone since they are deemed to be not yet ready to cope with major change and therefore they stay on in their pre-16 institution. Marcus[1] is a case in point. In his special school sixth form this young man with profound and multiple learning difficulties follows a programme which emphasises social interaction and includes modules on independence, coping with people, accessing a self-service café and supervised shopping. Marcus also has opportunities for work in the local community and makes contacts with age-peers since his sixth form unit is sited in a sixth form college rather than on the main special school site. Despite the problems which he experienced with this placement, the rationale for the programme is clear and common to many of its kind, allowing time for greater maturation whilst steadily expanding the range of experiences which are offered to the young person and relating them more closely to the adult world.

[1] All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part in the case studies.

This rationale, however, is not restricted to the small group of young people with the most severe and complex difficulties. Zoe's Connexions PA, for instance, was of the opinion that 'children in special school are three years behind' and therefore should access schooling for longer. Certainly, there is a relatively wide range of young people for whom transition at age 16 leads not so much to a progressive programme of education or work-related training, but to a 'maturational' programme. Typically, this is a 'pre-vocational' programme in an FE College. However, since this programme is seen as a necessary precursor to courses which lead more clearly to vocational or occupational qualifications (and certainly to any prospect of employment) these young people too are experiencing a 'deferred transition'.

Devesh's story is similar. He has learning difficulties associated with hydrocephalus and attended a special school for children with moderate learning difficulties. His SENCO described him in the following terms:

"His main problem is his reading comprehension. But his attitude is incredible, he is a very highly motivated pupil and this made him stand out from the other students. He completed an incredible portfolio for business studies. It was of such a standard that I contacted City and Guild to see if he would be eligible to one of their awards. They said that the portfolio was equal, if not better, than those received from mainstream education. But he could only ever hope to get a pass level because it was all copying other people's ideas. He wasn't able to come up with his own ideas or think in an abstract way."

Despite his enthusiasm and (albeit skewed) talents, the view as he neared the end of schooling was that he was not ready for employment, and work-related training was not an option that was available. As his class teacher reported:

"I would like more apprenticeships to happen and have had contact with people involved with modern apprenticeships, but it has not happened."

However, the school does have good links with the local FE College and places its pupils on link courses there. Not surprisingly, therefore, Devesh followed all but one or two of his school peers in transferring to an 'Essential Skills' course at the College. The course, the College told us, covers "Literacy, numeracy, socialisation" and is delivered by a separate Special educational needs Department. Once Devesh had completed this preparatory course, he was allowed to progress onto vocational education proper. As his college tutor explained:

"As far as [the] College is concerned this really was his only option. He had already been in full time education in Essential Skills and his progression from Essential Skills would be on to Level 2, we don't do a foundation course as such."

However, he was finding this new course difficult and no additional support had been made available to him although Devesh had made his need for support clear prior to admission and support time was available for use. However, the course tutor said that they received little information about new students from the SEN Department and relied on their own in-course assessments. His mother explained that Devesh was struggling to keep up in a mainstream college without the support that they expected he would have.

Devesh had already thought about dropping out of the course, but had decided to try to complete it, with a view to transferring later to another college where he could do a course that was very similar to the Essential Skills course with which he had started. Despite this apparently circular movement, there were prospects of real progression to employment for Devesh. Through college, he had already had contact with a Disability Employment Adviser and she was able to outline a number of employment opportunities in the long term. In her words:

"I think he will successfully gain employment. It may take a little longer than others may but I am confident that he will find a suitable job. We will make sure that we are there to provide support in times of change eg nature of work or staff, as we find that this can be disruptive. He may require further support or coaching at a later stage having got the job."

The model is clear. While most young people (in principle at least) make a linear progression from school to further education, training and employment, for young people with special educational needs, these things "take a little longer". The role of the post-16 phase, therefore, is to hold them out of the labour (and, initially, training) market until they are sufficiently mature and to stimulate that maturation by providing appropriate experiences and training.

Unresolved issues

As the examples above illustrate, the problems in the deferred transition model tend to come not so much during the course of the first activity post-16, which may be relatively unchallenging, but in the efforts that then have to be taken to make more decisive progress thereafter. This is true of young people with very different types and levels of difficulty. Carl, for instance, has severe autism and is in the sixth form of the same school for children with severe learning difficulties that he has attended since he was eight. His transition to the sixth form at age 16 was to all intents and purposes automatic. So is the next step which is planned for him; transition to one of two local FE Colleges to follow a Life Skills course. There has been some discussion as to which one would suit Carl best, but the decision is now virtually made and Carl's parents have opted for the one which can offer a full-time, three-year placement. School and college have well-established links, they meet regularly to discuss individual students and Carl is already spending one day per week in the college. The consensus is that this second transition has been well prepared for

and should go smoothly. The issues that both parents and professionals were concerned (though not, at this stage, worried) about were therefore not going to arise for a further three years. These were, of course, the issues of where Carl would live, how independent he would be able to become and whether he would find employment of any sort. In talking about his employment prospects, his mother once again articulated a 'deferred transition' model which was extremely long-term in its time horizon:

"We're not sure really, we're taking that as it comes. These courses I think will probably end up highlighting particular skills and preferences which could be built up. If he showed an interest in computers then maybe he could carry on and do more computer courses which could train him for some sort of sheltered employment using computers or maybe something…He is quite good actually, once he knows what he is doing he can get into a routine and just get on with it, so I think if it was something fairly simple, it is just finding out what suited him."

Maria's situation is apparently very different. She was regarded at school as having BESD and dyslexia, but nonetheless attended an academically-oriented mainstream girls' school. She has a turbulent home life, had a baby when she was aged 15 and her attendance and work record at school were erratic. Despite this, she received a high level of support from the school, and was consequently keen to stay on into the sixth form. Whether this more-or-less automatic transition proved to be the right one is debatable, however. Despite its willingness to offer support, the school has little experience in dealing with young people with similar problems and offers only a narrowly academic curriculum. Maria found the work challenging and dropped out of one of her A level subjects. She was uncertain where her next step lay and changeable about the future she wanted until she did work experience in a primary school and decided she wanted to be a teacher.

She had recently enrolled on a teacher training course at the time of our fieldwork and while this appears like a logical progression, there were real doubts about what would happen next. Her school teachers, while clear that she had much to offer, were dubious about her ability to stay the course and become a successful teacher. There were also unresolved tensions at home, since Maria was eager to set up home with herself and her daughter, whilst Maria's mother (who had little positive to say about her) appeared keen to keep Maria dependent so that she could continue to play a key role in looking after the child. In other words, as with Carl, the post-16 transition had in fact resolved very little and the real challenges lay in the future.

The issue in these cases is not that wrong choices had necessarily been made at age 16 or that there were problems with the post-16 provision. Rather, it is that the often valuable provision made after this first transition was not enough in itself to ensure a successful progression towards the labour market or 'open' living. Post-16 provision appeared to be holding young people for a few more

years, often in quite productive activities, whilst leaving unresolved some major issues about their next steps and long-term activities.

Disrupted transitions

For a few other young people, post-16 provision failed even in its basic task of holding them until they were able to enter more open activities successfully. A good example of this was Andrea, a bright young woman with BESD and/or autism who had effectively dropped out of school. Post-16, she had engaged in a wide range of activities, each one of which had proved unsatisfactory:

- She went to college to take A levels but was enrolled on GCSEs instead because her school results were poor. Once on the GCSE courses, her tutors realised that she was capable of A levels, but the A level courses were full. Andrea left the college after two months, bored with her provision.

- She then enrolled on a NVQ level 1 course with a training provider, but again left quickly when she found the work too easy.

- She secured unskilled work but found it dull and left.

- She enrolled on a media course at another college, transferred to drama, enjoyed the course for a while but eventually decided that:

"It wasn't my sort of course. I wasn't getting on with the people there."

- Finally, she joined a training scheme offered by an organisation specialising in young people who are out of work and offering a package of work experience, life skills, basic skills and personal development.

The difficulties which dogged Andrea's school career are evident in her post-16 trajectory. It seems that she does not form clear and coherent long-term plans which she is then able to see through. However, it is also clear that there has been even less in the post-16 structures than there was in her school provision to offer her some sense of direction. She doubtless had support in each of her activities and at the time of our fieldwork had found a key worker who was optimistic about her capacity to stay with Andrea long-term to get her into university. She had also had support from Connexions, though according to her parents this has been no more than supplying information about possible courses when they have taken the initiative to contact them. However, to date, all of these forms of support had been insufficiently robust to keep Andrea on track. The prospect, Andrea's mother believes, is bleak:

"In about five years time we're gonna be in this situation, she's still going to be here, unless of course she does get a job in the meantime. That is the only thing that's going to make a difference. In about five years time if things go the way they have done she's still going to be here still in the same sort of situation, not going out and just going to Dr Who conventions [one of Andrea's main enthusiasms].

Maybe in about five years time she might be ready to start moving on but I think it's gonna take at least that to get her to that point."

This is, of course, another articulation of the notion of 'deferred transition', except that in this case the deferral is not fully planned and it is particularly difficult to see how that period of deferment is doing much to promote the maturation that is necessary.

5.5 Relevance/influence of transition planning on current activity

The majority of young people in the survey who recalled attending a transition review meeting thought that their activities since Year 11 had broadly followed the plan (68 per cent). The main reasons offered by other young people to explain why their activities had not gone to plan centred on:

- deciding to do something different (52 per cent of those not following the plan said they had changed their mind)
- not gaining the right qualifications to do their intended activity (11 per cent of those not following their transition plan)
- ill-health (seven per cent of those following a different post-16 pathway).

Parents were generally in agreement with young people with regard to how closely their activities had followed the transition plan. Sixty-three per cent of parents/carers who recalled a transition plan being drawn up reported that the young person's activities after Year 11 had followed the plan by a 'fair amount' or a 'great deal' (see Table 5.25). Twenty-seven per cent of parents/carers, on the other hand, felt that their child's activities had not followed the plan much at all. Parents and carers of children without statements and/or those who had attended mainstream schools were more likely to say that their child's activities subsequent to Year 11 had not followed the plan compared to those with statements of SEN and/or those who had attended a special school.

Looking at the type of SEN (Table 5.26), parents of young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were more likely to agree that their child's activities had followed the transition plan than young people in any other SEN group. Parents of young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were the least likely to report that their child's activities since Year 11 had followed their transition plan.

Table 5.25: Parent/carer view on extent to which young person's activities since Year 11 have followed the transition plan

	All		State–mented	Not state–mented	Special school	Mainstream school
	N =	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal	280	30	33	26	34	28
A fair amount	313	33	37	24	39	29
Not very much	117	13	13	15	11	15
Not at all	111	14	11	22	8	17
Didn't know what the plans were	73	9	7	14	8	10
N =	894		746	131	399	495

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

In line with young people's views, most parents thought that the reason their post-16 activities had not followed the transition plan was because the young person had decided to do something else (Table 5.27). Parents were also likely to mention ill-health and a lack of necessary qualifications as barriers to conforming to the transition plan. However, more than ten per cent of parents reported that it was the lack of help, support or follow-up that prevented the young person from achieving the aims of the transition plan. Interestingly, though, ten per cent of parents also said that the young person had not followed the transition plan because the parent or carer wanted them to follow a different course of action. Just six per cent of parents thought the plan had been unrealistic.

Table 5.26: Parent/carer view on extent to which young person's activities since Year 11 have followed the transition plan, by SEN (per cent)

	Communi–cation and Interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour/ emotional/social development
A great deal	30	30	43	25
A fair amount	37	32	39	30
Not very much	11	14	10	18
Not at all	14	15	3	15
Didn't know what the plans were	8	10	6	11
N =	224	480	75	115

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 5.27: Reasons why transition plan not followed

	N =	%
Young person decided to do something else	80	44
Help/support/follow-up not forthcoming	25	11
Parent/carer wanted the young person to do something else	21	10
Young person was ill/had health problems	18	9
Young person did not get the necessary qualifications	14	7
School wanted the young person to do something else	14	6
Employer or college did not want the take on the young person	15	6
Plan was unrealistic/unsuitable	12	6
Young person was unable to adhere to plan	8	4
Young person never received the plan	8	4
Young person forgot what was in the plan/ lost the plan	6	3
Nothing formally sorted out/implemented	4	2
Young person was continuing with education	3	2
Young person got a job	3	2
Over-estimation of capabilities	4	2
Don't know	6	3
N =	197	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

5.6 Chapter summary

- Almost half of all young people in the survey were currently studying at school or college.
- Just over one-quarter of all young people were in employment at the time of the survey.
- Young people with statements of SEN, and those who had attended a special school were most likely to have continued with their studies.
- Most young people reporting that they were currently in education stated that teachers and tutors had made this move easier for them.
- Young people in work were primarily engaged in elementary occupations and the majority were not engaged in any work-related training *eg* Modern Apprenticeship.
- Young people who had undergone formal transition planning were more likely to report that finding

employment or a training placement had been easier than those who had not.

- Most young people reporting that they were in work stated that family and friends had made this transition easier for them.
- Most young people in work or training had used informal job search methods to find these jobs or placements, particularly friends and family.
- Almost one in five young people in the survey were unemployed or inactive.
- The majority of young people who recalled having a transition planning review thought that their activities since Year 11 had broadly followed the plan.
- The majority of parents who had attended a transition meeting also thought that the young person's activities since Year 11 had followed the plan.
- The main reason why young people's activities did not follow those set out in the transition plan was that they had changed their minds.

6. Support

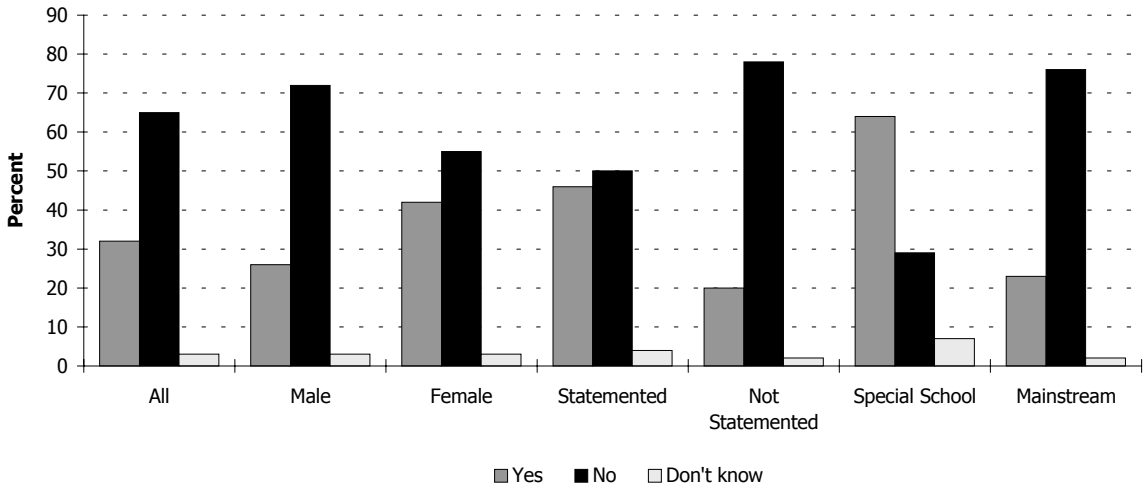
This chapter deals with the professional support that young people and their parents have received and sought since Year 11. It begins by looking at the support that has been received in terms of benefits and help from social and other professional services. It also looks at parents and carers as sources of support. The chapter then turns to look at the support that parents have themselves sought, in particular, support relating to employment, education, training, benefits and special educational needs.

6.1 Support received

6.1.1 Benefits and Social Services

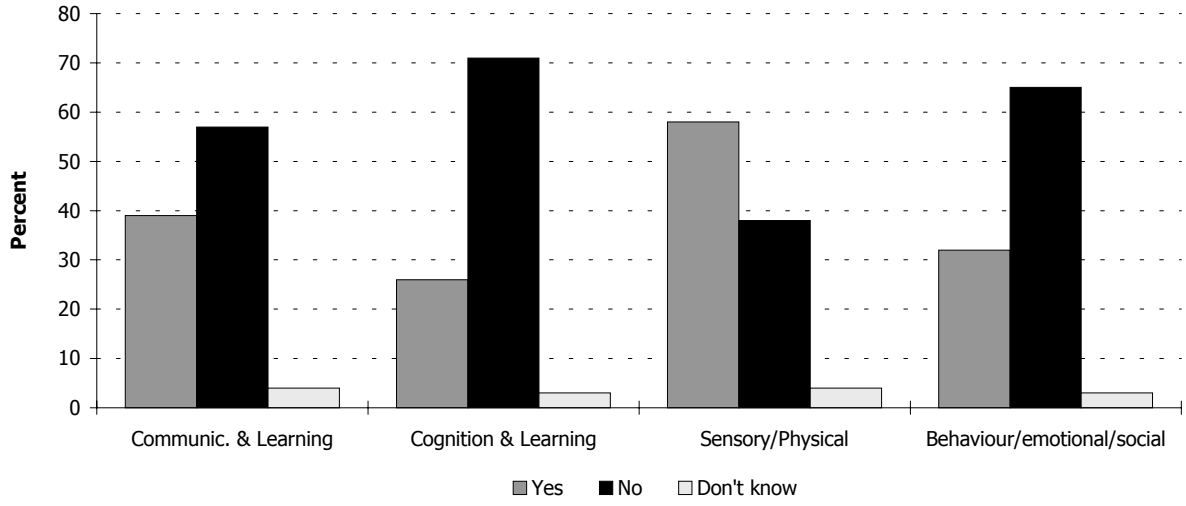
Approximately one-third of the young people surveyed reported that they were in receipt of benefits (Figure 6:1). Females were more likely than males to be in receipt of benefits as were young people who had statements of SEN compared to those without, and those who had attended special schools compared to those in mainstream schools.

Figure 6:1: Benefit receipt



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Figure 6:2: Benefit receipt, by SEN



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were most likely to be in receipt of benefits compared to any other SEN 'type' whilst young people with cognition and learning difficulties were the least likely to be doing so (Figure 6:2).

When asked, almost one-third of all young people reported that they would not know where to go for advice about benefits (Table 6.1). One-quarter of young people said they

Table 6.1: Source of advice about benefits

	N =	%		N	%
Jobcentre/Benefits Agency	445	25	Doctor	11	1
Friends or family	364	18	Post Office	9	*
School or college staff	138	8	Employer	6	*
No-one/nowhere	121	6	Health worker	5	*
Careers Service/Connexions Service	87	5	The Internet	3	*
Social Worker/Services	69	3	Carer	3	*
Council	27	2	Counsellor	2	*
Citizens Advice Bureau	20	1	Bank	2	*
Disability Employment Adviser	23	1	Other	28	2
Student Services/support	12	1	Don't know	591	31

N = 1,874

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

* - less than 0.5 per cent

Source: IES/MORI 2003

would go to the Jobcentre or Benefits Agency and almost one-fifth said they would ask friends or family. Only one in twenty young people would ask the Careers Service or Connexions for advice on benefits.

6.1.2 Other support services

Many young people had come into contact with professional support services and personnel since completing compulsory schooling (Table 6.2).

Most of this contact had been medical in nature. Over half of the sample had visited their doctor at least once and over one in ten had seen a nurse or school nurse, at some point since finishing Year 11. Almost one-third of the sample had also seen a Careers Service or Connexions personal adviser. Eleven per cent of young people taking part in the survey also reported that they had seen a social worker since completing compulsory schooling. One-quarter of the sample, however,

Table 6.2: Contact with professional/other support services since Year 11

	N =	%
Doctor	931	51
Careers Service/ Connexions personal adviser	561	30
Nurse or school nurse	285	14
Social Worker	240	11
Physiotherapist	146	7
Health & Safety Officer	114	7
Speech and language therapist	125	5
Occupational therapist	87	4
Educational psychologist	71	4
Psychiatrist	50	2
Other - social services	44	2
Other - health worker	43	2
Clinical psychologist	36	2
Occupational Health Nurse	36	2
Other - psychologist	10	1
Other	71	3
None	462	25
Don't know/can't remember	36	2
N =	1,874	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

had not had any subsequent contact with any professional support services on completion of Year 11.

Case studies – support

The patterns of support available for young people post-16 are complex. However, there is a sense that those who become involved in working directly with a young person do all that they can to offer support – sometimes with considerable success. As has been outlined above, Carl[1] is a young man with severe autism who, after a period where his behavioural problems provoked something of a crisis, stayed on in his special school's sixth form. At the time of the crisis, he was provided (through LEA funding) with a support worker who helped stabilise his behaviour and developed a strong relationship with him. In view of this, his first support worker now helps the development of Carl's social life in a friend-like role, while a new support worker assists Carl in the classroom. When he works off-site, he has an additional support worker to take into account the added risks involved. Now that he is preparing to leave school, Connexions and Social Services are also becoming involved in planning his future. Meanwhile, as his teacher points out, the support through which his challenging behaviour is managed is formalised through a behaviour support plan which co-ordinates the input of both professionals and family:

"So we do things like this here – this is a behaviour management plan that his parents have signed up to as well and everybody, but everybody associated with Carl has to follow this behaviour plan. It is very detailed about strategies to be used and works really well and of course I don't know if the college does one but we will liaise with the college about these plans."

Both professionals and parents agree that the level of support offered to Carl is appropriate. This may well be connected to a number of factors in Carl's case: he is in a stable environment where his needs are well-known; he falls into a well-defined disability category where eligibility for support is not in doubt; and there is a clear system for providing support. All this, of course, is in addition to the quality and commitment of the individual support workers.

Other young people, however, are in somewhat different positions. Zoe, for instance, has also stayed on at her special school sixth form and, as a young person in public care and with a history of abuse, receives considerable support not only from her foster parents but also from Social Services and Connexions. However, there seemed to be distinct differences of opinion between professionals and family as to what Zoe's difficulties and capacities were. The nub of the issue seems to be that Zoe has moderate learning difficulties but has also had a turbulent childhood. It is not immediately obvious, therefore, how far she lacks cognitive

[1] All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part in the case studies.

abilities and how far her previous experiences have damaged her to the extent that she cannot use the abilities she has. Not surprisingly, she is extremely insecure and finds change difficult to tolerate. However, the way she sees herself, the way her foster parent see her and the way she is viewed by other professionals varied considerably.

These discrepancies about the 'needs' of young people are not uncommon where the difficulties experienced by young people do not fall into 'standard' disability categories or are complicated by other factors. A number of examples illustrate how young people are being allowed to embark on options that have proved for one reason or another to be inappropriate. In these cases, the issue is not simply lack of support as such. There are enough professionals involved with these young people to offer adequate levels of support and some at least of them are making strenuous efforts so to do. However, the nature of these young people's difficulties means that the most appropriate form of placement and the level of support necessary are not immediately obvious. The providers of the young person's current activity do what they can, but there seems to be no professional who both has an overview of the case and is actively involved in shaping provision to meet the young person's needs.

6.1.3 Support losses and gains

Sixteen per cent of parents/carers have stated that some of the additional support that was available to the young person whilst they were in compulsory schooling is no longer available post-16. Perhaps not surprisingly, parents and carers whose children were statemented whilst at school were twice as likely as parents and carers of those without statements to report this to be the case.

In the main, the type of support that had been most commonly lost related to: (see Table 6.3)

- learning support
- SENCO/tutor support, and
- individual or one-to-one help.

Parents were asked to say how the loss of these types of support had impacted on the young person (Table 6.4)

Interestingly, over one-quarter of parents and carers reporting that additional support had been lost reflected that this had had no effect on the young person whatsoever. However, as might be expected, the withdrawal of (some of) this support had led primarily to:

Table 6.3: Type of support lost since Year 11

	N =	%
Learning/educational support/special tuition	54	18
SEN tutor contact/teacher support	49	17
One to one tuition/mentoring/individual help	47	15
Speech therapy	39	11
All support has been lost	18	6
Physiotherapy	14	4
Contact/support of school	12	4
Social worker support/access to support services	12	4
Counselling/emotional support	11	4
Career guide support	7	3
Help with exams	5	2
Close liaison with SENCO/SENCO support	5	2
Transport	5	1
Respite care	5	1
Help with Dyslexia	4	2
Removal of statement meant less/no support	4	1
Lap tops/IT back up	4	1
Other	39	13
N =	302	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

- lowered motivation
- fewer educational opportunities, and a
- loss of confidence and self-esteem.

More surprisingly though, one in twenty parents and carers reported that the loss of support post-16 had actually led to increased independence for the young person.

In addition to the support that had been lost since Year 11, many parents and carers (19 per cent) also reported that new support had subsequently become available (Table 6.5). This suggests that there was a net gain in support (albeit possibly of a different sort) since compulsory schooling came to an end.

The most common types of support that had become available post-16 included:

- special educational need(s) support from colleges

Table 6.4: Effect of loss of support on young person

	N =	%
No effect	77	27
Lowered motivation	65	22
Fewer educational opportunities	49	16
Loss of confidence/self esteem	24	8
Affected educational capabilities/under-achieving	19	6
Fewer social or leisure opportunities	17	6
Increased independence	16	5
Harder to get around/arrange transport	10	3
Decline of physical/emotional well-being	9	3
Speech improvement/capabilities affected	8	2
Lack of comprehensive support/help	8	2
Affected communication skills	5	1
Behavioural/attitude problems	5	1
Lethargic/lazier/loss of motivation	5	1
Made life more difficult for family/increased reliance on family	4	2
Become more confident/determined	4	2
Has no-one to speak to/confide in	3	1
Other	22	6
Don't know	12	4
N =	303	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

- one-to-one tutoring, and
- support from Connexions.

Thus, whilst the support from Connexions appears to be a different type of support to that which has been lost, the gains in support have been of a fairly similar nature, although perhaps offered in a different setting *eg* a college or sixth form.

Parents and carers reported that the most significant impact of this new and additional support were (Table 6.6):

- increased motivation
- increased independence
- increased confidence and self-esteem, and
- more educational opportunities.

Table 6.5: Additional support received since Year 11

	N =	%
Good help/support from college/SEN support at college	76	28
One-to-one tutoring/mentoring	32	10
Connexions service support	30	10
Extra support from school/teacher/SEN teacher	25	7
Help with life/social skills	16	5
Social worker	14	4
Medical support (psychologist/psychotherapy etc)	13	4
Help from family/friends	12	4
Dyslexia support/training	11	4
Extra help with becoming more independent (cooking/shopping)	11	3
Careers service support	8	2
Help from employer/workplace	7	3
Help with learning equipment	7	2
Extra help/support	6	2
Financial support/ grant	6	2
Speech therapy help	6	1
Disability was picked up	5	2
Extra/home tuition	5	1
Taken on outings/escorted to social activities	4	1
YMCA support/training	3	1
Good back-up from carers	3	1
Prince's Trust	3	1
Helped with approach to adult life/treated with maturity	2	1
Respite care/extra day care	2	*
Educational welfare officer	2	*
ICIS	2	*
Other	45	14
Don't know	2	*
N =	315	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

* - less than 0.5 per cent

Source: IES/MORI 2003

6.2 Parents and carers as sources of support

It is evident from the survey data presented in this chapter and the two preceding it, that parents and carers are often a

Table 6.6: Effect on young person of having additional support

	N =	%
Increased motivation	100	34
Increased independence	62	17
Increased confidence	45	15
More educational opportunities	43	15
No effect	35	11
More social or leisure opportunities	24	7
Improved learning capabilities/attitude to education	16	5
Easier to get around / arrange transport	6	2
Become more reassured/focused for the future	6	2
Increased job opportunities	5	2
Made him/her happier	5	1
Lowered motivation	4	2
Become more mature/gained more mature outlook	4	2
More relaxed, calmer	4	1
Gained more understanding about him/herself	4	1
Developed real life/organisational skills	3	2
Improved speech abilities	3	1
Given encouragement	3	1
Increased ability to interact socially	3	1
Other	29	9
Don't know	3	1

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

crucial source of support for young people through their transition from school and in the activities that follow.

The survey data also suggest a lack of one professional, service or organisation with an overview of the young person and the options available for them throughout this period. Parents and carers therefore often take on this role and provide critical continuous support, as the following findings from the case studies illustrate.

Case studies: parents and carers

A striking feature of the case studies is the extent to which parents and carers continue to play a key role in supporting young people through the transition process. This is certainly the case, for instance, for obviously dependent young people such as Marcus where his mother has had to battle to ensure that his needs are

met by his special school sixth form, or Sophie, where the experience has been less troubled but where her parents play a key part in seeing her through to adulthood.

However, it is also true of other young people, who are less obviously dependent but are nonetheless not capable of making their own way without a good deal of guidance. For instance, Gareth's mother played a key role in researching the options available to him and helping him to find an alternative to his special school's sixth form unit. In fact, she continued to be actively involved in the decision-making process long after this initial placement. At the time of the case study interview she was trying to steer him away from a Performing Arts course, despite opposition from both Gareth and his tutors, on the grounds that the course is of limited utility and that the real attraction for Gareth may simply be that his girlfriend is in the same faculty. Nonetheless, she accepts, the college will be careful that it is the young person's choice which prevails.

This example is typical both of the central role played by parents and carers and of the extent to which that role does not fit into stereotypes of 'over-protection'. Gareth's mother is certainly active on his behalf and has a clear view of where his best interests lie. However, her acceptance that Gareth will, in the end, decide for himself (and of the college's right to protect his autonomy) speaks more of the tensions that can arise in any family than of over-protectiveness. Given that many of these young people have a history of genuine difficulties in planning their futures and making rational decisions and that the options available to them commonly do not lead in any obvious way to attractive outcomes such as employment or high-level qualifications, a degree of protectiveness on the part of their families seems entirely justified.

This high level of involvement, of course, does mean that parents and carers can easily come into conflict with professionals in the decision-making process. In such cases, the lack of certainty about the precise nature of these young people's capacities and difficulties creates the potential for conflict as parents argue for options which professionals regard as inappropriate.

There is, in other words, a considerable resource here which could potentially be drawn upon for the benefit of young people, and the failure to manage that resource productively, however understandable, is a grave omission.

Matthew, for example, is currently unemployed and has relatively little support other than from his own family. The commitment of his mother in particular is considerable. Not only did she have to battle to get his difficulties recognised in school, but she had to face the dual pressures of being told by his school that he was badly behaved while Matthew himself was telling her that he was unhappy because he was being bullied. Since he became unemployed, she has played a major part in supporting his search for work. However, it is also clear that she has no real idea as to why Matthew cannot find work or what to do to improve his chances. Matthew has been rejected by employers for even the most low-paid jobs and neither he nor she understand why. Her

only strategy is to widen his search to the area where her sister lives. At the same time, she seems somewhat indulgent with Matthew, unable to prevent him getting into scrapes with friends of whom she disapproves and reluctant to see him 'fly the nest' in view of what she sees as her own mistake in marrying young. In this situation, there appears to be only the most minimal of professional intervention. Certainly, his mother appears to have no access to professional support which might make her efforts to help Matthew more productive.

The key role played by parents is evident in the contrast provided by the few cases where parents are less obviously, or at least less straightforwardly, supportive. For example, Andrea, who comes from somewhat fraught family circumstances, is churning between activities with no clear sense of direction. The issue here is not that Andrea's parents are unsupportive in any simple way. On the contrary, they continue to offer her day to day support by helping her with transport, and looking after her in the family home. The problem is that they are not apparently able to offer her any very clear and productive guidance and support in the transition process itself and this seems to leave her somewhat rudderless.

For very different reasons, Li experiences a similar lack of effective family support. His parents speak little or no English and played almost no part in the transition process. In the absence of professional support (Li had ceased to attend school), he managed his own transition to college on the advice of friends. In the event, Li is happy with the painting and decorating course he has chosen and his tutors are highly supportive of him. However, there is no way of knowing whether there were better options for a young man who at one time was following GCSE courses and Li's own ambitions, in the absence of any powerful stimulus to aim higher, remain modest:

"…I haven't got any GCSE's so I won't get a good job but I will probably only get painting and decorating stuff or going round, but I have got a bit of bricklaying and a bit of carpentry so I will probably go round people's houses and decorate them."

The case study findings add weight to the survey data, showing that parents and carers can be a crucial source of support for young people during this transitionary period. This seems to be particularly so once young people are no longer within the school system. As has been discussed above, parents and carers appear to be a willing and potentially pivotal resource. A more cohesive and proactive system of (formal) support and information would assist parents and carers to assist their children more effectively.

6.3 Support sought

6.3.1 Education

More than one-third of parents (39 per cent) reported that they had sought information or support on issues relating to

education since their child left Year 11. Parents of young people with statements of SEN and those attending special schools were more likely to have done so than those without statements and/or who had attended a mainstream school. Parents of young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were also much more likely to have sought information on education issues than those with children of other SEN types, in particular those whose children had behavioural, emotional or social development needs (51 per cent compared to 34 per cent).

Parents and carers who had sought additional information or support on education issues said that, by far, the most helpful people to respond to this need had been college staff (42 per cent). Careers Service or Connexions personnel were reported to have been the most helpful in this regard by almost one-fifth of parents and carers, whilst just over one in ten parents said that school staff had been the most helpful in providing this type of information and support (Table 6.7).

Table 6.8 lists the type of help or support that was provided to parents and carers about education issues. In the main, parents received:

Table 6.7: Most helpful source of support

	N =	%
College staff (including university)	280	42
Careers service (including Connexions personal adviser)	114	18
Other school staff	84	12
SENCO	24	3
Friends	22	3
Social workers/probation workers	19	2
Family member	15	3
Doctors/health workers	13	2
Local Council staff (including Education Authority)	10	1
Voluntary group	9	1
Jobcentre/Benefits Agency	6	1
Other	59	8
Don't know	27	4
N =	682	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 6.8: Support provided

	N =	%
Provided information	451	34
Explained options available	292	22
Helped her/him to progress into further education/training	183	14
Helped in planning support for her/him	160	11
Helped her/him in decision making	110	9
Did not help/give support at all	23	2
Offered extra help/support lessons	13	1
Involved parents/held meetings with parents	12	1
Kept in contact/kept us updated on progress	10	1
Helped with assessment/referrals	6	1
Other	33	3
Don't know/ not stated	9	1
N =	684	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

- information
- an explanation of the options available
- help to progress the young person into further education or training, and
- help to plan additional support for the young person.

Parents had broadly similar information and support needs on education issues regardless of whether the young person had been statemented or not, what type of school they had attended or indeed, the type of SEN they presented.

Just over one-fifth of parents and carers (21 per cent) had also sought published information and advice materials regarding education on behalf of the young person. Parents and carers of young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were more likely to have sought out this type of information than parents of young people with all other special educational needs. Parents and carers of young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were the least likely to have sought additional published material on educational issues. Parents and carers in higher socio-economic groups were also much more likely to have sought this sort of information than parents in the lower groups. In the main this information, which was found to be predominantly useful, had come from:

- colleges (33 per cent of parents who had sought published materials did so from colleges)
- the internet (18 per cent)
- Career Service/Connexions (13 per cent), and
- school (eight per cent).

Approximately one-fifth (19 per cent) of all parents and carers also said that they had experienced some sort of problem when trying to obtain services or advice related to education. This problem was most often felt to be due to a general lack of information or guidance (42 per cent). Parents also reported that some of these problems stemmed from staff from different services not working together (22 per cent), or waiting for a long time for support to be provided (17 per cent). Many parents and carers also thought that problems accessing information about education were caused by receiving conflicting advice from staff working in different services (15 per cent of those reporting problems).

6.3.2 Employment and work-related training

Just under one-third of all parents and carers (who deemed that their children were, or would be at some time in the

Table 6.9: Most helpful source of support

	N =	%
Careers service incl. Connexions personal adviser	136	31
College/university staff	109	23
Jobcentre/Benefits Agency	42	8
Friends	35	8
Other college staff	17	4
Employers/local businesses	17	4
Family member	15	4
Through my job/employer	9	2
Voluntary group	8	2
Local Council staff	6	2
SENCO	5	1
Training course/centre	5	1
Other	15	3
None/did not get any	3	1
Don't know	12	2
N =	452	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

future, able to work) had sought additional information and support about employment or work-related training issues since the young person had finished Year 11, regardless of the incidence of statementing, type of school attended or SEN type of the young person.

Thirty-one per cent of parents and carers with these particular information needs stated that the most helpful provider of this information and support was the Careers Service/Connexions whilst 23 per cent of parents said it had been college staff (see Table 6.9 above). The Careers Service/Connexions appears to have been slightly more helpful for parents of young people without statements of SEN and/or those in mainstream schools.

Most parents who received additional help about employment and work-related training did so by way of:

- provision of information
- explanation of the options available to the young person, and
- help to progress the young person into work or training.

Table 6.10 illustrates the main forms of help received.

Just over one in ten of all parents and carers also sought published information and support for their child and employment and training issues. Again, parents from the highest socio-economic group appeared more likely to proactively seek additional information than parents in any of the other socio-economic groups. 17 per cent of parents from the managerial/professional group had sought extra,

Table 6.10: Support provided

	N =	%
Provided information	277	36
Explained options available	173	21
Helped her/him to progress into further education/training	127	15
Helped her/him in decision making	70	9
Helped in planning support for her/him	70	8
Did not help/give support at all	24	3
Helped with work experience/employment	17	3
Other	13	2
Don't know	12	2
N =	467	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

published information against just five per cent of parents in the unskilled group.

The majority of this information, which most parents found useful), had come from

- colleges; 33 per cent of those seeking published information on work and training received it from colleges.
- careers Service/Connexions; 27 per cent of parents seeking additional information on employment and training received it from Careers Service/Connexions.
- the internet; 21 per cent of those seeking additional published information found this material on the internet.
- the Jobcentre; 14 per cent of parents who sought additional information about employment and training found it at the Jobcentre.

Ten per cent of parents and carers (who think that their children are, or will be, able to work) reported that they had experienced some barriers or obstacles to obtaining services or advice relating to employment. In the main, these difficulties related to a lack of general information or guidance (almost half of those experiencing problems gave this explanation). Many of these parents also complained that staff from different services did not work together which caused them difficulties (15 per cent of those experiencing problems) and a similar number said that they received conflicting advice from staff in different services. Ten per cent of parents who had problems stated that they had to wait a long time for support to be provided.

6.3.3 Social security benefits and housing

Just under one-fifth of all parents and carers had sought additional information or support on issues relating to the young person and social security benefits or housing. Parents of young people with statements of SEN and those attending special schools were more likely to have done so than those without statements and/or who had attended a mainstream school. Parents of young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were also much more likely to have sought information about social security and/or housing than those with children of other SEN types.

Most parents had found the Jobcentre or Benefits Agency to be the most helpful provider of this type of information or support (35 per cent of those who sought extra information), followed by social workers or probation officers (15 per cent of

those seeking additional information) and local council staff (nine per cent of parents looking for additional information).

As with parents and carers seeking additional help on the other issues, most received this help by way of:

- information
- an explanation of the options available, and
- help to plan additional support for the young person.

One in ten parents and carers however, reported that, although they had sought additional help or support on social security or housing issues, this support or help had not been forthcoming.

Less than one in ten parents and carers (eight per cent) had actively sought other published information and advice about social security benefits or housing. Again, parents of young people with statements of SEN and those attending special schools were more likely to have done so than those without statements and/or who had attended a mainstream school. Parents of young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were also much more likely to have sought other published information about social security and/or housing than those with children of other SEN types. Most of these parents had found this (largely useful) material at the Benefits Agency (44 per cent of those seeking additional published material approached this agency). Other sources of this type of information included colleges, local councils, the Jobcentre and the internet.

Just over one in ten parents and carers reported that they had encountered some sort of difficulty obtaining services or advice relating to social security benefits or housing. Once again, these difficulties related to a lack of general information or guidance (24 per cent of those encountering difficulties said this was the problem). 16 per cent of those experiencing problems trying to get support or advice said they had encountered a lack of financial support. 13 per cent reported that they received conflicting advice from staff in different services whilst ten per cent said they felt that staff from different services were not working together. A similar proportion also complained that they had to wait a long time for support to be provided.

6.3.4 Special educational need

One in five parents and carers had also sought additional support and information about the young person's special educational need(s). Not surprisingly, parents of young people

who had a statement of SEN and/or had attended a special school were more likely to have done so than those without a statement and/or who had attended a mainstream school. Parents of young people with sensory or physical disabilities were also more likely to have sought this type of information and support than any other SEN type.

The majority of parents and carers seeking this sort of information found that college staff were the most helpful (27 per cent of those seeking information), followed by doctors and health workers (17 per cent), and social workers/ probation workers (11 per cent).

Table 6.11 illustrates the type of information and support that parents and carers received, however, this primarily fell into the following categories:

- information
- an explanation of the options available
- help to plan additional support for the young person, and
- helped young person to make decisions.

Seven per cent of all parents and carers also sought published information and advice on the young person's special

Table 6.11: Support provided

	N =	%
Provided information	235	34
Explained options available	119	19
Helped in planning support for her/him	118	19
Helped her/him in decision making	53	8
Did not help/provide support at all	27	4
Assisted with education/training	13	2
Provided equipment/appliances	13	2
Helped assess/categorise the young person's condition	12	2
Helped him/her to progress to work/further education/training	6	1
Held meetings/discussions	6	1
Other	22	4
Don't know	9	1
N =	417	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

educational need(s). The majority of parents and carers found this information and any materials useful. The internet appears to have been the most commonly used source of this type of information. Almost one-quarter of parents who sought published information and materials did so using the internet. Fourteen per cent of parents and carers approached their doctor or hospital for additional information, ten per cent used colleges and nine per cent went back to schools for additional published materials and advice.

Thirteen per cent of parents and carers reported that they had come across barriers or obstacles that prevented them from obtaining services or advice relating to the young person's special educational need(s). Most of these parents and carers thought that there was a general lack of information or guidance (33 per cent of those encountering difficulties said this was the case) and nine per cent reported that they were unsure where to go for advice, or indeed what to ask for. Just under one in ten parents experiencing difficulties said they had received conflicting advice from staff in different services or waited a long time for support to be provided. A similar proportion thought there was generally a lack of financial support to meet the special educational need(s) of the young person.

6.4 Future support and information needs

Parents and carers were asked to say generally if they knew where to go to get advice on education, employment and training, social security and housing and special educational need(s) and the results are given in Table 6.12. It appears that parents and carers are more knowledgeable about services related to social security and housing than they are about help with special educational need(s). Seventy-eight per cent of parents agreed that that they would know where to turn for help with social security benefits and housing compared to 63 per cent of parents and carers who would know who to approach for help with special educational need(s). More worrying though, is the fact that between 17 and 28 per cent of parents indicated that they would not know who to turn to for advice on these matters.

6.5 Chapter summary

- Most young people have had some sort of contact with professional services since Year 11, the majority of which have been medical.

Table 6.12: Parent/carer knowledge of advice sources (per cent)

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know N/A	N =
If I need advice on matters relating to **Social Security Benefits** or **Housing** open to the young person, I would know where to turn	78	5	17	1	1,648
If I need advice on matters relating to **employment or training opportunities** open to the young person, I would know where to turn	67	6	23	3	1,440
If I need advice on matters relating to **education opportunities** open to the young person, I would know where to turn	64	5	28	2	1,686
If I need advice on matters relating specifically to the young person's **special educational needs**, I would know where to turn	63	7	28	2	1,599

Source: IES/MORI 2003

- One in three young people have met with someone from the Careers Service or Connexions since completing compulsory schooling.
- Just over one in ten young people have had contact with a social worker.
- Whilst some parents report that some support has been lost since the young person completed Year 11 a similar number report that additional support has been gained since that time.
- One in ten parents and carers who report that they have gained support since Year 11, stated that this related to (new) support from the Connexions service.
- Many parents have sought additional information and advice relating to education, employment, social services and the young person's special educational need(s).
- Many parents reported a general lack of information on these issues.
- Many parents also reported that they experienced problems getting additional information and advice because staff from different services did not work together, or because they received conflicting advice from staff working in different services.
- Parents and carers continue to be extremely important sources of support for young people with SEN.

7. Outcomes Since Leaving Compulsory Education

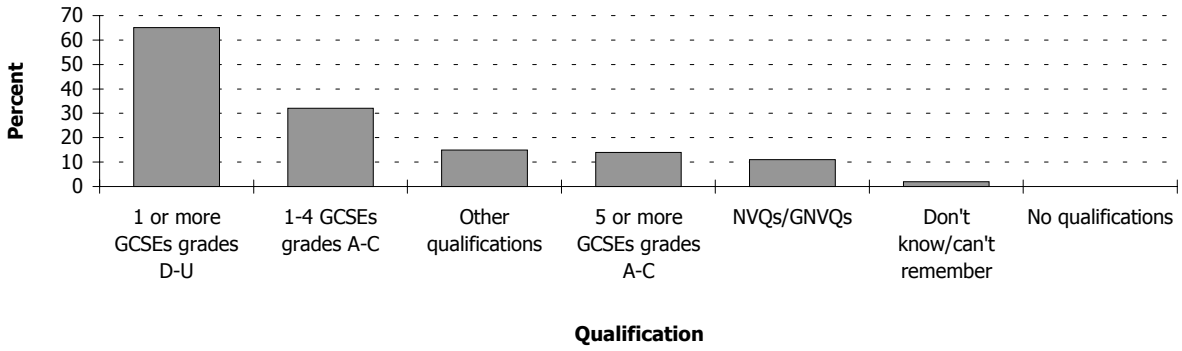
This chapter identifies the key hard and soft outcomes that young people have achieved since completing Year 11 ranging from (hard) qualifications through to (soft) feelings of increased confidence and independence, for example. The chapter also presents parents' and carers' views on the outcomes that young people have achieved since finishing compulsory schooling.

7.1 Hard outcomes

Just over half of all young people taking part in the survey (52 per cent) reported that they had gained new qualifications, or had done something that was likely to lead to some sort of certification since Year 11. Young people who had a statement of SEN whilst at school were less likely to have gained any qualifications or certificates since Year 11 than those without statements (47 per cent compared to 57 per cent). Also, young people from special schools were much less likely to have received any further qualifications or certificates since completing compulsory schooling than those who had attended a mainstream school (33 per cent compared to 57 per cent).

Looking specifically at young people who had gained new qualifications or certificates since Year 11, some slight differences are observed in relation to the sort of qualifications gained. Figure 7:1 shows that, generally, young people are most likely to have gained an 'other' qualification or certificate than a more formal qualification, such as GCSEs, AS/A levels, or G/NVQs. Young people with statements were more likely to get these 'other qualifications' than young people without statements who were, conversely, (slightly) more likely to get GCSEs, AS/A levels or GNVQs. A similar pattern was observed amongst young people who had attended a special school compared to those at mainstream schools with the former group more likely to get 'other' qualifications and the latter more likely to get more formally recognised qualifications or certificates.

Figure 7:1: Qualifications gained (all groups)



Source: IES/MORI 2003

7.2 Soft outcomes

Most young people report several 'soft outcomes' since leaving school (Table 7.1). Approximately three-quarters, or more, of all young people have said that they:

- have as many, if not more, friends than in Year 11
- have mainly enjoyed their activities since Year 11
- feel their activities since Year 11 will help them in the future
- have clearer ideas of what they want to do in the future than when they were in Year 11, and
- feel more independent now than they did in Year 11.

However, one in 10 young people also reported that they feel less confident now than they did when they were in Year 11, and two in 10 say they feel less certain about their future than they did in Year 11.

The only key differences in soft outcomes were observed amongst young people who had attended a special school who were less likely to have a clearer idea about what they wanted to do in the future than they did in Year 11 when compared to those who had attended a mainstream school (62 per cent compared to 77 per cent respectively). Young people from special schools were also less likely to feel an increased sense of independence since Year 11 when compared to those from mainstream schools (78 per cent compared to 90 per cent).

Table 7.1: Soft outcomes since Year 11, all young people

	I have at least as many, or more friends now than when I was in Year 11	I have mainly enjoyed my time since finishing Year 11	I feel less certain about my future now than when I was in Year 11	I feel that the things I have been doing since finishing Year 11, will help me in the future	I have clearer ideas about what I want to do in the future than I did when I was in Year 11	I feel less confident than when I was in Year 11	I feel more independent now than I did when I was in Year 11
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	80	82	22	75	74	12	89
Neither agree nor disagree	7	8	12	7	8	6	4
Disagree	13	8	63	15	16	81	6
Don't know	1	1	3	2	2	1	1
N =	1,765	1,763	1,739	1,765	1,744	1,756	1,755

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Parents were also asked to reflect on the impact of education on the young person and their views are shown in Table 7.2 below. In the main, parents/carers believe that education has been a positive experience for young people, and one that has reaped benefits. Over half of all parents/carers reported that education:

- gave the young person confidence to make decisions
- taught them subjects that would be useful in work, and
- was relevant to the young person's current activity.

However, less than half of all parents agreed that education had helped the young person to plan for their future or had done little to prepare them for real life. More positively, three-quarters of all parents disagreed that education had been a waste of time for the young person.

In the main, parents and carers of young people who had statements of SEN, and/or who had attended a special school were more likely to report positively on the impact of education on the young person's life and current activity. They were more likely than parents/carers of young people without statements and/or who had attended mainstream schools to agree that education had given the young person confidence, had helped them to plan for the future, and was relevant to what they were doing now. Conversely, parents and carers of young people without statements and or who had attended mainstream schools were more likely to agree that education had done little to prepare the young person for real life than parents and carers of those with statements and/or who had attended special schools.

Case studies — outcomes

Not surprisingly, the outcomes from the complex and very different transition routes seen in the case studies are themselves extremely varied. The deferred transition model, at its best, allows time for maturation and stimulates that maturation by a gradual widening of the young person's experiences. For some, this model appears to work, at least to some extent. Gareth1, for instance, though not loquacious in the interview situation, clearly felt that he had made real progress on his pre-vocational course. His mother elaborated:

[1] All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part in the case studies.

Table 7.2: Parent/carer views of soft outcomes since Year 11

	Education gave the young person confidence to make decisions	Education taught the young person subjects that could be useful in a job	Education helped the young person to plan for his/her future	Education did little to prepare the young person for real life	Education was a waste of time for the young person	Education is relevant to the young person's current activity
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	53	59	46	44	17	67
Neither agree nor disagree	10	10	11	11	8	9
Disagree	35	30	42	44	75	24
Don't know	2	1	1	1	0	1

N = 1,686

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

"(He is) a bit more independent; a lot more friends because students come from a wider area…plus he is learning about computers a lot more — he did this at school — but he is progressing all the time. Seems to be a bit more sensible as well. He is taking this certificate - a basic thing organised by the college. When he was at school he would never have talked like this about wanting to go out with his friends and wanting to do this and that so it's really opened him up."

Stuart, the visually impaired young man, has benefited considerably from his placement in a specialist college. Given that he was unhappy at his previous mainstream school, he describes a life at college which sounds 'typically' teenage. He talks extensively about friends and girlfriends, has a wide range of interests and is clearly developing a degree of independence which, while not total, does not seem unlike that of many young people of his age:

"I feel independent and grown up on a scale of one to ten about…five/six…I go out whenever and wherever I want to meet up with friends whenever I want to, and well, that's basically it… In my house, the house I was in, there was set times when we had to be in our bedrooms like, for example, 11 o'clock weekdays and one o'clock weekends but, I mean, in the house I'm in we can go to bed whenever we want."

His key worker confirmed the progress that Stuart is making:

"He has had a few setbacks, personal setbacks but I think he is managing to cope with them very, very well and he has matured a lot since he first came, you can definitely see that in him. He has taken on more responsibility for things that he does and he plans more, doesn't he, he thinks things through before he does them far more. He used to go in feet first but he thinks ahead more. I suppose like anyone would, as you get older you plan a bit more don't you? So yes, he has matured greatly."

It is no coincidence that these examples of progress through post-16 activities focus primarily on personal development and maturation rather than on academic progress of vocational skills acquisition. Stuart is, in fact, a case in point. He has no major intellectual impairments as such, is likely to achieve NVQ level 2 and is amongst those in the sample with the greatest chance of moving into employment of some kind. However, his key worker explains his options when he leaves college in the following terms:

"… it would [mean] going back down to his local area and then social services finding him a placement or it might be that he can go out and find a job, which I think for Stuart isn't unachievable, that is achievable for him. Some students, I don't know if Stuart, he is probably not ready for it yet, but some students move on then to their own self-contained flats and move on and get jobs. In future Stuart could achieve that but I'm not entirely sure if you could say next September he would be living in his own flat, I wouldn't

- manage as he can, cleanliness and tidiness are probably the main, I mean, he can feed himself and he knows when to wash himself but his actual living area might not be the cleanest! But then he's young, he'll learn."

The implication is that, whatever Stuart's academic strengths, his principal developmental needs lie in the social and personal domains. Indeed, his key worker believes he will have a continuing need for access to counselling to help him deal with the personally-troubling issues that are likely to arise even in a life which is now relatively stable.

In other cases, as we have seen, attempts at academic and vocational progression founder on the rock of the young person's cognitive or personal difficulties. They fail as they attempt to progress to more difficult courses, or they churn between activities in an apparently aimless manner.

Peter is diagnosed as having Asperger's Syndrome and a range of other difficulties which create real problems for him in handling social situations but mean that he had enough academic ability to pass a range of GCSEs (albeit with low grades) in his mainstream school. As with Simon, much has gone well on an FE College work-preparation course where he works on basic skills and vocational skills but also has some opportunities for extended work experience. However, the intended outcome of the course is that young people move into some form of employment (perhaps supported) and this has not happened for Peter. As his tutor comments:

"Peter has done the two year work preparation course and he's come out of it with all the qualifications that we'd expect anybody to come out with…On his work experience placement Peter was able to do all of the tasks that they set, multi tasking, but I was just a little bit disappointed at the end of the day that the employers sort of inhibited him by not allowing him to carry on there and work as a paid person, and I think that's where some of it might even fall down that the employers are quite happy to use them for a while and then, when it comes to the end of the time, say thank you very much, cheerio. That's the disappointing side of it for us, with all of our students this year, although they have been taken on in part-time jobs but nobody is prepared to full time employment for them."

The implication would seem to be that, for some young people, the modest academic and vocational successes of which they are capable are not able to open the door to a relatively unproblematic progression to employment. There may be positive outcomes for them both in academic/vocational and in personal development terms, but in a competitive labour market, these are not sufficient to outweigh the disadvantages which they experience.

For other young people, even these limited outcomes are difficult to discern. Zoe is experiencing a 'deferred transition' by remaining in her special school sixth form. Given her insecurity, her social

immaturity and the fact that she is happy and settled at school, this is an entirely understandable option. However, the security of the sixth form means that issues such as her dislike of change, her inability to travel alone, handle money, take care of her personal hygiene or make decisions for herself have not yet been tackled effectively. When she leaves school, the options which are available to her will be precisely those which were available at age sixteen, and to this extent at least no progress will have been made. Her mother is, therefore, concerned that Zoe will 'just vegetate'. Her Connexions PA hopes that the issues facing Zoe will be tackled in her remaining time at school, but adds:

"I can see Zoe just being Zoe in ten years time, but there can be a dramatic change in this final year of her schooling. Unless the issues (her fear of independence) can be addressed in a professional way she will stay in that comfort zone."

In Devesh's case, the concern is not one of stagnation but of actual regression. Devesh, like Zoe, attended a special school, where he was happy, highly motivated and successful. The prospects for his making a successful transition are, on the basis of his performance in school, very good. In five years' time, his former teacher at school comments:

"I expect that he would be living independently, maybe with a wife. I shouldn't think he'd want to stay living at home for longer than he had to. He is a very employable young man, within certain parameters. He is very good at getting on with other people, and very reliable. I think he would be very popular member of staff."

However, he is now in a mainstream college where, as his mother points out, he finds life difficult without adequate support. Her view is that he is failing to make progress at college. On the contrary, Devesh is going backwards from the point he had reached at school:

"It's no use. He's going to college but he's not going to be learning anything. Instead of going forward, he's going backwards. In fact, he's not getting anywhere. He was better in school than he is college. I don't know what they do in college, but he's under stress, depression. He can't reach anywhere any more."

It may be, of course, that Devesh's parents are expecting too much of him and his college. However, his college tutor points out that he has already tried to drop out of his course and is likely to transfer next year to a pre-vocational course at another college.

The case studies present a mixed picture of outcomes, with the most positive being in terms of social and personal development, and confidence, rather than academic and vocational achievement, although there were also examples of these. However, there were also young people in the case studies who seemed to have made

little progress, or were floundering in the relatively unsupported environment in which they now found themselves.

7.3 Chapter summary

- Just over half of all young people have achieved new qualifications, or have worked towards new certification since Year 11.
- Young people without statements and those from mainstream schools were more likely to have gained new qualifications.
- Formal qualifications, such as GCSEs and GNVQs were more likely to have been achieved by people without statements and those from mainstream schools than those with statements or those who had been to a special school. These young people were more likely to have achieved less formal, 'other ' qualifications and certificates.
- Most young people report several soft outcomes since Year 11 , including feeling more independent, having more friends, and having a clearer idea of what they want to do in the future.
- Most parents believe that education had given the young person greater confidence and taught them subjects that were work-relevant.

8. Leisure Activities and Social Life

Most young people taking part in the survey appear to have active social lives and plenty of leisure activities. Far from being solitary in these pursuits, most young people report that they spend time engaged in these activities with many and varied groups of friends. This chapter looks at the activities that young people are engaged in and identifies the role of others in these activities. The chapter also looks briefly at young people's current living arrangements and the likelihood of future independence.

8.1 Leisure activities

Table 8.1 below shows that the majority of young people in the survey regularly watch TV, go shopping, play video and computer games and do some sort of sports activity or exercise. Just six per cent of young people said that they went out to pubs and clubs to socialise.

Table 8.1: Leisure activities

	N =	%
Watch TV	1,577	84
Go shopping	1,201	65
Play video, or computer games	1,096	58
Play sport/do exercise	1,070	58
Go to cinema/theatre	927	49
Read magazines or books	878	48
Use the internet	784	43
Go out socialising (pubs/clubs)	111	6
Listen to music/attend gigs/concerts	72	3
Other	288	15
N =1,874 respondents		

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

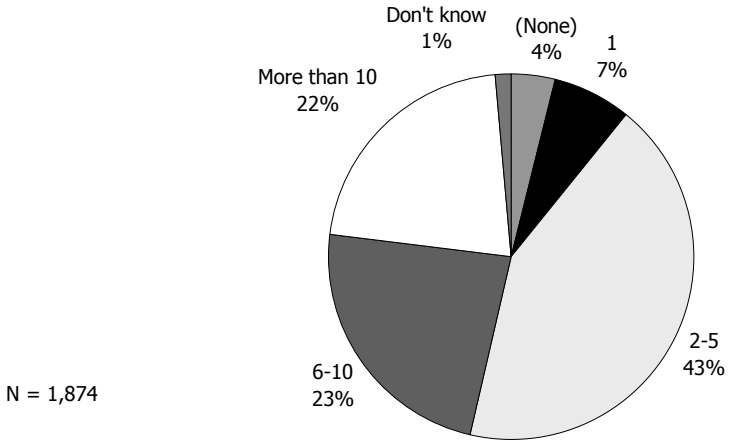
8.2 Friends and other relationships

Almost all young people in the survey said that they had at least two good friends with just four per cent of the sample reporting that they had no good friends at all (Figure 8:1). Over half of all young people said that they had six or more good friends. The incidence of statementing, the type of school attended or the type of special educational need does not appear to have any bearing on the friendships of young people as all recorded similar numbers of friends.

Two-thirds of young people participating in the survey stated that they had had a boyfriend, girlfriend or partner at some point since completing Year 11. However, young people who had been statemented at school and/or who had attended a special school were much less likely to say that they had had a partner over the same time period when compared to their counterparts without statements or those who had attended a mainstream school.

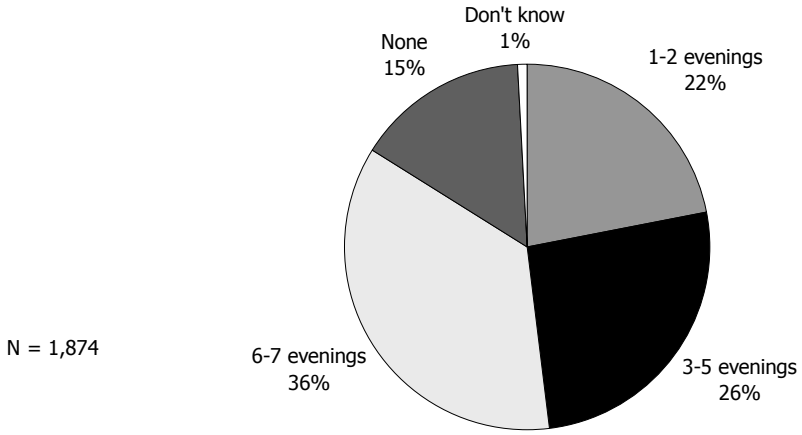
Most young people also reported that none or only a few of their friends had any disabilities or difficulties (83 per cent). However, just over one in ten of all young people stated that most of their friends had disabilities or difficulties of some sort. This was particularly the case for young people who had statements of SEN at school (23 per cent of whom reported that most of their friends had disabilities or difficulties compared to just two per cent of young people without statements). Similarly, young people from special schools were very much more likely to report that most of their friends had disabilities or difficulties (42 per cent versus just two per

Figure 8:1: Number of good friends



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Figure 8:2: Weekday evenings spent with friends (including partner *eg* husband/wife/ boyfriend/girlfriend)

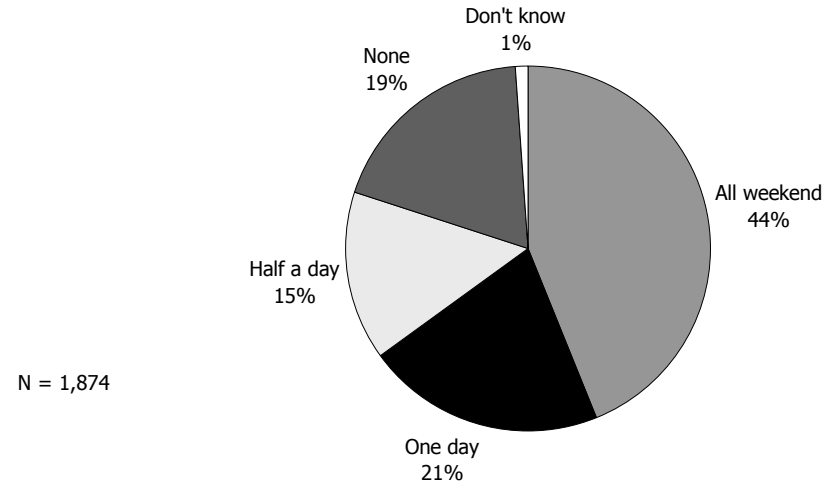


Source: IES/MORI 2003

cent of those from mainstream schools).

Young people from the survey also report that they spend a fair amount of their weekday evenings and weekends with friends and partners (see Figure 8:2 and Figure 8:3). Almost all of the sample spend at least one or two weekday evenings in the company of non-family members and most spend at least one or two days of the weekend with them. Having said this, up to one-fifth of all young people do not spend any evenings in the week or any of the weekends with friends or partners, and this is particularly the case for young people who had statements at school and/or who attended special schools.

Figure 8:3: Amount of weekend time spent with friends (including partner *eg* husband/wife/boyfriend/girlfriend)



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Case studies – social life

For some young people, transition at 16 marks a progression into a fuller and more independent social life. Stuart[1] for example, is very pleased with the social life he has established for himself at his specialist college. From being a somewhat friendless and bullied child at school, he has made friends at college and has had girlfriends. Holidays at home are more difficult for him (which may not be untypical of late teenagers who are beginning to establish their independence) but he has started doing voluntary work in a local special school, has joined two leisure clubs for people with disabilities and occasionally meets a friend from college who lives locally.

Carl too has begun to establish a social life independent of his family, albeit with the aid of his support worker:

"We've got a bit of a social life out of school, Carl and I have. We're quite good mates now, more than one to one (ie support). We've got on well and have quite a laugh."

This social life includes attending a MENCAP youth club, playing badminton and squash and going to the pub, as well as taking part in a school-run youth club and a school-organised holiday.

In the same way, Joshua has a group of friends at his sixth form college, some of whom he associates with outside college. He is learning to scuba dive at the local sports centre with one of these friends. He likes surfing and occasionally goes to play pool. He gets on well with his younger brother and sister and mentioned an aunt and his grandfather of whom he is fond. He has an active and independent social life but also a close and strong relationship with his father and mother and still takes part in family outings on occasion. No doubt Joshua is helped in his social life by the fact that he is widely regarded as highly sociable and very pleasant, with no significant problems in his family life and with academic difficulties rather than any evident cognitive, physical or sensory impairments.

Joshua is, however, an exception in the case study sample. The general pattern seems to be that these young people find social relations problematic for a range of reasons and are, in a number of cases, somewhat isolated. This is true even of those who appear to be developing a social life of their own. Carl, for instance, is highly dependent for his social life on his support worker and it seems unlikely, given his severe autism, that he is going to become genuinely independent in this respect. Indeed, as his support worker comments:

"Carl doesn't make friends, but it is more, 'I've seen a lot of you. I'm getting used to you. I'll talk to you.' "

[1] All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part in the case studies.

For some young people, the involvement and commitment of parents is central to their social lives. This is most obvious in the case of young people with the most severe and complex difficulties (such as Marcus, and Sophie). Sophie, for instance, has a rich social life, largely because her parents are part of a network of families with disabled children which organises its own activities. However, young people with less severe difficulties are often similarly dependent. Gareth involves himself in a wide range of social activities, although, as with Stuart, these are almost exclusively with other people with disabilities. Moreover, they all depend on his parents' willingness to transport him, to take him on family outings, to include his friends (and girlfriend) in these outings and to fund his somewhat expensive tastes. As his mother acknowledges, Gareth remains "frightened to death" of new social situations and refuses to stay away from home overnight. Gareth himself is adamant that he does not wish to learn how to use public transport on the grounds that he 'would not know anyone on the bus'.

It is arguable that in some cases, parents are being 'over-protective'. However, their actions have to be seen in the context of the difficulties which their children have in forming social relationships and hence in maintaining an independent social life. Even where the charge of over-protection cannot be levelled, the result seems to be not that young people achieve independence but that they become more isolated. Peter's parents, for instance, both work full-time and have been busy in recent months building an extension to their house. As a result, although they are very supportive of Peter, they do somewhat less than they would ideally like with him. However, the consequence is not that Peter has branched out on his own. He has only one friend, who himself has special educational need(s). As Peter's mother comments, they would like him to have non-disabled friends:

"…but a normal 18 year old is not going to want to spend time with Peter. [So] his social life is basically home… But there again, Peter doesn't want to do a lot. He's very happy to be in his room listening to his records. He does jigsaws and reads his books…He doesn't want entertainment a lot of the time. You know, you can almost see his relief 'Oh, I can go to my bedroom and play my records now'."

8.3 Living arrangements

The majority of the young people surveyed in Wave 2 live with their parents or carers or other family members (93 per cent). Among the remainder, two percent of young people reported living with a partner, while a smaller proportion of young people reported that they lived with friends or alone (both one per cent).

Although most young people currently live at home with their parents or carers, 70 per cent of all parents and carers believe that the young person will be able to live completely

Table 8.2: Parental views on ability of young person to live independently in the future

	N=	%
Yes, completely	1,034	70
Yes, with some additional support	327	17
No	250	12
Don't know	28	2
Total	654	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2003

independently whilst a further 17 per cent believe this is possible with some additional support (Table 8.2).

Case studies – living arrangements

As has been apparent from the case study data in this and previous chapters, many of these young people experience a degree of social isolation and dependency. Hence it is no surprise that none of the young people in the sample is living in complete independence. Andrea is, in fact, the nearest, though the Foyer in which she has been placed is a sheltered environment and it remains to be seen whether she will persevere with this placement. Moreover, her move to the Foyer is as much to do with the tensions in the family home as with any progress towards maturity. Likewise, Stuart is living away from home, but his specialist college provides a heavily protected environment rather than a form of independent living.

For the other young people, a combination of factors makes independent living out of the question. Without predictable earnings, even those, like Maria, who would like to be independent, are unable to do so. Indeed, so eager has Maria been to set up home with her young daughter that for a while she lived in a caravan outside the family home but, as we have seen, she sees genuine independence as an unattainable dream. For Peter, the issue is his inability to look after himself and manage his own affairs. He wears the same clothes every day, is not competent at household chores, has a limited understanding of money and is lacking the social skills which would enable him to stand up for himself in everyday situations. His college tutors, therefore, feel he has no realistic chance of leaving the family home in the foreseeable future:

"It would be very traumatic for him certainly now. He has come on so much in lots of ways… [he might] but it's how quickly he would get to that stage. If he could go somewhere where there was a group of people living together with a worker who was helping them, then that I think would work but if you said there's a flat going in [name] Street, no, no."

For Li, who has found his own way onto vocational training, independent living is likewise not out of the question in principle and he has a role model in a sister who is about to go to university. Li feels himself to be independent, not least because he retains all of his EMA for himself. However, in practice he is dependent on his sister for anything which involves literacy skills, is lacking in confidence, has a very limited social life and shows no inclination to leave the family home. Li pictures his future five to ten years hence in the following terms:

"I do know I should have hopefully passed the course, get a job and try not to get fired that's all…I will still be living here, I will still be doing everything I usually do."

As for many of these young people, then, independent living is a distant dream rather than an imminent reality.

8.4 Chapter summary

- Most young people report active and busy social lives.
- Most young people have had, or do have, a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Most young people have friends with and without disabilities.
- One in ten young people, however, stated that most of their friends had disabilities or difficulties of some sort, particularly, young people who had statements of SEN and who had attended a special school.
- The majority of young people currently live with their parents, although most parents believe that they will be able to live completely independently, or with some support, in the future.

9. Reflections on the Past and Plans for the Future

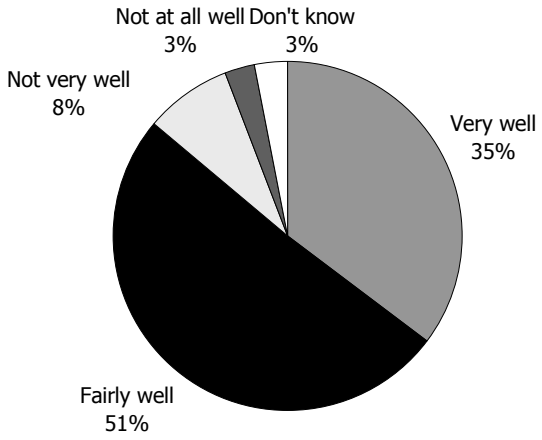
This chapter reports on young people's and their parents' views of the past, in particular, the period between leaving school or completing Year 11, and the present time, and looks forward to plans for the future.

9.1 Reflections on the past

Well over four-fifths of all young people surveyed felt that things had gone well for them since they had completed Year 11 (see Figure 9:1). Over one-third of young people reported that things had gone very well for them. Just over one in ten young people, however, reported that things had not gone very well for them since they had left school.

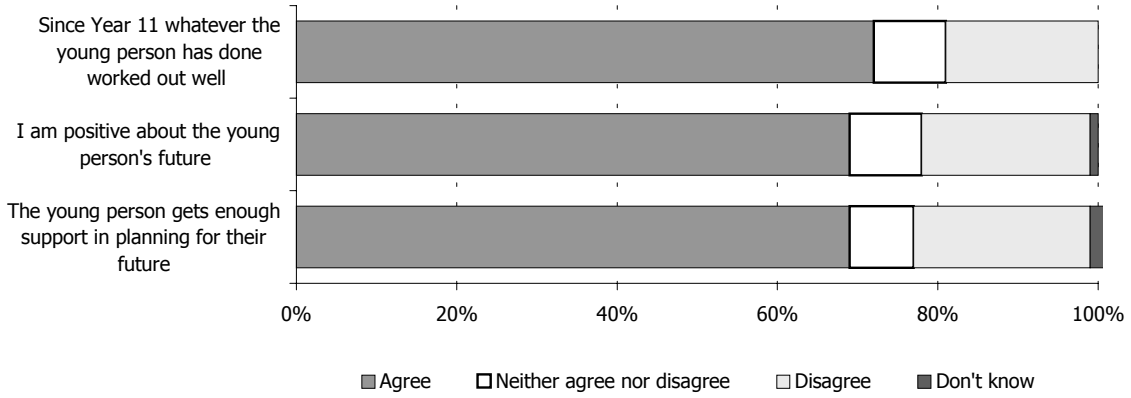
Most parents and carers tended to agree with young people on this issue. Figure 9:2 illustrates parental views on a number of statements regarding the young person's activities since Year 11 and the outlook for their future. Almost three-quarters of all parents and carers agreed that whatever the young person had done since Year 11 had worked out well. Looking more closely

Figure 9:1: Young person's reflections: how things have gone generally since leaving school



Source: IES/MORI 2003

Figure 9:2: Parental views on young person's future



Source: IES/MORI 2003

at these figures though, it appears that parents and carers are less likely to agree with this statement if the young person had behavioural, emotional or social development needs at school than if young people had other types of SEN.

Sixty-nine per cent of parents and carers also reported that they were positive about the young person's future. Again, this figure masks some differences. Parents and carers whose children had a statement of SEN and/or who had attended a special school were less likely to be positive about the future than those whose children were not statemented, and/or had attended a mainstream school. Parents of young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were once more less likely to agree with this statement than parents of young people with other SEN difficulties.

When discussing help to plan for the future, again 69 per cent of all parents and carers reported that they thought the young person received enough support in planning the future. Parents and carers of young people with statements of SEN, and/or those who had attended a special school were, however, less likely to report that this was the case, compared to those whose children did not have a statement or who had attended a mainstream school. Parents and carers of young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs also seem far less likely to think that the young person had enough support to plan for their future than those with any other type of SEN.

Although these findings are largely positive, it remains that at least one in five of all parents and carers were not positive about how things had worked out for the young person so far, nor were they positive about their future, or the adequacy of the support they received to plan for the future.

9.2 Young people's views on the future

Young people were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about the future and the results are presented in Tables 9.1 to 9.8 below.

It is clear that there is a fair degree of optimism about many aspects of the future (Table 9.1). Most young people taking part in the survey believe that the courses, jobs and training *etc.* that they have done since Year 11 have worked out well for them (71 per cent). Most young people also report that they know how to find out about future work, education or training opportunities (78 per cent). Nearly all young people are hopeful about the future (85 per cent) and very few think that planning for the future is a waste of time (only 12 per cent agreed with this statement). Seventy-three per cent of young people want to go on to do more education or training in the future although only 25 per cent believe they have all the qualifications they need for the job or course they want to do. Moreover, 20 per cent of all young people surveyed reported that they do not get enough support to plan for the future.

Taking each statement separately, a few differences become apparent according to statement, school or SEN type:

- Young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were less likely to think that what they had done since Year 11, in terms of course, jobs or training *etc.* had worked out well for them than young people with all other types of SEN.
- Young people who had been statemented at school and/or who had attended a special school were less likely to know how to find out about future work, education or training opportunities than those without statements, or those who had attended a mainstream school.
- Young people who had attended a special school were less likely to feel hopeful about the future compared to young people from mainstream schools. Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were also less likely to feel positively about the future compared with those with all other types of SEN.
- Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were more likely to want to do more education and training in the future than young people with all other types of SEN. They were also more likely to report that they did not have all the qualifications they needed to do the job or course they wanted to do.

Table 9.1: Views on the future, all respondents (per cent)

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	N =
Since Year 11, the courses, jobs, training or what I have done has generally worked out well for me	71	9	18	1	1,723
I know how to find out about future work, education or training opportunities	78	6	14	2	1,731
I think that making plans for the future is a waste of time	12	8	77	2	1,735
I am hopeful about the future	85	7	6	2	1,742
I do not get enough support in planning my future	20	13	64	2	1,741
I want to do more education or training in the future	73	8	16	3	1,745
I have got all the qualifications I need for the job or course I want to do	25	11	61	3	1,719

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Table 9.2: View (1) on the future, statemented or not, school and SEN type

Since Year 11, the courses, jobs, training or what I have done has generally worked out well for me	Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school	Communi–cation and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour / emotional / social development
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	75	68	71	72	75	76	76	54
Neither agree nor disagree	9	10	9	9	6	9	12	13
Disagree	14	20	15	19	17	14	11	31
Don't know	2	0	5	0	1	1	1	2
N =	1,006	602	410	1,313	310	871	103	254

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 9.3: View (2) on the future, statemented or not, school and SEN type (per cent)

I know how to find out about future work, education or training opportunities	Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school	Communi–cation and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour/ emotional/ social development
Agree	70	84	60	83	77	79	82	78
Neither agree nor disagree	7	5	10	5	5	6	4	5
Disagree	19	10	23	12	15	13	11	14
Don't know	4	1	8	1	3	1	3	2
N =	1,008	607	407	1,324	310	878	104	254

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Table 9.4: View (3) on the future, statemented or not, school and SEN type (per cent)

I think that making plans for the future is a waste of time	Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school	Communic–ation and interaction	Cognition and interaction	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour/ emotional/ social development
Agree	13	12	14	13	11	11	13	14
Neither agree nor disagree	7	8	9	8	6	8	6	12
Disagree	75	78	68	79	80	78	79	72
Don't know	4	1	9	1	3	2	2	3
N =	1,013	606	412	1,323	312	878	102	257

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 9.5: View (4) on the future, statemented or not, school and SEN type (per cent)

I am hopeful about the future	Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school	Communic–ation and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour / emotional / social development
Agree	84	87	75	86	85	87	66	79
Neither agree nor disagree	7	7	8	7	7	6	4	11
Disagree	7	6	9	6	6	5	8	7
Don't know	4	1	8	1	2	2	2	3
N =	1,019	607	418	1,324	313	879	105	259

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Table 9.6: View (5) on the future, statemented or not, school and SEN type (per cent)

I do not get enough support in planning my future	Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school	Communic–ation and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour / emotional / social development
Agree	22	19	24	20	18	18	23	24
Neither agree nor disagree	11	14	12	13	15	12	9	17
Disagree	63	66	56	67	64	67	67	58
Don't know	4	1	8	1	3	2	1	2
N =	1,018	607	418	1,323	313	879	105	258

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 9.7: View (6) on the future, statemented or not, school and SEN type (per cent)

I want to do more education or training in the future	Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school	Communic–ation and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour / emotional / social development
Agree	72	74	72	73	74	71	81	72
Neither agree nor disagree	7	9	7	8	7	9	6	7
Disagree	17	16	15	16	16	17	9	19
Don't know	3	2	6	2	2	3	4	2
N =	1,022	607	420	1,325	313	881	104	262

Table 9.8: View (7) on the future, statemented or not, school and SEN type (per cent)

I have got all the qualifications I need for the job or course I want to do	Statemented	Not statemented	Special school	Mainstream school	Communi–cation and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour / emotional / social development
Agree	25	26	21	26	24	26	34	23
Neither agree nor disagree	11	11	10	11	12	10	15	11
Disagree	58	62	61	61	61	60	49	61
Don't know	5	2	9	2	4	3	2	5
N =	999	604	399	1,320	305	871	103	255

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

9.3 Next activity

Almost three-quarters of all young people surveyed (74 per cent) know what they want to do next. At the time of the survey most young people were coming to the end of Year 13, or were in their eighteenth year. Table 9.9 shows that just over half of these young people want to be in work, followed by almost one-third who want to go to, or stay in, college, or move on to university and higher education.

Looking at what young people want to do next according to the type of SEN (Table 9.10) it is possible to see that those with cognition and learning difficulties, and behavioural, emotional or social development needs were more likely to want to be in work than young people with other types of SEN. Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were more likely than young people with any other SEN to want to go to (or stay in) college, or move on to university.

Table 9.9: Next activity (per cent)

	All
Work	51
Go to/stay at college	22
Go to university/HE college	10
Change jobs	5
Take a year out/go travelling	3
Work based training/apprenticeship	3
Work experience	2
Join the armed forces	1
Set up own business	1
Obtain more qualifications	1
Other	1
Don't know	1
N =	1,370

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Table 9.10: Next activity, by SEN (per cent)

	Communic–ation and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour / emotional / social development
Work	44	55	33	53
Go to/stay at college	26	19	24	25
Go to university/HE college	14	8	27	6
Change jobs	3	5	5	5
Take a year out/go travelling	3	3	2	2
Work based training/apprenticeship	2	2	4	4
Work experience	2	2	3	2
Join the armed forces	2	1	1	0
Set up own business	0	1	0	1
Obtain more qualifications	1	0	0	1
Other	1	1	1	1
Don't know	0	1	0	1
N =	244	695	85	204

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Case studies – future plans

The plans of the young people in the case studies ranged from the potentially unrealistic, to plans which are undoubtedly possible but may not be carried through. For those with significant cognitive impairments, the notion of planning is itself rather meaningless. This is not to say, of course, that they do not have clear wishes which can be taken into account when decisions are made about their futures. His mother reports how Marcus[1], for instance, makes these wishes clear when he visits an adult residential facility:

"When we took him to [name of facility], which is an adult provision, he came alive, so yes, he was maybe saying to us 'this is where I want to be'. And why is this? Is it because they are all adults?"

However, this is a far cry from being able to formulate and act upon a rational plan to achieve these wishes. Moreover, even where young people can formulate plans, the extent to which they are realistic is often in doubt. Some young people, such as Andrea and Maria, have ambitions which are not entirely unrealistic, but those who work with them have real doubts about their capacity to see plans through to a successful conclusion. Others might in principle be able to formulate

[1] All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part in the case studies.

plans for their futures but for various reasons either do not do so at all, or do so only in the most limited way.

Matthew is a case in point. He originally 'had his heart set' on finding work in the catering trade, but his lack of success has caused him to lower his sights. Asked whether he has thought about returning to college to improve his catering qualifications, he replies:

"*Don't know, just I've been set back. I've been to so many catering interviews and all that and they've always knocked me back I've just - willing to do anything now, not just got my heart set on catering.*"

This is, however, not quite the realistic appraisal of his situation that it might seem, as his other comments about his future show:

"*Don't wanna be living in the UK, wanna be out in some hot country. I did about three months ago have my heart set on moving back to where I was born, back to Cornwall, but there's so many stories about that now. Hopefully I wanna be living in a hot country, or somewhere decent round here with a full-time job, my own place and everything… I actually wanna own my own pub don't I, at the moment…*"

What is apparent through much of the case study evidence, is that planning for the future is a highly problematic notion.

9.4 Reflections on transition

On reflection, young people are most likely to report that their parents and carers have been the most important people in helping them to make the transition from Year 11 to the present time and 64 per cent of all those surveyed reported this to be the case (Table 9.11). A further seven per cent of young people

Table 9.11: Most important person in post-16 transition

	N =	%
Parents/carers	1,197	64
Other school staff	122	6
No-one in particular	115	6
Friends/partner (boyfriend/girlfriend)	87	5
Careers Service/Connexions personal adviser	47	2
Careers Adviser at school/college	38	2
Someone else in your family	35	2
Other college staff	26	1
SENCO at school	23	1
Don't know	69	3
Other	109	6
N =	1,874	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2003

thought that friends, partners or other family members had been the most helpful to them when making the transition. Taken together approximately seven out of ten young people rated the support and help of friends and family as paramount in moving from compulsory schooling to post-16 options. Very few young people (ten per cent of all those surveyed) thought that school and college staff (*ie* careers teachers, SENCOs and other staff) had been the most important people in helping them to make their post-16 transition and only two per cent of young people reported that the Careers Service or Connexions had played this role.

9.5 Chapter summary

- The majority of young people believe generally that things have gone well for them since they completed Year 11.
- Most parents agreed with young people and reported that whatever the young person had done had worked out well for them.
- The majority of parents and carers also report being positive about the young person's future and believe that the young person receives enough support in planning for this future.
- However, one in five parents do not believe that things have worked out well for the young person, nor do they feel positive about the future and the way the young person is supported in planning for it.
- Just over half of all young people who know what they want to do next want to be in work. About one-third of these young people want to remain at college or move on to university.

10. Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

This study set out to provide a comprehensive review of the experiences, achievements and attitudes of young people with SEN during their post-16 transitions and beyond. In so doing the research has sought to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the transition process and the policy response, and identify the main barriers to a successful transition.

The term 'transition', in itself, presupposes some sort of linear progression towards the key markers of adult life, with the commensurate acquisition of skills, qualifications, maturity and experience resulting in purposeful occupation (preferably in paid employment), meaningful personal relationships, and independent living. Each of these goals can be demanding, particularly so for young with SEN.

To assess the 'success' of their transition from compulsory schooling the study has focussed, through the surveys and case studies, on a number of key indicators against which progression might be measured:

- engagement in a 'positive' post-16 activity *ie* participating in education, training and/or employment
- greater inclusion into mainstream society (*eg* by way of social contact and/or an active social life); and
- progression towards independent status.

To ease and facilitate post-16 transitions, policy has focussed on:

- developing multiple pathways through the transition phase *eg* dedicated forms of FE provision, supported employment schemes, and vocational training schemes *etc.* and
- providing support, with a particular emphasis on inter-agency co-ordination, for example, through the provision of statutory transition planning at school and (latterly) the establishment of the Connexions service.

Generally the survey found that most young people with SEN had gained some sort of qualification from school, most were in education or employment, and most enjoyed active and busy social lives. However, this apparently positive general picture masks some key differences: in the types and levels of qualifications gained, the courses being followed and the place of study, and the quality or level of jobs being undertaken. On closer inspection, it is clear that some 'groups' of young people have a very different transition experience and fare better or worse depending on some key personal characteristics, such as the severity of need, the type of school attended, and/or the type of special educational need. In many ways, a significant number of young people in this study could be deemed to have deferred their post-16 transition: they remain in their pre-16 environment and are unlikely to make any significant moves for two to three years.

The study has examined the influence that various supportive structures have had (or seem to have had) on these differential transitions and outcomes to date. In particular, it has looked at the impact of statutory transition planning on young people's progress, and has explored the role of other formal structures and bodies, such as the Careers Service or Connexions, on the transition process generally. It has also looked at the role of parents and carers in the transition process, and their views on it.

The rest of this concluding chapter examines the evidence to ascertain:

- the preparedness of young people with SEN to make their post-16 transitions; and
- the extent to which the transitions that young people with SEN have made can be deemed to have been successful.

10.2 Preparing for transition

10.2.1 Transition planning

Transition planning forms a key element of government policy for young people with special educational needs. However, less than half of all the young people taking part in the Wave 2 survey could recall having any formal transition planning meeting to assist them to move on from compulsory schooling. In particular, just under two-thirds of young people with statements of SEN could recall attending a transition planning meeting prior to Year 11 although all would have had a statutory right to formal assistance of this sort. This finding may be a problem of recall (approximately one-fifth of all young people surveyed could not remember if they had attended a planning meeting), but may also indicate that this sort of planning does not always happen as routinely as policy suggests it should.

Transition planning is purposely focussed on those with the more severe special educational needs, although this may not equate with the greatest need for transition support. Young people who had attended a special school, who by definition are very likely to have more severe needs and statements of SEN, were much more likely to recall attending such a meeting, as were those with sensory and/or physical disabilities, or communication and interaction difficulties. Conversely, young people without statements, who had attended mainstream schools, and those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were the least likely of all those surveyed to report any formal transition planning process. Having said this, it interesting to note that one-third of young people without statements of SEN reported that they had attended such a meeting even though this was unlikely to have been driven by any statutory requirement on the part of the school.

Not surprisingly, the main people attending the transition planning meeting were school staff and school careers advisers. Only one-fifth of young people reported that an independent careers advisor *ie* Careers Service or Connexions personnel, had been present. Parents and carers were also involved in the formal transition planning meetings, although less so among young people without statements, those attending mainstream schools and/or those with behavioural, emotional or social development needs. School careers advisers and other school staff were perceived by young people to have been the most helpful people at the formal transition meeting, particularly in relation to explaining the options available to them post-16 and in providing information. Encouragingly, most young people had found the meetings generally useful, however, less than one-third of young people thought the review meeting had helped them to make a decision about their next activity.

10.2.2 Role of the Careers Service and Connexions

Most young people also reported that they had some formal and impartial careers planning with the Careers Service or Connexions during Year 11. Once again, these discussions centred mainly on an explanation of the options available and the provision of information. However, less than one in three young people thought that the meeting with the Careers Service or Connexions had helped them to progress into work or further education or to make decisions about their future. A significant number of young people complained that the meeting with the Careers Service/Connexions had not provided the right sort of information, had not provided enough information, had not helped with decision-making, did not explain all of their options and was confusing.

10.2.3 Parental involvement

Overwhelmingly though, parents, rather than any statutory body, are identified by young people in the survey, as being the most influential and helpful in the post-16 transition process *per se*, a finding reinforced heavily in the case studies. Young people without statements and those who had attended a mainstream school were particularly likely to say that their parents had been *the* most helpful person when making their post-16 transition.

Parents themselves, although mostly feeling involved in the process of assisting the young person's transition from school to post-16 activities more generally, were likely to report that they had received little or no help or information from the young person's school regarding their options. Parents were even less likely to report that they had received adequate help and information from the school if the young person did not have a statement of SEN, had attended a mainstream school and/or who had behavioural, emotional or social development needs. Quite clearly, this could be problematic as it is exactly these young people who rely most heavily on their parents when making their post-16 transitions.

10.2.4 Post transition support

Whilst young people with SEN may require additional, professional support to assist their post-16 transitions because of their needs, there is little evidence to suggest that they receive any sort of coherent external support other than what they, or their parents, ask for. Parents who had sought additional services or advice, *eg* concerning education, employment and training opportunities, social security or special educational needs generally, often reported a lack of information and guidance, and poor service co-ordination. In some cases, parents received conflicting advice from staff working in different services.

Relatively few young people with SEN had routinely received help from the Careers Service or Connexions, or indeed any other non-medical service, following their move from compulsory schooling. The survey data illustrate a general lack of one professional, service or organisation with an overview of the young person, their current situation (or history) and the options available to them throughout the transition period. This does not mean that young people lack support at all. The case studies found that young people with significant and complex difficulties often had an individual champion, or key worker assisting them through the transition and in most of these cases, there was at least one provider, agency or individual making strenuous efforts to ensure that the young person progressed. For some, the efforts of these organisations and individuals were well co-ordinated with each other and addressed a wide range of the young person's

needs in both the academic and the social and personal domains. For others though, this was not always the case.

In addition to concerns about the coherence of multi-agency support, there is the question of the stability of such an arrangement. It is not at all clear, and actually very unlikely, that these champions or workers will remain constant as provision shifts from child to adult services, and as young people change activities. Moreover, the support 'systems' described here seem to be geared to helping young people with severe or 'uncontested' impairments. These young people constitute a relatively well-known population for whom there are clear transition pathways and systems in place.

Underpinning any agency support that young people received were parents and carers who provided the largest degree of help, stability and continuity for the young person post-16 as they did pre-16. The powerful commitment of parents and carers, although not always fully harnessed, was a striking feature of the case studies.

10.2.5 School outcomes

Encouragingly, most young people taking part in the survey had gained some sort of qualification at the end of compulsory schooling, the majority of these being a Level 1 equivalent qualification, and many had gone on to get additional qualifications and certificates post-16. However, young people who had a statement of SEN, who had attended a special school, and/or who had behavioural, emotional or social development needs were less likely to have achieved any qualifications on completing compulsory schooling leaving them in a much lower starting position than their peers.

10.3 Success of transition

A key indicator of progression and a successful transition for young people leaving compulsory schooling is their post-16 activity. Not surprisingly, the survey found that young people with SEN most commonly continued in (primarily) full-time education in FE institutions, schools and sixth form colleges. Young people were particularly likely to have continued in education post-16 if they had had a statement of SEN, had attended a special school and had sensory and/or physical disabilities.

Whilst continuing education is a positive (and fairly 'normal') activity for young people on completing compulsory schooling, these findings lend weight to the hypothesis that many young people with SEN, by remaining in their familiar school environment or in special FE provision, may have 'deferred' their

transition. This certainly seems to be the reality for many young people taking part in the case studies. The real test of what happens in these post-16 years is therefore left for the future and will be explored in the next wave of the study.

Just over one-quarter of young people taking part in the survey had made a significant change and were in employment when interviewed. However, in contrast to those who had continued in education, young people without statements and those who had attended a mainstream school were almost as likely to have been in employment as education at the time of the Wave 2 survey. Young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs, or with cognition and learning difficulties were also much more likely to have been in employment at the time of the survey. Most young people were employed in lower level jobs as process, plant or machine operators, or in elementary occupations, and less than half had any sort of training or apprenticeship component attached to these jobs. Essentially, the work in which most young people were engaged was of poor quality, with seemingly few prospects.

More worryingly though, is the fact that over one in ten young people taking part in the survey were unemployed (or NEET). Those most likely to find themselves in this situation were young people without statements of SEN and those who had attended a mainstream school. Young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were also far more likely to have been unemployed than young people with any other type of SEN.

For young people moving into employment, and indeed those currently in unemployment, the issue is not about deferring transition necessarily, but rather one of the quality and prospect of the transition that has been made. Many young people in this survey (over four in ten) are either not in education, employment or training, or are in low level jobs with seemingly few opportunities for improved skills acquisition or progression. Whilst this may be the case for many young people starting out in the labour market more generally, for those with additional difficulties, as presented by SEN, such a trajectory could be worrying. Young people with SEN but without a statement (and thereby the formal transition process), who study in mainstream schools, and/or who have behavioural, emotional or social development needs were most likely to find themselves in such a position. In other words young people with less-severe, 'invisible' or contested impairments are particularly at risk of falling out of the system into unsatisfactory or unsuccessful outcomes immediately on transition.

10.3.1 Social life and sense of independence

On a more positive note, young people overwhelmingly reported that they felt a greater sense of independence compared to Year 11

and most reported that they had more friends than before, and had a clearer idea of what they wanted to do in the future. The case studies also found that some of the most important outcomes for young people post-16 were in social and personal development rather than academic and vocational achievement. Having said this, there remained a small, but not insignificant, number of young people who had not achieved any additional outcomes *eg* qualifications or social development gains, since completing compulsory schooling. The case studies particularly, observed young people who had made little or no progress since Year 11, and who appeared to be rather aimlessly engaged (or floundering) in their post-16 activity, and heavily reliant on support workers and parents for social contact and friendship.

10.4 Two key groups

From the survey and the case studies, two groups of young people stand out:

- The first group relates to young people with largely uncontested impairments (*eg* sensory and/or physical disabilities) that have been identified at (or before) school. These young people generally have a statement, have attended a special school (or special provision in a mainstream school) and had multi-agency intervention related to their impairment. Essentially, these young people constitute a fairly well-known population for whom there are clear transition pathways, although many are experiencing deferred transitions in post-16 education. The issues for them are whether the pathways they are on are appropriate, whether they promote genuine progression and whether the high level of service co-ordination these young people need (and that they have experienced pre-16) actually survives the transition phase.
- The second group of young people are those with less well-defined or evident impairments *eg* less severe learning difficulties, and behavioural, emotional or social development needs who effectively form part of a broader population of educational low-attainers. They are most likely to have attended mainstream schools, are less likely to have had statements of SEN or well-defined transition pathways, and the level of statutory support they have received to date appears to be low. Many have left education and have entered or are seeking to enter the bottom end of the labour market. The issue for these people is whether the mainstream 'systems' within which they operate, including the education system and the labour market, are sufficiently powerful to overcome the (sometimes significant) difficulties that these young people face. There is considerable evidence already that this may not be the case.

Of course there is a much larger group of young people who fall between these two groups. These young people have a range of special educational needs, including communication and interaction, and cognition and learning difficulties. These may or may not be attributed to various 'conditions' or to more contested and less 'visible' impairments. They may or may not have had a statement of SEN, may well not have had any significant involvement from other agencies and constitute a population for whom transition pathways are less well defined, or understood. The issues for this group of young people are likely to centre around the appropriateness of the available transition pathways that they are following, and the level and effectiveness of such support as is available.

10.5 A model of fractured transitions

This study has reported the experiences of young people two years after they have completed statutory schooling. Given that these young people are likely to take time to work their way through the transition process and that many of them are experiencing what might be called a 'deferred transition', it is too early to reach conclusive judgements about the quality and effectiveness of the processes they are experiencing, or the outcomes they have achieved. It is likely to become clearer in successive waves of this survey whether what is happening is a slow and steady progression towards a meaningful and productive adulthood, a largely non-productive process of 'churning' and stagnation, or a complex mixture of the two.

However, despite a picture of differential and deferred transitions so far, it is possible to see some sort of pattern emerging in the experiences of young people with SEN as they move from childhood to adulthood and from full-time education to something else.

The 'standard' model of transition presupposes that young people are set on a linear journey towards adulthood. That journey will be marked by the acquisition of academic and (increasingly) vocational skills which will themselves open up employment opportunities, by a growing control of social life, an increasing personal maturity, by greater financial independence and eventually by fully independent living. Throughout, the process will be driven by the young person's increasingly mature planning and decision-making, guided by professional and family support where necessary.

Unfortunately, this model does not apply to many of the young people in this study, and certainly not to those with the most severe and complex difficulties in the case studies. For some of them, the 'standard' markers of adulthood are simply out of reach. With the best will in the world, they are not going to access open employment or live independently. For young people with

the most severe and complex difficulties, therefore, transition can at most be about approximating the markers of adulthood as nearly as their difficulties will allow. This might well involve new experiences and an acknowledgement that the young person is increasingly adult. However, transition is also, for these young people, a time when such positive arrangements as have been put in place in the childhood years are threatened by changes that may have little meaning for the young people themselves. There may well be, therefore, as much if not more to lose in the transition process than there is to gain.

For others, an approximation to a 'standard' transition is theoretically possible, but the approximation is not close. The case studies highlighted difficulties with rational planning, limitations in the young person's capacity to act on plans effectively, limited skills acquisition, delayed personal maturity. When young people come to a demanding labour market, with few assets to offer, the notion of linear progression comes to seem problematic. The next phase of the study will be able to assess whether the (transition) activity in which young people are engaged generates progression, and whether the efforts of individual professionals or organisations to support young people help them to overcome the (not inconsiderable) barriers that they face.

Although there are individual champions in particular cases, the overall impression is that, once out of school, no individual or organisation gives a strong lead to young people or 'personalises' the provision that is available. The formal SEN transition planning process is undoubtedly important for some young people. However, not all young people are entitled to access the process or, as the survey shows, do in fact do so and it seems to be the strength of the pathways between pre- and post-16 provision that make the difference rather than the formal procedures or support mechanisms themselves. In particular, what seems to be lacking is any strong or coherent framework within which this heterogeneous group young people might stand the best chance of progression. [1]

Whether Connexions ultimately will (or indeed can) play the role of creating strong, customised and long-term pathways for all young people remains to be seen. It is clearly too early to judge. However, the variability of young people's experience of Connexions in this sample and the very uneven outcomes of their transitions suggest that in its early days it is not yet providing a

[1] Having said this, there are significant policy moves taking place to strengthen the co-ordination of services for children and young people up to the age of 19 and their families (*ie* the Every Child Matters agenda). These may produce more co-ordinated approaches to transitions for young people with SEN in the future although clearly not for the young people in this study who were already approaching the age of 19 when surveyed.

complete solution to the problems they face. At best, young people are 'helped' over the boundaries from activity to activity from school to college, or from one course to another. There is little sense, from this study, that anyone or any body is taking responsibility for giving coherence and purpose to their overall experience or that the help provided is tailored to, the wide variety of, individuals needs.

The next stage of the research, which further tracks the sample of young people, will be able to throw more light on the progress they have made, the barriers they face and the support they have received to overcoming them, through their transition into adulthood, the labour market and beyond.

Appendix One: Wave 2 survey

Summary of the Wave One baseline study

In Wave 1 of the research, interviews were conducted with 617 SEN Co-ordinators (SENCOs)/teachers, 2,313 young people and 2,365 parents/carers.

Sampling took place at three levels. Firstly, the project team initially approached a sample of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in order to ask permission to approach the schools within these LEAs.

The second stage was to approach schools within the LEAs that granted permission. The SENCO/teacher at each school was asked to provide background information on a maximum number of ten eligible pupils: demographic characteristics, SEN profile, special educational needs support offered, educational attainment, absences and exclusion, transition planning and careers education and advice. Interviews were also conducted with the SENCO/teacher at these schools.

Finally, those schools that agreed to take part in the study were asked to provide contact details of eligible young people and their parents/carers who had agreed to take part in the research (*ie* after the schools had conducted opt-out procedures). These young people and their parent/carer were contacted for interview during 2000/01.

Sample design for Wave 2

As there had been a substantial period of time between the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys, a high rate of attrition was expected. In view of the need to ensure an adequate sample size for analysis, as well as the follow-up interviews with young people and their parent or carer who took part in the Wave 1 survey (the Wave 1 sample), the second stage of the survey involved additional interviews with a new sample of young people and their parents/carers (the top-up sample).

Selection of schools for top-up sample

The overall aim was to draw a sample of 345 schools, on the basis that 115 would agree to participate in the research (based on a 30 per cent response rate). The population was defined as all mainstream secondary schools in England, excluding those that participated in Wave 1 and middle deemed-secondary schools. As special schools were over-represented in Wave 1, they were excluded from the top-up sample although young people from special schools remain over-represented in the sample. This was important to ensure sufficient special school students in the sample to enable comparisons with mainstream school students to be made.)

MORI's approach to the selection of schools for the top-up sample comprised the following procedures:

- The sampling frame was stratified by Government Office Region (GOR) in England.
- Within each GOR, schools were selected with a probability proportionate to the size of school register (*ie* pupil population).
- The selected sample of schools were compared against population profiles to ensure that it was representative.

Table A.1 gives profile information for participating schools as well as population profiles.

Selection of pupils

The nominated SENCO/teacher was then contacted by a MORI interviewer to arrange a time to visit the school. During this visit, the interviewer assisted the SENCO/teacher with completing the Pupil Information Form (PIF) and the administration of the opt-out.[1]

The PIF was divided into two parts: the first part collected a limited number of variables about each eligible pupil (*eg* gender, SEN stage in Year 11/2000-01); and the second part collected their contact details. The first part was completed for a maximum of 30 eligible pupils[2] and the second part was completed only for those pupils that did not opt-out of the study.

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[1] This is to minimise the burden on schools but schools, if they chose to, could carry out this process themselves.

[2] In the pilot, MORI tested two approaches: a census and a maximum of 40 eligible pupils. The findings from the pilot showed that the maximum number of eligible pupils tended to be 30. Thus the decision was taken in the main stage to cap the maximum number of

Table A.1: Profile of participating schools

Profile of schools	Population[1]		Total achieved sample		Achieved sample (W1)		Achieved sample (Top-up)	
Region	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
London	559	13	69	9	56	9	13	10
West Midlands	546	12	83	11	68	11	15	12
North West	665	15	125	17	108	18	17	14
Yorkshire & the Humber	425	9	83	11	69	11	14	11
North East	277	6	41	6	33	5	8	6
South West	422	9	76	10	65	11	11	9
East Anglia	533	12	93	13	78	13	15	12
East Midlands	407	9	82	11	70	11	12	10
South East	690	15	91	12	70	11	21	17
School Type	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Special	1,088	24	362	49	362	59	–	–
Mainstream	3,436	76	381	51	255	41	126	100
Total	4,524	100	743	100	617	100	126	100

Source: IES/MORI 2003

Main-stage fieldwork

The aim was to achieve paired interviews (both young person and their parents/carers) in the first instance. However, this was not possible in a small number of cases. Interviewers were instructed not to conduct a parent/carer interview unless they were able to interview the young person as well.

Interviewers were required to make a minimum of six calls per address, at different times/day including at least one call at the weekend.

If the young person had moved away and the parent/carer was willing to provide contact details, interviewers were instructed to make every attempt to contact the young person at their new address. If the young person had moved out of the area, they were asked to notify the Area Manager, so that the new address could be issued to an interviewer working in the appropriate area.

10.5.1 Response rate

eligible pupils on the PIF to 30. This also ensured that no excessive burden was placed on schools with a large population of SEN pupils.

[1] Source: *Statistics of Education: Schools in England* 2003, DfES.

In total, 1,876 interviews were achieved with young people, from an issued sample of 3,732, giving an overall adjusted response rate of 68 per cent. From an issued sample of 3,722 leads for parents/carers, 1,688 participated in the study, which represents an adjusted response rate of 63 per cent.[1] Table A.2 illustrates the sample outcome in more detail.

Table A.2: Response rate analysis

Young People	**Overall Wave 2**	**Wave 1 sample**	**Top-up sample**
Issued sample	3,732	2,132	1,600
Achieved interviews	1,876	1,169	707
Unadjusted response rate	*50%*	*55%*	*44%*
Invalid sample	100	49	51
Not available during fieldwork	100	57	43
Moved	582	355	227
Other	177	79	98
Adjusted response rate	*68%*	*73%*	*60%*
Refused	519	249	270
No contact	378	174	204
Parent/carer	**Overall Wave 2**	**Wave 1 sample**	**Top-up sample**
Issued sample	3,722	2,126	1,596
Achieved interviews	1,688	1,090	598
Unadjusted response rate	*45%*	*51%*	*38%*
Invalid sample	113	56	57
Not available during fieldwork	104	45	59
Moved	653	402	251
Other	163	55	108
Adjusted response rate	*63%*	*70%*	*53%*
Refused	580	282	298
No contact	421	196	225

Source: IES/MORI 2003

[1] Although 1,688 parent/carer interviews were achieved, two of these interviews have been deemed subsequently as unusable. All parent/carer data presented in the report relate to 1,686 successfully achieved interviews.

10.5.2 Weighting

Table A.3 reports the achieved sample at Wave 2 against estimates of the number of Year 11 students in 2000 by school type and whether they had a statement of special educational need.[1]

As can be seen below, the number of young people in the Wave 2 sample without statements and from mainstream schools are under-represented, while students with statements are over-represented. This has been corrected for in the data set through the use of cell based weighting.[2]

Table A.3: Estimates of the number of secondary level students with SEN and Wave 1 distributions.

	Wave 2		Population
	N =	%	%
Secondary school non-statemented (levels 2 to 4)	593	34	54
Secondary school statemented	638	36	24
Special school statemented	505	29	22
Special school – other	18	1	1
Total	1,756	100	101

Base for Wave 2 excludes cases in which the level of SEN was not known.

The following chapters document the findings from the case studies alongside the data from the quantitative survey. All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part.

1 The estimates are based on DfES figures collected from the Annual School Census. However in 2000, the data was not collected in a way that makes it possible to know how many were on stages 2 to 4 of the old SEN Code of Practice or how many of the SEN pupils were in Year 11. It has therefore been necessary to estimate this based on the ratio observed within the overall sample from the Wave 2 PIF, which has been designed to be representative of the population.

2 In the 120 cases where data were not available on SEN level, weighting was based on the school type alone.

Appendix Two: Characteristics of the Case Studies

In addition to the surveys, detailed case studies of 16 young people were also undertaken. The purpose of these case studies was to track and understand the process of transition for the young person in three key areas, though of course, these areas tended to interact with each other. These areas were:

Their **progression from school** in terms of:

- Further education
- Employment
- Training

The **development of their social life** in terms of:

- Social activities
- Friendships
- Relationships (family & sexual)

Their **movement towards independent living** in terms of:

- Financial independence
- Choices over housing
- Choices regarding family position (*eg* independence from, or chosen role within birth family, establishment of a new family)
- Choices regarding other support systems
- Mobility & access to public space
- Participation in citizenship activities

Within each area, it was important to understand what had happened in the young person's past, particularly since the first wave of the longitudinal study, what they were doing at Wave 2 and what they expected and hoped for the future. Essentially, the case studies aimed to explore:

The **facilitators of transition**, in terms of:

- Personal attributes
- Social supports (friends & family)

- Economic factors
- Structural supports (formal transition planning, courses, advocacy groups, counsellors, transport *etc. ie* anything formally organised and provided)

The **inhibitors (or barriers) to transition**, in terms of:

- Personal difficulties & limitations
- Lack or limitations of social supports (friends & family)
- Economic factors
- Lack or limitations of structural supports

The **role of the young person as agent** in their own transition, in terms of:

- What options they had
- What decisions they made
- Why they made those decisions
- How satisfied they were

It was unreasonable to expect that a small sample of 16 case studies could represent the whole population of young people with (or, more correctly, who had been identified at school as having) special educational needs. Nonetheless, it was important that the sample reflected the range of types of special educational need, the range of severity and complexity of need and the type of school provision. It was also necessary to ensure that the sample was appropriately diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, social class, current activity and access to Connexions services.

In terms of gender, 11 of the young people were male and five were female. Fourteen were White/British, one was of Chinese ethnic origin and one was of Indian ethnic origin. Nine had last attended a special school, and seven had last attended a mainstream school. According to records, 12 had had a statement of special educational needs when at school, four had not. The main reported type of SEN is shown below:

- Three had mild learning difficulties/social-emotional difficulties
- Four had moderate/severe learning difficulties
- Two had profound and multiple learning difficulties
- Two had autistic spectrum disorder
- Two had dyslexia/behavioural, emotional or social development needs
- One had behavioural, emotional or social development needs/Autistic spectrum disorder

- Two had visual impairment.

For sampling purposes, current activity was taken from the questionnaire survey. Although for some of the young people, this had changed by the time the case studies were conducted, at the time of the survey, current activity was reported to be:

- Four at FE College
- Two at mainstream sixth form
- One at specialist FE college
- Four at special school sixth form
- One on a modern apprenticeship
- One on a training course
- Three unemployed.

Three of the case studies were with young people living in London, eight more were in the South East and a further five were in the North East. This regional bias reflects the location of the research institutes undertaking this study. The case studies were intended to explore and illustrate a range of experiences rather than to be geographically representative.

The sample was also selected so that it would reflect three notional transition pathways. Namely those of:

- Young people who have a difficulty which is limited in its impact and who, with appropriate support and facilitation, should be able to make a successful transition.
- Young people who have severe and profound difficulties who are likely to remain highly dependent throughout adulthood.
- Young people who have a real prospect of making progress towards a successful transition but whose difficulties present major challenges to this progress.

Although each of these groups was important, it is the more challenging second and, particularly, third group who constitute the greatest test of policy and practice and therefore the sample was weighted towards these groups. This is important in interpreting the case study findings. There may well be many young people who are identified as having special educational needs at school and who go on to further education, employment or training in a more-or-less unproblematic fashion. The focus of the case studies however, was not on these young people and therefore the somewhat troubling picture which emerges from the case studies has to be set in the wider context of the survey data as a whole.

All young people were asked as part of the survey if they were prepared to be re-contacted for the case study phase. An initial long list of potential sample members was formed by those who

gave their consent and who lived in the regions closest to the bases of the two research teams in Brighton (covering London and the South East) and Newcastle (covering the North East). The data from the Wave 1 and 2 surveys on these young people was then reviewed so as to produce an initial sample which gave the best fit against the sampling criteria. These young people and their parents/carers were then approached to ensure that they were still willing to participate. Where they did not agree, or where they could not be contacted, a substitute was found from the long list who matched as closely as possible the withdrawing young person. A further important caveat about the sample, therefore, is that it was drawn only from those young people and their families who were contactable and who were willing to participate.

Initial interviews were then conducted with the young person and with his/her parents/carers on the same basis as in the main survey. That is, interviews were conducted separately wherever practicable and using whatever aids to communication the young person normally relied upon. During this interview, the young person and parents/carers were invited to nominate those people who had been most important in the transition process and whom they would be willing for the researchers to interview. Wherever possible, this included the provider of the young person's current activity (*eg* college tutor or trainer), the SENCO or class teacher at the young person's school and the Connexions PA. In some cases, alternative or additional key people were nominated (for instance, the young person's headteacher or class teacher at school, or a key worker in a voluntary project which the young person attended).

Given the diversity of young people's situations and the differential communication styles of interviewees, it was not possible to formulate prescriptive interview schedules. Instead, topic guides were generated on the basis of the foci of interest set out above and interviewers were asked to use their judgement in eliciting information from interviewees.

All case studies were written up in a common format so that comparisons could be made more readily across the sample. Where possible, interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Where this was not possible, researchers made detailed field notes on each interview with selective quotation. Analysis took the form of a repeated reading of the case study reports, interview transcripts and field notes in order to identify common themes and significant differences against the key foci of the study.

Data from the case studies is presented throughout the report. All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part.

Appendix Three: Additional Data from the Case Studies

This Appendix presents additional data from the case studies, which provides further examples of the points outlined in the main body of the report.

Chapter Four: School and Outcomes

Transition planning at school

There were cases where transition planning appeared on the face of it to be adequate but where the outcome was not quite as positive as might have been hoped. Simon[1] for instance, is a young person who had had a statement for moderate learning difficulties and had attended a mainstream school. The school had offered Simon work experience, held the appropriate review meetings with him and his mother and had good links with the Careers Service (which subsequently became Connexions). However, Simon's learning difficulties were accompanied by social and behavioural difficulties and he had few contacts beyond his immediate family. In particular, he did not find it easy to plan out his own future or articulate his wishes. Because he felt unable to cope with wider social demands, the school allowed Simon to do his work experience within the school itself. In the review meetings, his mother spoke on his behalf while Simon sat and said nothing. In the event, the only option to emerge from these meetings was a course at the local FE College. Simon was unhappy with this on the grounds that he wanted to get a job. As a result nothing happened until he left school and his mother took him to the local Connexions office. Simon said he wanted to do something practical, but Connexions felt that he was socially immature and instead found him a place on an eighteen-week life skills course. Subsequently he moved to a vocational training provider to begin a foundation modern apprenticeship. However, his current tutors feel he has been mis-assessed and that the course is too demanding for him.

1 All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part in the case studies.

Gareth is a young man with learning difficulties, though his appear to be more severe and he had been placed in special school. His school, as in many cases, appears to have engaged in all the proper planning and review processes and had involved both other agencies and Gareth and his family in the planning process. Both Gareth's Connexions worker and, particularly, the school pushed strongly for him to transfer to the sixth form unit. Gareth and his parents, however, were not convinced. Not only was the sixth form site run down, but it offered provision to 'disaffected' older pupils from mainstream schools and Gareth was concerned about the prospect of being bullied. The school provided little information about other options and it was left to Gareth's parents to explore alternatives. They identified an attractive course offered by a college some distance away, but the Connexions worker told them that places were difficult to access. It was only through word of mouth from other young people that they found out there was a similar course in a local college. From that point on, the Connexions worker was helpful in arranging and supporting the move. As Gareth's mother somewhat wryly commented, however,

'There was choice – but you had to go looking for it yourself.'

In the event, professionals, family and Gareth himself are now happy that an appropriate choice has been made. Clearly, that choice was rational and based on good information, even if it flew in the face of professional judgement. What is equally clear, however, is that it depended very much on the parents acting on their son's wishes and taking the initiative to explore alternatives for themselves. Whether the school sixth form unit would or would not have been appropriate for Gareth, there was, of course, no incentive for the school to be proactive in offering alternatives to families and risk losing its own students and funding. Not surprisingly perhaps, the college course leader told us that links with the school were minimal and virtually all students came via Connexions rather than directly from the school.

School experiences

Andrea had a turbulent story to tell. Her difficulties were variously described as autistic spectrum disorder, BESD and language disorder. Her current key worker simply described her as so bright and eccentric that she found it difficult to get on with teachers and peers. By the time she reached year eight, she already had a statement, had been excluded from her first secondary school, had spent time in a Pupil Referral Unit and was beginning a split placement with another secondary school. Gradually, she was moving out of this school's SEN base into mainstream lessons, until in Year 10, she was attacked at a bus stop near the school. This incident, in the view of the school's SENCO, compounded her existing social difficulties:

'… it's part of her social communication, she could never cope with big groups. If she was late into school, right from the very beginning, if she was late you could no more get her to go into lesson one than you could get her to fly, quite frankly. If she was late she had to come in here as she couldn't cope with walking through the door and everybody turning round and looking at her at all.'

The result was that she effectively stopped attending school. By the start of Year 11, she was coming into school only to collect packages of work and was being educated by a home tutor for one hour per day. However, her visits to school became less frequent, her commitment to work diminished and, not surprisingly, she did badly in her GCSEs. In both of these cases, the school was as supportive as it could reasonably be and the young person formed positive relationships with those teachers who were able to spend most time delivering that support. However, none of this was enough to enable the young person to complete school effectively or move through a carefully planned transition process. As Andrea's SENCO explained:

'Yes, I did reviews of transition plans and you could almost read the history of Andrea in them really in a sense that in year nine we were all really optimistic and everything was going really well and in year ten we were already saying we were concerned about her attendance and year eleven, there were lots of moves to get other professionals involved but her not being here and careers would come here and want to talk to her and she wouldn't be here so you'd set up another meeting and she wouldn't be here. You'd phone her up and say don't forget you're coming in at three o'clock. "No, that's fine", and then she just didn't appear.'

Chapter Five: Transition from Year 11

Current Activity

Emma has had major medical problems in the past but her principal difficulties in school related to her lack of social skills, her inability to assess social situations and her tendency to fantasise. Emma attended a special school for children with learning difficulties. Her father vehemently rejects the idea that she has such difficulties and felt that the high level of support offered to her has effectively disabled her. As Emma grew older, she decided she wanted to be a hairdresser. However, the school's view was that she was not ready to move into employment on leaving and found her a place on a one year course at a local FE College which involved experiencing 'tasters' of a range of other courses with some work experience. Only after this did Emma enlist on a NVQ hairdressing course and successfully completed the first year. However, the college decided she was incapable of proceeding to the second year and she was left without an appropriate activity. Emma said she was "gutted" about the college's decision, and is now using her own initiative to try to find herself work-based training with a hairdressing concern. If

she does not succeed, her Connexions PA, of whom she speaks highly: 'She just builds up my confidence', has offered her an alternative on an 'Education to Employment' scheme.

Whatever the truth about Emma's difficulties and capabilities, the model of provision is clear. Once she is judged incapable of entering employment or more 'open' forms of education and training, she is placed on a programme which gives her time, and support, to mature personally and academically. After a year of this, she is then allowed to enter vocational training, but when she is again judged incapable, she returns to a further placement on a 'maturational' programme.

Unresolved issues

Stuart, the young man with visual impairment had transferred at 16 from a mainstream secondary school to a specialist college. The college offered a classic but, to all appearances a well-thought-out, 'deferred transition' package of social and independent living activities alongside vocational learning activities. Stuart explained the benefits of the college in these terms:

> *'…it's benefited me on the social terms…Before I came to the college I didn't really have good social skills with people of my own age or – and now it's helped me progress and get some friends. One good thing about the close communal structure of the college is that well, even if you're a new student you're guaranteed to know every single person's name within six months of being there.'*

Stuart and his parents were enthusiastic about the benefits of college attendance, but the extent to which unresolved transition issues remained became evident when his family learned at the last minute that funding for a further year's placement from their local authority was not automatic and had to be applied for. It was evident that the issue of progression from college had not been considered, despite the fact that Stuart was not yet in a position to function in a mainstream setting. Amongst other things, there had been no effective support from a Connexions service which had undergone reorganisation and which had suffered from staff absence. In the event, the funding issue was resolved and Stuart returned to college. However, his Connexions PA was clear that major issues remained regarding Stuart's social skills and that she had a great deal of work to do to get to know him and plan the next transition. Moreover, although she was optimistic about Stuart's employment prospects, she felt he would need longer-term support and was much less optimistic about securing this from Social Services unless his parents were prepared to push extremely hard for this.

Chapter Six: Support

Finances, benefits and Social Services

Case studies – finances, benefits and Social Services

By and large, financial issues do not appear as major factors in the case studies. One reason for this seems to be that the system of state benefits and allowances appears to be effective in meeting the financial needs of young people whose expectations of reward are relatively low. Li[1] for instance, who has somewhat low expectations of himself, sees his £30 Educational Maintenance Allowance as an important inducement to stay on his course. Asked what are the good things about the course, he replied:

"I get to paint and I get paid and everything just to be there, that's the only reason."

Gareth has his benefits paid to his mother and then she places a proportion into his bank account for him to manage himself. However, he has modest personal needs. His social life revolves around family activities, a youth club and attendance at voluntary schemes, he cannot travel independently and all he really needs money for is to spend on his computer. Not surprisingly therefore, he is perfectly happy with the allowance he receives. Stuart is in a similar situation, paid an allowance from the disability benefit managed by his parents and finding that perfectly adequate to meet the limited needs that arise whilst he is in residential college. Similarly, Matthew, although capable of greater independence, seems content with his Jobseeker's Allowance, though he is heavily subsidised by his family. Indeed, family support seems to be a common pattern and is a second reason why financial issues do not feature prominently.

Simon is delighted with his financial independence, but he makes no contribution to his upkeep, his mother buys him all his clothes and he has no ambitions to set up house for himself. Joshua is one of the more independent young people in the sample, has an active social life and holds down a part-time job, but nonetheless remains living at home and therefore has no great financial needs.

Emma receives Jobseeker's Allowance but gives her mother only £10 per fortnight of this towards her upkeep. Her parents are relaxed about this situation, however:

> *'…now she has a bit of cash in her pocket that's hers, she has gone a bit wild with it and not thinking about the important things. To her it is buying a couple of CDs, unnecessary things but that I suppose is being a teenager, they all go through that.'*

There are two situations, however, where financial problems do seem likely to arise. The first is where the young person has ambitions to be more independent than their financial situation will allow. The obvious

1 All names have been changed to protect the identities of the young people who took part in the case studies.

examples here are Maria who wants to set up home with her young daughter, and Andrea, who experiences tensions with other family members. With no job, a commitment to full-time education and a young daughter to bring up, Maria is in no position to live independently. She is heavily dependent on her own mother to provide childcare and there is a sense that her mother is discouraging her moves towards independence so that she can have more contact with her granddaughter. Andrea expresses a similar dilemma in the following terms. She is, she says desperate to:

"Have a house on my own, not a flat. It'll never happen but be great if it did… I don't have much of a choice at the moment, 'cos I can't get any benefits to help me get a place of my own until I've left home... I need the benefits to leave but I can't get the benefits until I've left. It's a loop and I'm stuck in it…"

Andrea, a bright young woman variously described as having conditions including autism and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties was not optimistic about the support available to help her to leave her family home, in which she was finding it increasingly difficult to live:

> *'If I really really desperately wanted a place on my own I could just leave and say I'm homeless, sleep on the streets... Even if I did go, even if I went out on the streets and said I'm homeless, they'd say well you've got a home you can go to.'*

In the event, Andrea's key worker at her training provider found her a place in a Foyer (an accommodation scheme for unemployed young people) and after some hesitation Andrea accepted. Not only does this confirm the high level of support offered by this individual but it raises the possibility that Andrea might be in a position to make genuine progression from her hitherto somewhat aimless situation. The caveat, however, is that Andrea had her own reasons for hesitating about accepting the place:

"But it's a box, it's not a room, it's a box. You've got a bed. You've got a cupboard right next to a bed and you got a cooker right at the end of the bed…I considered it for about two seconds. The whole idea of moving out is so you can take all your stuff with you and you move out, not so you leave all your stuff behind and you sleep somewhere else. It's not the same."

There must be some doubt, therefore, about whether Andrea's experiment with independent living will last.

The other situation in which financial difficulties can arise is where some element of provision for the young person is dependent on funding which is not guaranteed. This is not a common situation. Young people who remain at school are protected by the school and LEA SEN procedures; in fact, they are likely to have statements and have their provision specified in and protected by the statement. Other young people are likely to be on pre-vocational or other courses where the course provision has stable funding even if the entitlement for any individual (as Devesh, discovered), is not guaranteed. The vulnerable

group here are those who need some provision over and above what is provided as 'standard'. One example is Stuart whose place at a specialist college came under threat when he wished to exceed the usual length of stay. Another is Sophie whose severe and complex difficulties mean that she will need long-term college and day centre provision. This has been apparent for some time and she is in the sixth form of a school where transition planning is taken very seriously. However, the funding of her post-16 provision is dependent on Social Services because it does not lead through LSC-approved progression routes, and Sophie's Headteacher is scathing of Social Services' capacity to deliver:

"… they haven't got the social workers to re-place anyhow. I got a letter from the children with disabilities team saying 'please don't refer any more children because we are shedding cases because we haven't got enough personnel', you can't do that because if they need a referral, they have to have a referral, we can't take them on, there is nothing we can do, we can't do it. It's just a joke in terms that they are the primary source of funding for our children, they have to make the applications, they have to do all of these things and quite often they don't know the children, quite often they are new, they are not fully qualified, they don't know how to access the system, how to get the funding that they need to get."

Sophie's head sees this as part of the general turmoil of Social Services provision. The issue is not lack of funding per se, but the failure to make the correct moves to access funding caused by lack of social workers and by the transfer of cases from Children's to Adult Services. Since Stuart's problems also stem from difficulties in accessing Social Services funding, the impression is that SSDs may have real difficulties in meeting their responsibilities towards young people with the most complex needs in a planned and predictable manner. Sophie's Headteacher hopes that Connexions will be able to iron these problems out and she believes she has already begun to see some improvements. It remains to be seen whether her hopes are fulfilled.

Marcus provides us with an example of engagement with Social Services, benefits, and other sources of support. Because of his severe and complex difficulties, he and his family already receive significant levels of support not only from Education but also from the benefits system and from Social Services. Currently he receives attendance and mobility allowances and incapacity benefit. At present, Marcus's needs appear to be adequately met, but the real challenges for him and his family lie (as so often in deferred transitions) when he finally leaves school. He faces a choice between local authority provision and, as his family see it, much superior private provision which is run by the same charitable organisation which maintains his current school. His benefits would not cover the costs for this placement nor for the one-to-one care which he needs, though he could apply for grants to cover both. However, since his family already meet most of his personal care needs, his mother would prefer to have funds to support leisure activities (at weekends, for instance) which will make Marcus more independent of his family and give them more

time to themselves. The problem for her is that negotiating an appropriate package takes a great deal of time and is extremely frustrating:

"…a lot of talking, a lot of meetings but no action."

Moreover, if Marcus receives a grant, she believes she will lose her carer's allowance. Not surprisingly, therefore, her view of the transition process is that it is fraught with uncertainty:

"At the moment through transition its just as if you are going across stepping stones. You go on one stone and you clear that one and you go to the next one and like the next problem comes up, the next change in his life comes up so you've got to negotiate one at a time and its just so scary…It's a horrible feeling, transition, because you've seen him through 16/17 years and you have got all this established and then somebody just comes along and just takes it all away and you've got to start again."

Support

Simon is now following an NVQ level 2 brick-laying course with a training provider and his tutors are highly supportive of him. They have taken care to build any theoretical work on an extensive practical base, have offered a range of social activities to Simon (though he has in fact declined to participate) and have allowed him to stay on beyond the formal end of the course. Much of this has worked well. Simon's attendance is good and he appears to be enjoying the course. However, there is considerable uncertainty over the level at which Simon should be aiming. Simon himself believes he is likely to get NVQ level 2. His mother thinks he already has level 1. His SENCO thinks he is not without academic ability. However, his tutors believe he is struggling with level 2 work and will not achieve the award. He was, they believe, wrongly assessed by the Basic Skills Department of their own organisation. However, when they asked for a re-assessment, the result was the same. Simon's progress is reviewed regularly with his tutors. Unfortunately, however, since he did not come to the training provider direct from school, liaison with his school has been non-existent and with his family it has been limited. Simon has a Connexions worker who could potentially help in resolving differences of perception and there had been good links between Connexions and Simon's school. However, the same link does not operate in practice with the training provider. Simon's tutors commented that although they did have regular contact with the Careers Service, they had not seen anyone since it became Connexions. There had been some changes in the Connexions PA working with Simon and the reality seems to be that there will be no direct involvement with him unless he or his family approach Connexions directly or until the automatic 'flagging' system indicates that he has reached the end of his current placement.

Parents and carers as sources of support

Devesh's family is committed to supporting his transition. He is the young man with hydrocephalus-associated learning difficulties who has embarked on a college course without, it would appear, adequate support. The importance of his parents' support and high ambitions for their son is obvious:

"We made him to feel that it is important for his life to do – achieve something and he decided to do that but it was entirely up to him what he wants to do... He wanted to do the cleaning job for people in school, he decided to do that but then we persuaded him to go on to course. In the end, the teacher and us parents, we advise him and then he started this course which he wanted to do so we said alright, whatever but do something."

Not surprisingly, his parents are deeply worried by the difficulties he is now experiencing, but their own account is that they have been unable to get any help from the college. Again, there are no doubt two sides to this story. The point, however, is that the undoubted commitment of these parents towards their son is not being harnessed effectively.

Chapter Seven: Outcomes

Carl, whose severe autism was for a time associated with such challenging behaviour that his special school was on the points of excluding him. His support worker describes what he has gained in recent years from school in the following terms:

"What has he gained from school? I would think he has gained control, self-control, I'd say self control. I'm talking about behaviour, self control over his own social behaviour because these are big issues aren't they? They are for him and I think he has gained friendship, stability and continuity…Yes, he has socially progressed a hell of a lot and a lot of that is because he is so much calmer now, he is so much more settled."

For young people who are troubled or have intellectual impairments, the emphasis on personal and social outcomes is particularly great. Marcus's mother, for instance, wryly comments that although his school has awarded him a certificate for his curricular achievements, it means nothing to him:

"His bestest things in the world are bumpy rides and trees."

Even for young people who come close to success of some sort, there are usually significant difficulties. Joshua, for instance, is highly committed to his Intermediate GNVQ work at a sixth form college and has already achieved a pass in Business Studies. His tutor describes him in the following terms:

"I would say that he absolutely loves studying and I think that he is one of those rare students in a way…he fits right in and he just wants to be

here. He is one of the nicest people you could ever meet, his manners are impeccable, everything about him is so nice and he wouldn't be out of place with the other students except he couldn't do the work…"

Because he 'can't do the work', Joshua has been encouraged to do more courses at intermediate level rather than progress to advanced level. He has already dropped out of an A-level course and both his tutor and Connexions adviser are convinced the gap between GNVQ levels is too great for him to manage. This, of course, makes Joshua's ambition to go to university and into the law somewhat unrealistic. His Connexions PA believes he may be able to work in an administrative capacity in a law office but is beginning to think in terms of an Entry to Employment course which would build his confidence, teach him 'employability skills' and give him work experience 'tasters'.

Chapter Eight: Leisure Activities

Social life

Stuart's active social life is very much restricted to contacts with other young people with disabilities. Matthew, having had significant social problems at school, similarly appears to be developing a circle of friends. However, his mother is convinced that these friends are bad influences and are involved in criminal activity:

"We had a lot a lot of trouble with some of his friends. This [current] one seems to be a bit better than the rest of them but then truth is, he gets involved with the wrong ones. He tries to back off of 'em and then I get the other one [Matthew's brother] starts hanging around with them."

Similarly, Emma remains dependent on her family. On the face of it, she is a sociable young woman and is apparently more confident than Gareth about going out on her own, using public transport and facing new social situations. She also claims to have a circle of friends. However, the extent to which this apparent confidence is real is doubtful. She claims to have a boyfriend, but he is someone she has 'met' in an internet chat room rather than in the flesh. In this context, her view of how she will find her independence with this young man seems somewhat fanciful. Moreover, she has had serious problems with bullying which ended with an assault that severely limited her ability to pursue her own social life:

"… I ended up getting beaten black and blue just because of them. I lost confidence, I wouldn't go out that front door, I wouldn't go in the car, I wouldn't even go anywhere without looking behind me to see if they were there, it was absolutely scary."

As a result, her social life in practice centres around her family, with whom she has a very strong relationship. This is a situation which her father at least is happy to maintain.

Much the same is true of Andrea. There is considerable tension in the family home, but this does not encourage Andrea to develop a full and independent social life. By her own admission, she has few friends and rarely goes out. She is, however, passionate about Dr Who, accesses Dr Who web sites and goes to conventions to meet other fans. Asked, therefore, about the current state of her social life, she responds:

"At the moment pretty much non existent, 'cos most of my friends I actually met them over the internet. You go on there and you can talk to them and post messages and then when they go on they answer or they post messages so you get on there and it's just loads of conversations. We actually all agreed to meet up. We actually met up at a convention so there were a lot of people around…"

Whilst her interest in Dr Who opens up to her a social circle, this is, of course, a circle with significant limitations:

"I'd like to be able to spend more time with my friends 'cos at the moment we only meet up for conventions. Maybe go to a pub afterwards but they all like [live too far away] to meet up regularly…Quite a few of them are actually in America."

Perhaps not surprisingly, given this pattern of isolation, Andrea claims to have no interest in developing deeper relationships. She has not had and, she says, does not want, a boyfriend. As for marriage:

"Not worth the hassle. I've been a kid. I don't want anyone else to put me through it. So I know what I've put people through and I love it, love winding people up but I know if I get a kid they're gonna do it to me, so no thanks."

Living arrangements

For Simon, independent living is not out of the question, but there is little incentive for him to leave the family home. It provides him with relatively undemanding security and in addition allows him to keep much of his limited income to spend on computer games. Those involved with him, therefore, can see little prospect of his moving towards greater independence.

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