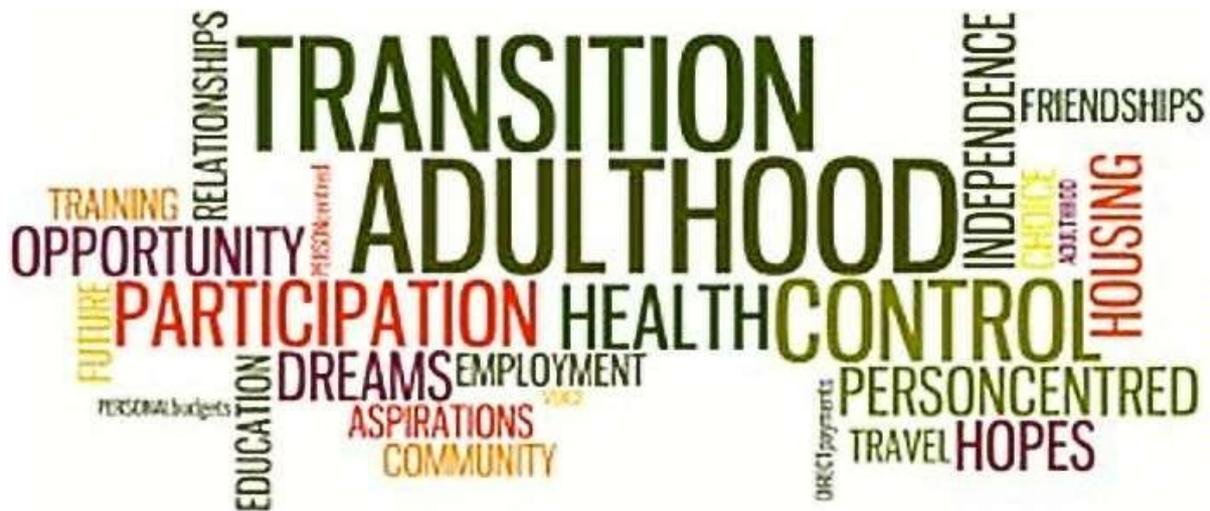




# Review of Policy and Practice Of Transitions Services across partner states.



#STARSTransitions

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## 1. Introduction

STARS (School Transitions To Adult Responsibilities and Services) is a Erasmus+ funded project focusing on the transitions from school to adult life for young people with learning disabilities and/or autism. STARS is a two year project (October 2018 – September 2020) and delivered by five European partners Orchardville Society (Lead partner, Northern Ireland), AsIAm (Ireland), MISA (Sweden) and Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment.

The main aim of the STARS Project is to develop a resource to support young people to prepare to make that transition from leaving school. A platform ([www.starsweb.info](http://www.starsweb.info)) will be developed to host practical information and training resources (i.e. worksheets). The topics covered will include:-

- Post school options (i.e. college and training, work and other options)
- Practical Steps (i.e. money management, rights and responsibilities)
- Staying Healthy and active
- Staying in touch and connected
- Developing independence

To best inform the topics, training resources and website design/format the partners needed to conduct a needs analysis which would include a review of current legislation and best practice in each state as well as identifying gaps in provision and delivery. This will inform the development of a new web based resource and training materials which will be tested with groups of young people in each state.

The Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE) was the lead partner organisation taking responsibility for designing and conducting the review. The review will provide a comparison between each state as well as identifying key areas to assist with the design and development of the resources. This will be referred to as Intellectual Output 1.

Running parallel to the legislative review MISA conducted a survey with young people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to find out what kind of information they would assist them with their transition from school and what format they would like the information presented. MISA also conducted a Peer Review of current transition training programmes and materials. This will be referred to as Intellectual Output 2.

Output 1 & 2 reports are available on the STARS Project website ([www.starsweb.info](http://www.starsweb.info)).

## 2. What is Transition Planning

The term transition refers to passing from one state or condition to another.

Life is full of transitions, and one of the more significant ones occurs when we get ready to leave school and go out in the world as young adults. Leaving school and moving into adulthood is a significant milestone for all young people and none more than young people with disabilities.

For people with learning disabilities and/or Autism this is one of the most critical transition periods moving from school to young adulthood. It can often cause significant anxiety for young people with learning disability and/or Autism and their families.

Transition for young people with disabilities often describes the period between the ages of 14 and 25, when young people make choices about their future and experience significant changes in the way they live. While many of these choices and experiences are common to all young people, those with disabilities may face particular challenges.

The main transition points include:

- **From school to further or higher education:** The transfer from school to further or higher education generally takes place between the ages of 16 and 21. Many disabled young people do go on to a further education college or university, though their choice of course and institution may be limited by accessibility and the support available.
- **From education to employment:** After leaving school, college or university, many disabled young people look for paid or voluntary work.
- **From living at home to living elsewhere:** Young people who have been living with their parents/carers may move into their own flat and live there with regular support, or move into supported housing
- **From children's services to adults' services:** Between the ages of 16 and 19, responsibility for supporting disabled young people passes from children's services to adults' services.

These may be very practical points in a young person life but also underpinning all these areas is independence and rights to take responsibility for their own actions (self-empowerment).

Transitions for young people with disabilities has been well documented as a significant point in their lives from leaving school in to adulthood.

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) commissioned a report in 2012 “Review of Transitions to Adult Services for Young People with Learning Disabilities” which described transition as:-

*“Transition implies a shift from one period or phase to another. Transition is a term often used to refer to the time in a young person’s life when plans are made to move from school to adult life and services. Young people with learning disabilities can often experience complex and ‘extended transitions’ due to the range of barriers they may face across education, health and social services, and employment”.*

The Report went on to explain that compared with non-disabled young people, the experiences of those with learning disabilities are more likely to have an adverse impact.

Valuing People Now/Valuing Employment Now produced “Pathways To Getting A Life” which outlined the key factors in successful transition planning:-

- Transition is not about planning services, it’s about planning lives. It should be a time of creativity with great choices
- Transition planning needs to start early and be led by young people and their families
- We need to start working on the outcomes of plans in time to deliver real choices and opportunities
- Education and transition planning must encourage and support employment
- Transition should be based on the idea that young people with learning disabilities will live in inclusive communities
- Person-centred approaches to health planning with young people are critically important
  - Everyone should have a place in the community. Sometimes it takes real creativity to make this happen.

The “Pathways To Getting A Life” document also stressed the negative and potentially life long impact that not getting the transition planning right can have on the lives of young people with disabilities and their families.

With regards to legislation most EU states have introduced legislation and policies to assist with this major juncture in young people with disabilities lives and this will be explored across the partners states.

Overarching state legislation regarding transition is the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child and UN Convention on the Rights of People with disabilities.

**The UN Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC)** states that Government must recognise that children with disabilities ‘should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community.’ As well as specific Articles which relate directly to young people with disabilities.

**The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRDP)** makes particular relevance to transitional experiences and the Convention urges states parties to ensure that disabled people have access to further education, training and employment on an equal basis with others. A general theme of the UNRCPD is the right of disabled people to live independently and experience full community inclusion and participation. State parties are also expected to take measures to eliminate discrimination against disabled people in the all matters relating to family and relationships. There are also specific articles which relate directly to young people with disabilities and transitions from school to adulthood.

(See Appendix 1 for specific Articles under UNCRC and UNCRPD relating directly to young people and transition from school to adulthood).

Although legislation has been developed at a state level as well as overarching legislation (UNCRC & UNCRPD) research has shown across Europe, there is little evidence of practical implementation and consistency of delivered of transition planning.

This was highlighted in the Northern Ireland Assembly, Committee for Employment and Learning “Report of the Inquiry into post Special

Educational Need (SEN) Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>” stated:-

*“Most importantly, the report uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as the framework to consider transition arrangements, often highlighting the stark contrast between the international obligations placed upon Government and the reality that is experienced by young people and families, as well as professionals seeking to support them”.*

This was supported by the NICCY Report (Review of Transitions to Adult Services for Young People with Learning Disabilities) and Don't Box Me In Report (Queens University and Barnardo Northern Ireland).

Similarly a report conducted by the National Disability Authority<sup>2</sup> in Ireland exploring how well young people with disabilities are prepared for life after school found *“limited evidence that a systematic approach to this issue was in place apart from outreach activities of Further and Higher Education Institutions, some work experience programmes and the actions of some Special Needs Assistants linking in with disability services”*

Furthermore, research undertaken by Academic Network of European Disability Experts' highlighted that across the EU the transition to post compulsory education is problematic for young people with disabilities and there are fewer opportunities to enter and progress in to further education and employment.

Therefore, Transition Planning is complex and it is insufficient to view it only as a legislative process. More consideration must be given to the implementation and opportunities available delivered through a range of agencies and support services.

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<sup>1</sup> “Report of the Inquiry into post Special Educational Need (SEN) Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland”, NI Assembly Enquiry Report for the Committee for Employment and Learning, 2016

<sup>2</sup> “A qualitative study of how well young people with disabilities are prepared for life after school”, National Disability Authority, 2017

### 3.00 Research Methodology

The primary methodology employed to gather information and data was a Questionnaire which would encompass a range of qualitative and quantitative questions. In addition to this desktop research would be used to assist in gathering information and literature review.

The questions to be included were discussed and agreed at the initial STARS Project meeting in Belfast, 25 & 26 October 2018.

The questionnaire cover a range of areas such as:-

- Education system – Legislation
- Transition planning
- Key factors in transition planning
- Gaps in transition practice
- Best practice

(See Appendix 2 for copy of the Questionnaire)

Timeframe - The Questionnaire was circulated to all partners in 30 November 2018 and were returned in 30 January 2019

### 4.00 Findings

The findings from the Questionnaire will cover a range of areas and each state will be reported individual and comparison will be drawn across all states.

#### 4.01 Legislation

The Questionnaire included a series of questions relating to the education and legislation in each state:-

Partners were asked to describe the legislation and policy governing the education for people with disabilities in their state?

##### Legislation in Sweden

- **Swedish School Law** – contains rules and regulations for how schools should operate and applies to all schools (pre-school to adult education)
- **LSS Law (The Act on Support and Services for some disabled persons)** – is a law of rights that will guarantee people with significant disabilities the assistance they required for their day to day activities. The law also allows them to influence the support and services they

require. LSS complements other laws and does not impose any restrictions on the rights that other laws provide.

- **Special Educational School Authority (SPSM)** – works to ensure that all students (children and adults) with disabilities have access to an equivalent education and other good quality activities in a safe environment. The Authority shall contribute to good conditions for the children with disabilities development and learning as well as improved knowledge and skills. The Authority is responsible for special education support and for training in special schools as well as in pre-school class.

### **Legislation – Northern Ireland (UK)**

Education (NI) Order 1996 - This is regarded as the primary legislation for special educational needs in Northern Ireland. It covers the Code of Practice, the duties of schools (and Boards of Governors) for pupils with a Statement, the identification and statutory assessment arrangements and the Special Educational Needs Tribunal. The 1996 Order provides a legal framework for the assessment of, and provision for, Special Education Need (SEN). It requires the Education Authority (EA) to identify, assess and make provision for children with SEN within their area. It also provides a definition of SEN. The 1996 Order contains a large number of provisions, including:

- Providing for a Code of Practice that the EA and schools must have regard to;
- Setting out the duties of health authorities in relation to children with SEN;
- Detailing requirements for the EA to inform parents in relation to SEN assessment and provision;
- Outlining the requirements for statements of SEN;
- Setting out the grounds for appeal in relation to statementing;
- Requiring the EA to keep statements under review;
- Giving parents a right to request an assessment; and
- Providing for a Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

Statement of Special Education Needs is a 5 step process which is outline on pages 13 & 14.

- **Special Educational Needs Disability Order (NI) 2005** - enhances the rights of children with SEN to attend mainstream schools and introduced protections against disability discrimination to the education system for the first time.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016** The Act places new duties on Boards of Governors, the Education

Authority (EA) and health and social services authorities, and provides new rights for parents and children over compulsory school age. The EA will be required to publish an annual plan of its arrangements for special educational provision. They will also have to seek and have regard to the views of the child when making decisions on special educational provision. The EA will have to put in place an independent dispute avoidance and resolution service, and independent mediation arrangements.

- Boards of Governors will be required to ensure a Learning Support Coordinator is appointed within each grant-aided school to coordinate provision for children with SEN. The school will be required to complete and review a personal learning plan for each pupil with SEN and ensure that this plan is transferred when a child moves from one grant aided school to another (consent is required.)
- The Act also provides for increased cooperation between the EA and health and social services authorities to provide services identified to be of benefit in addressing a child's SEN.

### **Legislation in Spain**

Provision of education for people with disabilities can be found in a wide range of legislation in Spain:-

- Bill of the Constitution of 1978 – states in Article 27 “education is the right of every child, regardless of their physical and mental characters” (it is still in effect today)
- Law of Social Integration (LISMI) 1982 – integrated special education in the standard education system.
- Decree 224 (1985) Special Education Planning & Natural Law 3 October 1990 “General Planning of the Education system (LOGSE) – established the requirement that all children up to the age of 16 will be entitled special education programme within the standard education system. This created a unique system which would include all students. This law also marked the first time that Spanish legislation acknowledged the concept of children with learning disabilities, and stipulates the educational needs of these students with disabilities be met by their school.
- Decree 696 (1995) Education Planning for Students with Special Needs - entitled “Education Planning for Students with Special Needs” stated that students with special needs be provided services and introduced the term diversity
- Law of Education (2006) - represents another large step towards inclusive education. Today, law 8/2013 entitled “Improving the Quality

of Education” (LOMCE) which in reality doesn’t present significant changes in respect to LOE with regards to Special Education Needs.

- Autonomous Regions granted in 1980’s
  - Catalunya Decree 150/2017 of 17 October “A Framework for Students Needs in an Inclusive Education System”

### **Legislation –Ireland**

- **Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004**
  - EPSEN provides for the education of children aged under 18 years with special educational needs. You are a person with special educational needs if your capacity to participate in and benefit from education is restricted due to an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability. While the Act is passed, all parts of it are not fully in effect.

The Act:

- Provides that people with special educational needs are educated in an inclusive environment, as far as possible
- Establishes that people with special educational needs have the same right to avail of and benefit from education as children who do not have those needs
- Provides for the greater involvement of parents in the education of their children and decision making
- Establishes the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) on a statutory basis
- Gives statutory functions to the Health Service Executive with regard to the education of people with special educational needs
- Establishes an independent appeals system – the Special Education Appeals Board – where decisions made about the education of people with special educational needs can be appealed

The Act sets out a range of services to be provided to people with special educational needs. These include assessments, education plans and other support services. Parents can seek assessments of a child’s educational needs. Assessments can be initiated by the Health Service Executive (HSE), by a school principal or by the National Council for Special Education. The system for personal education plans is not yet in place and its implementation is being co-ordinated by the NCSE.

**Education Act 1998** - deals with education generally but emphasises the rights of children with disabilities and with other special educational needs. This Act is in effect and provides that every

person concerned with the implementation of the legislation must have regard to a number of objectives including:

- To give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children including children who have a disability or who have other special educational needs, as they relate to education
- To provide that, as far as is practicable and having regard to the resources available, a level and quality of education appropriate to the needs and abilities of the people of the country.
- The Minister for Education and Skills is obliged, among other things, to ensure that everyone living in Ireland (including people with disabilities and people who have other special educational needs) has available support services and a level and quality of education appropriate to his/her needs and abilities.

**Equal Status Act 2000 – 2011** - outlaws discrimination in areas of life - mainly the provision of services. The Acts apply to educational services, including private schools and pre-school facilities. There are certain specific provisions in the Acts in relation to education and some of these deal with people with disabilities or people who have special needs.

#### **4.02 Which Government department is responsible and funds education for people with disabilities: -**

In **Sweden** central government funds every municipality (township) and every county is responsible for the education of those who live there. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the government's education, research and youth policy. The Ministry is working on issues such as school results, teacher's terms, study funding and living conditions for young people.

In **Northern Ireland** the Education Authority for NI (EANI) funds education (mainstream and special education schools). The Department for the Economy funds the Careers Service for Northern Ireland who have a legal input in to the Transition Planning (from 14 plus).

In **Spain** there is a Ministry of Education and Professional Training who oversees legislation and policy however each autonomous region of Spain has responsibility for education in their region. For example, in Catalunya education is funded by the Department of Education of Catalunya

In **Ireland** funding is provided by the Department of Education and Skills and is responsible for primary and secondary schools. The Department of Health is responsible for providing services to pre-schools children and may provide therapy services for schools (such as speech and language, physiotherapy etc).

#### **4.03 Education pathway for people with disabilities**

**In Sweden** Special Education School Authority (SPSM) is responsible for providing special schools. There is also provision to provide support to people with disabilities in mainstream schools. The support can include student assistants, special education teachers or mentors. There is also the possibility to study as Universities where there are special units for people with disabilities. The support is provided by a Coordinator who assists students with disabilities with taking notes, additional time requests for examines and assignments etc.

**In Northern Ireland** young people with a disability commences education at the same age as their peers without a disability and can remain in education until they are 19 years of age (they leave the academic year they become 19) or can leave after the compulsory age of 16.

There are two education systems in N Ireland. Children with disabilities can access education through mainstream school or special schools. Students with a Special Educational Need can stay in mainstream school with additional support being in place. There are also several schools in NI that offer BASE units for young people with ASC or support units offering specialist support for dyslexia, communication needs etc. To access these units, they require as Statement Special Educational Need (SEN).

To obtain a SEN there is a 5-stage process which can commence from nursery school age but can also commence at any time during schooling, it is often lengthy and frustrating for families. The five stages are referred to as the Code of Practice (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-educational-needs-code-practice> )

Stage 1 & 2 provide support and intervention within the classroom involving the class teacher or some additional support from Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Support can include help with literacy, numeracy, social/emotional or behavioural support. Goals and progress are recorded on an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) which is updated 2 or 3 times per year.

Stage 3 is when additional support from education is required including support from the educational autism service, behavioural support, educational psychologist etc.

Stage 4 - when an application is made for a statement, during this stage all the relevant reports and information are reviewed, and decision is made whether to proceed to offering a statement, stage 5.

When a young person is given a Statement of Special Educational Need, they may wish to transfer into special education provision. Teaching is specialist and there is a high pupil to teaching ratio. Special Schools are classified into difference categories ranging from severe learning disability, moderate learning disability, physical, and sensory.

**In Spain** children with disabilities are given an individualised learning plan which equals their peers and are given the help and necessary support services needed to provide quality inclusive education.

Children from 0-3 years have access to public preschools and are guaranteed additional support if they have learning disabilities. From 3 years children attend primary school and can have access to Child Psychology Team (EAP) in their district who can provide access to additional support as well as providing support to the teacher. Students with learning disabilities (NEE) enrol in public schools and receive necessary support and services from their school. A student with learning disabilities is given an Individual Learning Plan (PI) which in addition to the Teacher's goals and objectives is adapted to ensure their progress and success. The plan can be adapted and adjusted if necessary.

Students with learning disabilities can enrol in a Special Education School instead of a public school. Students can attend the school from 3 – 21 years. At Special Education Schools students offer Transitional Programmes for Adults Life (TVA) from 16 years or they can participate in Jobskills course (PFI) or Individual Job Training Programmes (IFE). There is also the opportunity for students to attend a semi-private school which has a special education programme and students will alternate between the two systems.

From 16 years old students with disabilities can broaden their studies with training:-

- Transition into Adult Life (TVA) from 16 – 21 years with the principal objective being to develop independence, autonomy and social inclusion.

- Specific Training Development (IFE) from 16 – 21 year olds and the focus of the programme is increasing independence, autonomy and achieving professional work skill to prepare for adulthood and social inclusion
- Professional Development and Job Skills (PFI) from 16 – 20 years old the 1 year (1000 hours) is aimed at students who have dropped out of secondary school without receiving a diploma, with the objective to gain work experience and inclusion in the workplace.

**In Ireland** – The compulsory school age is 6 years and all forms of pre-primary education are optional. However, children from the age of 4 can be enrolled in infant classes in primary schools. Young children with Disabilities are supported in attending mainstream preschools through the Access Inclusion Model, a government initiative to equip preschools with the knowledge and resources to maximise inclusion. Preschools wishing to avail of these supports must submit an application.

Preschool-aged children may also attend:

- early intervention settings attached to mainstream and special schools
- early intervention settings attached to HSE funded service providers
- home tuition (10-20 hours/week if tuition provided by tutor registered with the Teaching Council)

There are generally speaking 3 options for school-aged children with additional learning needs. Depending on the profile of the child, the recommendation may be for

- Placement in a Special School
- Placement in a specialist class attached to a mainstream school
- Placement in a mainstream school with or without the additional support of a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) and/or Resource Hours with a Resource Teacher

In the event that a child is unable to attend for medical reasons, and/or where there is no placement available (or learner has been expelled), children are able to avail of the Home Tuition Grant. Primary school aged children qualify for 20hrs/week, while post-primary students are able to avail of 9 hrs/week. Home tutors must be registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland.

#### **4.04 Transition Planning**

Partners were asked if there were specific legislation in relations to Transition Planning and how did it operate:-

**In Sweden** – they do not have a specific legislation on Transition Planning the LSS Law and School Law covers many of the aspects of person life when entering adulthood (transitions).

**In Northern Ireland-** The Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 requires annual reviews of statements from the age of 14 to include the preparation of a **transition plan**. However, the regulations do not require transition plans for those without a statement of SEN. The Code of Practice suggests that schools “may wish to” prepare their own transition plans for such students. Transition Planning commences at age 14 with a Transition Planning Review, usually held during 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> school term. The meeting forms an integral aspect of the legal responsibility of education regarding transition planning. There is an annual transition review up until the young person leave education and the transition document is update to reflect changes and opportunities.

It is the responsibility of the specific school to co-ordinated the meetings and invite relevant agencies. Those attending the meeting include young person, parents/carers, Transition Co-ordinator, Careers Service for NI (who is required to attend) and other relevant organisations in the area.

**In Spain** – the legislative provision is included in Order 22 of March 1999 from the Ministry of Education. Transition planning takes place from 16 – 21 years. The transition programmes into adulthood are centred around developing self reliance and independence as well as social integration. They can also include specific job training depending on the individual case. They are implemented in Special Education school at the end of the basic education cycle and aim to promote higher education and self reliance as well as job skills.

**In Ireland** – There is no legal definition of ‘transition planning’. However, EPSEN does reference/name three routine transitions:-

- Pre-school to primary
- Primary to second level
- Second level to further education, training and employment.

They also note that transitions can occur between schools offering similar provision and from mainstream to special education settings (special classes, special units and special schools) and vice versa.

Transition planning is referenced in the EPSEN Act within the context of Individual Education Plans (IEP).

In relation to formal supports, the Health Services Executive provide guidance services to those with substantial needs, who are likely on the path to vocational training, rehabilitative training, or other day services. In the final year of school, the Occupational Guidance Officer (from HSE) will meet with individuals referred to the service and explore their needs, wishes and expectations. Having a detailed knowledge of HSE funded Adult Day Services; the Occupational Guidance Officer will advise on options available and support the individual to make informed choices. If a suitable placement is agreed, the Occupational Guidance Officer will approve and complete the necessary steps required to secure the placement and facilitate a smooth transition for the service participant. This however does not generally involve visits to the environment prior to commencing services the following September

#### **4.05 What are the key areas of the young person's life are considered with Transition Planning**

The partners identified a range of areas are considered with in transition:-

- Independent living (i.e. housing, social activities, transport and travel etc)
- Healthcare
- Careers – further and higher education, vocational training, employment (including self-employment)
- Social inclusion (including recreational activities)
- Community participation (social and community integration)
- Personal Autonomy
- Essential skills (literacy and numeracy)

#### **4.06 Who Is Involved in the Transition Process and What Are Their Roles?**

The partners identified a range of stakeholders who should be involved in the transition process, with the most important being the student and his or her family.

Key participants and their roles in the transition planning and program implementation process follow:

- Young person
- Teacher
- Parents/carers
- Professionals (health care, Careers Service, Occupational Guidance officers (Ireland) Social Workers, OT's etc)
- Community and voluntary organisations

### **In specific partners stated**

- **In Sweden** in District Administration Officers (municipalities/councils) LSS Officer provides help in different areas of their lives and provides contact details.
- **In Northern Ireland** all of the above can participate in the Transition plan. It is the responsibility of the specific school to co-ordinate the meetings and invite relevant agencies. Those attending the meeting will include the young person, parents/carers, the schools Transition Co-ordinator, Careers Service (NI), EANI Transitions Officers and other relevant professionals such as social workers and/or allied health professionals (eg Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist).

**In Northern Ireland** the Special Education Act states who should attend the meetings (minimum requirement) young person, parents, **Transitions Co-ordinator**, school teacher, Careers Officer and health professionals).

The Education Authority have Transitions Officers covering all of NI who can provide information and advice on a range of options on leaving school in the local area.

- **In Spain** they have **Transitions Specialists** or qualified staff with relevant experience
- **In Ireland** – there is not a standard process for transition planning however the **Health Service Executive provide Occupational Guidance Officers** who will consult with parents, young adults, teacher and other related services providers.

Partners highlighted that often there were many organisations involved in the transition meeting which was very daunting experience for the young person and their family.

#### **4.06 Is there dedicated staff to implement the transition planning process?**

**In Sweden** – No

**In Northern Ireland** – Yes – There are dedicated staff to implement the Transition Plan i.e. Transition Co-ordinators in school as well as Transition Officers based in each of the Education Authority NI areas (2 or 3 per area). Transitions programmes are usually provided by an outside agency. Funding is often an issue for schools and there is not provision provided across NI (consistency)

**In Spain** – Transition programmes are implemented by qualified special education teachers and transition specialist or qualified staff. (Please note if someone has an auditory disability they will receive special speech therapist). The Special Education teacher or speech therapist are responsible for training and educating students about independent living and self reliance (life skills and social integration). A Job Coach will provided support and training in job skills.

**In Ireland** it is generally the role of the school Guidance Counsellor to support students to prepare for life beyond school. Special Schools however do not have Guidance Counsellors post. For those with special needs, support is available through the HSE Disability Service's Occupational Guidance Officers. The occupational guidance Officer will establish the person's support needs, assist in the identification of an appropiated service provider and guide the allocation of funding for their service. This process takes place in the last year of school.

It was noted that Transition provision was provided in the main from within the school environment.

#### **4.07 What options are available to young people leaving school.**

All partners identified the following options:-

- Further Education
- Vocational training
- Higher education
- Supported Employment

- Day Opportunities

Other options highlighted by specific states included:-

**In Northern Ireland** a young person with high support needs and challenging behaviour may also opt for a traditional day centre

**In Spain** identified Shelter Workshops as an option

#### 4.08 What are the Key factors of Transition Planning that works?

Partners identified a range of key factors:-

- **Participation and engagement** with the young person to assist them to express what they want to do and provide them with the information that they need
- **Good communication** between all agencies involved in transition planning
- **Practical opportunities** for young people to acquire skills, experience and independence outside the “comfortable” school environment
- **Individual tailored programmes** need to be in place for each young person to address personal challenges
- **New skills need** to be reinforced at home to increase retention and learning e.g. independent travel skills and money management
- Incorporate the **principles of supported employment** in to the process focusing on providing correct levels of support
- **Working in partnership** with parents/carers is crucial to the success to ensure realistic and achievable goals and agreed as well as support with practical arrangements
- **Multi-agency approach to planning and preparation** – schools need to be fully on board and embrace the opportunities that are available with NGO’s – (we have good examples of this identified through the project)
- **Person centred approach** must be adopted when delivering Transition Planning.
- Key life skills must be included in Transition planning such as:-
  - Emotional Intelligence
  - Expression emotions
  - Self – esteem and personal balance
  - Social Norms
  - Self autonomy
  - Independence
  - Goal Setting

- Decision Making
- Empathy
- Personal well-being
- Social Skills (life skills)
- **Time line** – must start much sooner than final year at school. In Northern Ireland the Transition Planning starts at 14 but it needs to be much sooner.
- **Partnership with the community** to enable training and job sampling opportunities that can begin prior to leaving school

#### 4.09 Gaps in provision

Partners identified a number of gaps in Transition Planning provision which were very similar across all the partners:-

- Accessible information
- **Promotion of services and options** on leaving school (for example in Spain if students are not aware of the options available they could potentially stay at home and miss out in options available to them such as vocational training)
- **Timing** (usually information is provided in the last semester in school) – require regular reviews not just annual reviews (too little too late!)
- **Co-ordinated approach** – someone has to take the lead
- **Availability of options** and services on leaving school
- **Practical opportunities** for young people to acquire skills, experience and independence outside of school (during the academic year and over the summer holidays)
- **Professionals offering advice and signposting** should be familiar with the options available. This information needs to be updated as well as spending time with the service to find out what is being offered.
- **Resources** – insufficient funds across all states
- **Attitudes** – schools and other services must be fully committed and embrace the opportunities that are available from outside agencies
- **Inconsistencies in delivery of transition services** across states and regions (post code lottery depending on where you live). No standardisation across all the partners states.
- **Up-to-date information** on services and support available (web based directory of services)
- **Incorporate employment (Supported Employment)** and employability in to the transition process
- **Lack of standardisation and quality assurance**

## 5.00 Good practice

### Partners outlined some good practice programmes:-

In Northern Ireland - **Orchardville Transition Service**, commenced in 1995 and has been funded by various means over the last 20 years. It offers young people the opportunity to take part in a transition programme involving activities outside the school environment which compliments activities in school. It is a practical programme involving work placements with employers and within social enterprises managed by Orchardville.

There is a strong focus on developing independence including travel training, money management and personal capability skills. The service works closely with parents/carers as well as teachers to maximize opportunities for each young person. The project works in Belfast, North Down, Downpatrick and Strabane areas and each year provides opportunities to around 80 young people. Current funders are Big Lottery Fund, BHSCT and WHSCT – funding is time limited and will end in 2020.

Other providers in NI include NOW, Cedar Foundation (Physical Disability) and Stepping Stone

For further information go to <https://www.orchardville.com/>

**In Spain** Transition planning is carried out by transition specialists working with students aged 16-20, during the year they create a school plan with their specialists depending on their learning or developmental disability and modified job skills plan.

The transition program lasts for 4 years and includes job training and life skills in order to gain independence and self sufficiency, as well as social skills. The end goal is that students grow into their adult life and have a greater sense of self and are socially integrated into society.

In **AURA** Foundation they have created a specific program that is complementary to the job skills program they receive at school, to reinforce their transition program and job skills into adult life. They also offer supported employment and training for those with developmental disabilities.

For further information go to <https://www.aurafundacio.org/en/>

**In Ireland –**

**Blossom Gateway** is a pilot programme for teenagers in the Wexford area aged 16- 18 with an intellectual disability. They are currently in year 2 of a 2 year pilot which aims to give them the chance to explore new opportunities and avenues for possible areas of work or further study after school. This programme provides young adults opportunities for practical life and work experience that wouldn't otherwise be available, although this programme operates on the weekend, separate to any programming or preparation that may or may not be occurring at school. Nonetheless, the young adults gain invaluable experiences and skills that they wouldn't be receiving otherwise.

For further information <http://www.socialinnovation.ie/blossom-gateway/>

**Transition Action Planning (TAP) Services.** A free support operated by the National Learning Network in Letterkenny, available to individuals aged 16-18 diagnosed with autism or intellectual impairment 'with autistic tendencies.' It is a flexible, person-centred service to facilitate the transition from school or children's services to adulthood through a wide range of educational, rehabilitation and vocational opportunities. They provide assessment services, culminating in a plan to assist the individuals in moving towards their preferred educational and training options. They explore challenging behaviours that may cause barriers to progression and identify positive supports to mitigate those challenges. They also support the individual in establishing sustainable links with the community.

For further information <http://www.nln.ie/>

**WALK's PEER (Providing Equal Employment Routes) Programme.**

The programme is targeted at young people in the area who are aged 16 to 24 and who are in receipt of disability payments from the Department of Social Protection 7. Participants are supported in identifying strengths, needs, and interests to assist in creating a pathway to employment, and are further supported in accessing training and employment opportunities in the community. Although this programme has been operating longest in Dublin, it has more recently been implemented in County Louth in partnership with a Special School, providing work experience opportunities to students in senior classes. It was evaluated in the report Progressing Accessible Supported Transitions to Employment. Navigating the transition from school: Voices of young people and parents (2018).

For further information <https://www.walk.ie/>

## 5 Conclusion

The research has demonstrated that Transition Planning for young people with disabilities is a key priority in each state.

The research has also highlighted a number of key areas in relation to transition planning: -

- All states have legislation in place regarding education provision for people with disabilities
- All states have a range of education provision for people with disabilities – special schools, mainstream school and special units with in mainstream schools
- Not all states have specific provision for Transition Planning. Northern Ireland and Spain have specific legislation, processes and resources (staff) to co-ordinate Transition Planning. In Sweden they do not have a dedicated resource for people with disabilities but have local provision through LSS Law to support and provide options. Ireland have specific legislation around services, although not fully implemented, the main source of support for transitions came from the Health Service Executive, Occupational Guidance Service.

There was overall agreement across all states the range of areas included in transitions, who should be involved and the options available (with some additions from N Ireland – Day Centres and Spain – Sheltered Workshops) and key factors of transition.

All stated identified very similar gaps in provision such as Access to information, promotion of options, co-ordinated approach, resources, inconsistency of delivery and standardisation and quality assurance.

The questionnaire highlighted similarities across all the states and one of the most significant was all states had legislation regarding education provision and transition for young people with disabilities but how they were implemented was very inconsistent.

The information and data collected from the questionnaire will be used to inform the next stage of the STARS Project – design and development of the website and resources.



## References

- “Review of Transitions to Adult Services for Young People with Learning Disabilities Report”, authors Professor Laura Lundy Dr Bronagh Byrne and Dr Paschal McKeown on behalf of Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People. (NICCY), 2012
- “Don’t Box Me In - Disability, Identity and Transitions to Young Adult Life Report” Author Dr Berni Kelly, on behalf of Queen’s University Belfast and Barnardo’s NI 2013
- “Pathways To Getting A Life”, Valuing People Now/Valuing Employment Now, 2011
- “A qualitative study of how well young people with disabilities are prepared for life after school Report”, National Disability Authority & National Council for Special Education, June 2017
- “Report of the Inquiry into post Special Educational Need (SEN) Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland”, NI Assembly Enquiry Report for the Committee for Employment and Learning, 2016

## Appendix 1

The most relevant Articles to young people with disabilities and education provision are summarised below:

### **UN Conventions on the Right of a Child (UNCRC)**

Article 5 – the rights of parents to provide appropriate direction and guidance

Article 17 – the right to information Article 18 – the rights of parents to appropriate assistance Article 19 – the right to protection from all forms of violence

Article 20 – the rights of children deprived of their family environment

Article 23 – the rights of children with disabilities

Article 24 – the right to the highest attainable standard of health and health care

Article 25 – the right to periodic review of placement

Article 26 – the right to benefit from social security

Article 27 – the right to an adequate standard of living

Article 28 – the right to an effective education

Article 29 – the aims of education

Article 31 – the right to leisure, play and culture

Article 32 – the right to be protected from economic exploitation

Article 37 – the right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

### **UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**

Article 9 – the right to accessibility

Article 15 – the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment

Article 16 – the right to freedom of exploitation, violence and abuse

Article 19 – the right to independent living and being included in the community

Article 21 – the right to freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

Article 23 – respect for home and the family

Article 24 – the right to education

Article 25 – the right to the highest attainable standard of health and healthcare

Article 26 – the right to habitation and rehabilitation

Article 27 – the right to work and employment

Article 28 – the right to an adequate standard of living and social protection

Article 30 – the right to participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

## Appendix 2



# STARS PROJECT

## INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 01

### Transition Planning from School to Adult Life

Please complete the following questionnaire in relation to your states transition planning for young people with disabilities leaving school.

The questionnaire is completed by:-

Partner	Country	✓
AURA	Spain	
Autism Ireland	Ireland	
Orchardville/NIUSE	Northern Ireland	
Misa	Sweden	

### Education System

1. Legislation – describe the legislation and policy governing the education for people with disabilities in your country.

2. Which government department is responsible and funds education for people with disabilities?

3. Briefly describe the education path/system for people with disabilities including information on age pupils start and finish school, type of provision special school, special unit with in a mainstream

school or mainstream provision, are you able to move between schools,

4. **Statistic** – number of disabled people with in the education system for the period 2017 – 2018.

- Special Schools [     ]
- Special Units with in mainstream schools [     ]

If possible if you can break this down in to primary school (up to 11 years old) and secondary school (from 11 to finishing school).

## Transition Planning

1 – Definition of Transition Planning in your Country? Is this a legal definition? Please reference the legislation the definition Training Planning is cited.

2 Is there specific legislation in relation to Transition Planning?

Yes/No

If yes please state the name of the legislation

Describe the process of the transition planning? Please include:-

- Age when transition planning starts and finishes (with in the education system)

- What areas of the young person's life are considered within Transition Planning, for example:-
  - Independent living (i.e. housing, social activities etc)
  - Health care
  - Careers - Further education, vocational training or employment
  - Social inclusion
  - Community participation
  
- Who is involved in the Transition Planning process? For example:-
  - Young person with a disability
  - Teacher
  - Parents
  - Other professionals (please specify)
  - Other outside (school) organisations (i.e. disability service providers)

Comments:-

4. Is there dedicated staff to implement the transition planning process?

Is the transition planning process delivered by teachers/staff in school or do schools engage with outside agencies?

5. What options are available to young people leaving school (please tick and you can tick more than one):-

- Further education
- Vocational training

- Higher education [ ]
- Supported Employment [ ]
- Employment programmes [ ]
- Day Opportunities [ ]
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

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### Good Practice

1. Provide examples of good practice in relation to transition planning?

2. Please identify any research project/studies re: transition planning

3. What are the key factors of transition planning process that works?

4. Are you aware of examples of international good practice?

5. In your opinion what are the gaps in transition planning process

6. Areas of improvement for transition planning process

7. Any other comments

**Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.**

**Please return to NIUSE by 30 January 2019 to  
[edythdunlop@niuse.org](mailto:edythdunlop@niuse.org)**

For further information contact the STARS Project Partners or visit our website – [www.starsweb.info](http://www.starsweb.info)

## Partners-

- Orchardville Society Lead Partner (N Ireland) – [www.orchardville.com](http://www.orchardville.com)  
Contact: [info@orchardville.com](mailto:info@orchardville.com)
- AsIAM (Ireland) – [www.asiam.ie](http://www.asiam.ie)  
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- AURA (Spain) – [www.aurafundacio.org](http://www.aurafundacio.org)  
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