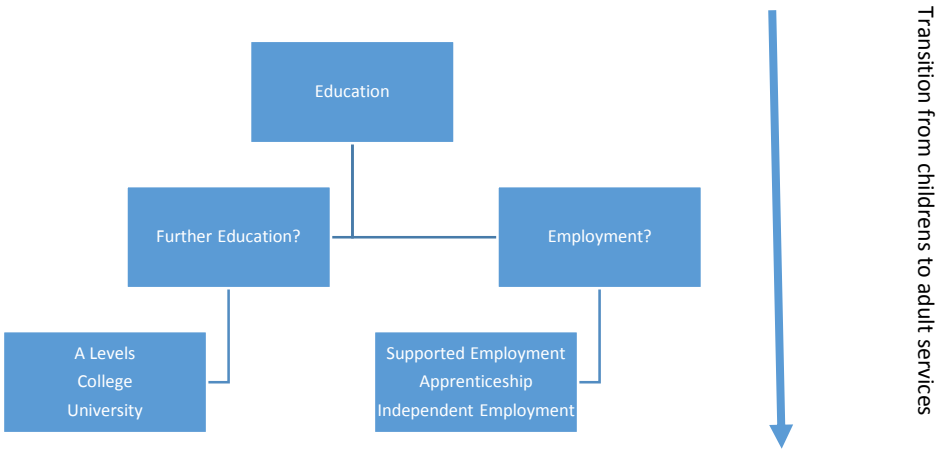
Moving into Adulthood

Child Brain Injury Trust 'hope for tomorrow - today'

The Child Brain Injury Trust is a national charity supporting anyone affected by childhood acquired brain injury. The following information has been developed to help the reader understand more about brain injury and some of the associated issues. Every effort has been taken to ensure the information is accurate and up to date. If you require more immediate support or assistance please contact our ***Helpline 0303 3032248*** *or email* ***helpline@cbituk.org*** *where we will be able to respond to your specific enquiry and or offer support.*

Moving into Adulthood

The transition from teenager to adult is difficult enough for any young person, with new responsibilities to cope with, decisions to make regarding continuing education or employment and changes in friendship groups. For someone with an acquired brain injury there is this and more to contend with. As parents or carers, we naturally help our children but, as they get older and start doing things independently, their real difficulties may become more apparent and this might be the time when they need extra support[i.] However, this is also the time when the support services available to your son or daughter move from child to adult services. This can be a stressful time for the family but, with enough planning, the transition can be smooth[ii].



One of the biggest decisions that must be made is how long your son or daughter will stay in education after 18 in England (16 years of age in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)- and if so what type - or whether they will enter employment[iii]. Many children with an acquired brain injury will be assessed for a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) [iv] or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) which describes the child's educational and health requirements and the specific help they should get[v].

If your child is given a statement or EHC they will be invited by their head teacher to have a Transition Plan review meeting, usually during Year 9. At this meeting, you and your son or daughter will help to make a Transition Plan: a document that describes your child's aims for the next few years, particularly after leaving school, and the support they will need to fulfil these aims[vi].

The discussion will cover many aspects of everyday life including education, employment, housing, healthcare, transport and hobbies. Many of the people involved in your child's care will be at this meeting, including your son or daughter's teacher, social worker, doctor/nurse, an educational psychologist and possibly a Careers Service Adviser linked to the school or college, who has an extensive knowledge of the educational learning opportunities available, if you still have this service in your local area[vi]. Those students who do not have a statement of SEN are also entitled to ask the school for a meeting to discuss their future, and can see a Careers Service adviser, if applicable. The school SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) will be able to organise this for you or you can contact your school's Career's Advisor.

If your son or daughter is to remain in some form of training or education they could consider a variety of further education and training courses designed for individuals with SEN/ EHC, either in academic or work-related subjects. Many young adults with an acquired brain injury attend specialist day colleges. For information about specialist colleges visit the Association of National Specialist Colleges website (see below).

Another option for continuing education is attending a residential college where the individual moves away from home and develops further personal, social and practical skills to help to live as independently as possible[iii]. As a first port of call, you might find it worthwhile contacting your local Careers Centre Service, or local colleges. Remember that staff might not have had a lot of experience of acquired brain injury so it may be a case of informing and raising awareness of the issues.

If your son or daughter would like to find paid employment then there are a number of ways in which work can be approached. Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs) are based at Job Centres to assist adults with a disability, or a worsening health condition, to enter paid employment[vii]. DEAs perform an employment assessment which identifies what type of work or training suits that person best, and from that make a plan to help the person gain the employment that most suits them.

Supported Employment Services Your son or daughter may have specific support needs and a specialised member organisation of the British Association for Supported Employment Service (BASE) may be more helpful than a DEA, who is likely to have a limited knowledge of acquired brain injury. A specialist supported employment service member would spend time getting to know your son or daughter in order to develop a profile for work[viii]. This would include undertaking various work 'tasters' and/or trials to look at whether the work is enjoyable and to assess the level of support that would be required. Once a person's preferences are established and strengths identified, the service will work with the job seeker to find employment. One of the main features of this service is that the individual will be supported on the job for as long as necessary, and from day one would be paid the going rate.

The website of the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) (www.base-uk.org) lists the employment services in your area. They include organisations such as Remploy (http://www.remploy.co.uk), Shaw Trust (http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk), Into work Enable Scotland (http://www.intowork.org.uk) and Momentum Scotland Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities (http://momentumskills.org.uk/).

It is important to bear in mind that in the right circumstances (i.e. with the right support, the right job and the right staff team) employment, regardless of how it comes about, can be long-term and satisfying.

For more information on the transition into adulthood contact

Mencap, a charity dealing with all aspects of adult disability:

http://www.mencap.org.uk/all-about-learning-disability/transition-and-further-education/

For more general information on continuing education or employment visit

The Association of National Specialist Colleges: **http://www.natspec.org.uk/**

For more specific information paste these addresses into your browser

In England (Directgov): **bit.ly/Y1ft7**

In Scotland (Myworldofwork.co.uk): http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/

In Wales (Careerwales.com): **bit.ly/uls0Lr**

In Northern Ireland (NIdirect.gov.uk): **bit.ly/tULqco**

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[i] Semrud-Clikeman M. Pediatric Traumatic Brain Injury: Rehabilitation and Transition to Home and School. Applied Neuropsychology Volume 17, Issue 2, 2010.

[ii] http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/Browsable/DH_4868920

[iii] http://www.mencap.org.uk/all-about-learning-disability/transition-and-further-education/

[iv] http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/your_family/education/special_educational_needs.htm

[v] http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_4000870

[vi] http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Youngdisabledpeople/DG_10039608

[vii] http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/LookingForWork/DG_4000324

[viii] http://base-uk.org/information-jobseekers