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## Transition

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## Going to college:

The transition from school to college or just starting in college can be an exciting but anxious time for students. It can be particularly unsettling for autistic students who often find change very difficult. However, there are things that you can do to make the transition as smooth and as positive as possible.

## Helping the student decide on a college and a course

- Provide opportunities to meet a key contact from college at an agreed familiar venue such as school. Ideally this 'key contact' will be a consistent link person for the student throughout the transition process.
- Ensure website information is easy to read and contains factual information, including visual information where possible.
- Allow time for students to process information by providing an opportunity to ask questions after transition events and not only during. Provide opportunities for non-verbal communication.
- Offer additional transition visits to college, starting at quieter times of the day/week/term and building to include busier sites and times of day.
- Offer additional support for attending course interviews, open days/evenings and course keeping in touch days.
- Provide a Transition Guide to clearly outline the support services offer available to autistic students.
- Provide opportunities for site familiarisation, allowing students to plan how they will navigate around the college. Provide clear maps to facilitate this process.

## Putting support in place

- Support the prospective student in producing/developing a 'One Page Profile' to be used to help develop a personalised package of support.
- Ensure support planning meetings are person centred and capture what is important to, as well as for the student.
- Ensure all relevant prior medical information / education based support plans / Learning and Skills Plans are used to appropriately meet the needs of each individual student.
- Involve parents/carers in the transition process as appropriate, whilst supporting the student to gradually experience training and work independently, in order to minimise anxiety around parental/guardian separation.
- Make an advanced plan for managing unstructured time during break and lunchtimes, this may include making use of designated quiet spaces.
- Try to provide course timetables and other process information in advance wherever possible.
- Provide opportunities for students to meet with other students in order to help facilitate social interaction. This may include other students with an ASD diagnosis if appropriate.
- Ensure students know how to access additional wellbeing support services and counselling if needed.
- Share personalised support plans with teaching staff, support and specialist assistants and pastoral support staff as appropriate, with guidance on how to best support the student to achieve specific outcomes.
- Offer travel training/ opportunities for journey planning. Use social stories to support this process if appropriate.

## Reducing the student's anxiety

### Prior to beginning their course

- Organise a visit before the term starts to look around the site/campus and show key places such as reception, canteen, toilets, chill out room. Give the student a map of the college so they can find their way round easily on their first day. This can help with coping with the environment, dealing with large, noisy crowds, trying to find their rooms.  
Or they could produce their own with your help.
- The student could use a video film or take photos of key places and build up their own map.
- Introduce key staff before term starts.
- Show the student where key activities happen.
- Provide a time out / safe base for stressful situations.
- There should be clear labelling around the college.
- Clearly explain the procedures for break times and lunch time and how to cope with meeting others.
- Travelling to college by bus – Allowing time to get to the bus, where to wait, times of the bus, what happens if the bus is late.

### Transition from college

The transition from college can again be an exciting but anxious time for students. It can be particularly unsettling for autistic students who often find change very difficult. However, there are things that you can do to make the transition as smooth and as positive as possible.

- Preparation and early planning are fundamental to a successful move onto another setting.
- Up to date and accessible information is the essential for a student being able to make an informed choice.
- College Transition Workers are key in supporting the student in making the right choice.
- Helping the student choose a preferred destination which may be university, employment or further training (including apprenticeships).

### University

The transition from college can again be an exciting but anxious time for students. It can be particularly unsettling for autistic students who often find change very difficult. However, there are things that you can do to make the transition as smooth and as positive as possible.

- about the application process
- about the university and the courses available

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- on what qualifications they will need to access their chosen course
- how they can arrange visits and who will support them with this
- how to get to the university and access accommodation
- links to the student support services
- how to plan for unstructured time
- an up to date one page profile
- what to do if they do not get the grades for their first choice university
- what to do if things start going wrong once at university

## **Employment**

If a student wishes to find employment they may need some assistance with:

- information on employment advice services e.g. careers
- help with mock interviews, complete application forms, etc if appropriate link with Supported Employment Services
- what careers are realistic with the student's current aspirations and qualifications? Do they have the required qualifications? Will they need to do further qualifications? Are they unlikely to reach to the desire qualification level?
- there are a whole range of resources available on [www.ASDInfoWales.co.uk/working-with-autism](http://www.ASDInfoWales.co.uk/working-with-autism) that can help with employment choices, employment preparation and planning.

## **Training including traineeships and apprenticeships**

Some students may wish to undertake further training and may require assistance with:

- information on training advice services e.g. careers, work based learning advisors
- help with mock interviews, completed application forms etc.
- if appropriate link with Supported Employment Services
- what careers are realistic with the student's current aspirations and qualifications? Do they have the required qualifications? Will they need to do further qualifications? Are they unlikely to reach to the desired qualification level?
- there are a whole range of resources available on [www.ASDInfoWales.co.uk/working-with-autism](http://www.ASDInfoWales.co.uk/working-with-autism) including those on work based learning.