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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (Harvard):
Hewett, R, Douglas, G & Williams, H 2011, Post-14 transitions support – a survey of the transition experience of visually impaired young people: Technical report of findings to summer 2011: Report for RNIB . VICTAR.

Publisher Rights Statement:
Checked for eligibility: September 2014

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Post-14 transitions support – a survey of the transition experience of visually impaired young people

Technical report of findings to summer 2011
Report for RNIB

August 2011

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Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

This research project was designed in 2009 by a team from RNIB and VICTAR (Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research at the University of Birmingham) in response to the Research Brief prepared by RNIB Corporate Research Team: "Longitudinal study from age 14 of blind and partially sighted young people in the UK".

The key objectives of the project are:
1. To track the process of transition for blind and partially sighted young people from age 14 for five years
2. To identify the roles of professionals involved
3. To identify the factors that improve or reduce a young person's chance of gaining employment

The project includes the following key phases:
1. Recruit and survey visual impairment services
2. Through these services, recruit and survey a sample of Year 9 and 11 students with visual impairment
3. Follow-up surveys of the sample of students with visual impairment

This report focuses on data collection conducted in Summer 2010, Autumn 2010 and Spring 2011. The findings of Phase 1(survey of visual impairment services) of the report were presented in Hewett et al (2010). This report focuses on the findings of Phases 2 and 3 of the project (surveys of young people).

The aims of the report are primarily to present the transition journey of the Year 11 cohort so far, by looking at the support that they received whilst in Year 11, how they performed in their GCSEs, what they have gone on to do now (and how they found that transition experience) and the progress that they have made in making further plans for their future. This is a technical report which presents all findings so far. It will be followed by a series of focussed reports that aim to explore key themes, and will particularly make use of the longitudinal nature of the data.

Participants were recruited from Year 9 and Year 11 across the English Midlands and Wales to take part in the longitudinal project. By June 2011, 81 young people had been recruited into the

project. The Summer 2010 questionnaire was completed by 78 participants, the Autumn 2010 follow up interviews were conducted with 46 from the Year 11 cohort and the Spring 2011 interviews were carried out with 75 young people. For convenience, the Year 9 and Year 11 cohort labels are used throughout the report (although by the Spring 2011 they were in Year 10 and Year 12 respectively).

Sample Demographics and Representativeness

Taking the students who were initially identified by the services in phase one of the project as our population, the sample was examined to see how representative they were of the population from which participants were recruited.

The small sample size must be taken into account when assessing the representativeness of our sample to the population. However, overall the sample does appear to be a good representation of the population, although the following points are noted:
1. There is an underrepresentation of Asian or Asian British young people
2. There is an overrepresentation of those with additional special needs, Statements of Special Educational Needs, Braille users and young people from Wales

Preferred font size (and reading medium) is taken in this report as an indication of the young person's level of visual impairment. The range of preferred font size of those recruited is wide, from point 12 up to Braille users. Therefore we have recruited within the project young people with varied needs of support in order to obtain a good overall picture.

The young people were asked some questions taken from a national survey, to ascertain how supported they were by the families. Taking the results of the national survey as a comparison, we find that the young people who have been recruited into the project seem to be more highly supported by their families than average (although it is of course possible that visually impaired young people are more supported than the average young person). This is a common problem within projects of this nature, and it will be important to read this and subsequent reports with this in mind.

Visual impairment and support received at school

Throughout the three data captures, the majority of young people spoke positively of the support that they received both in school, and from the Visiting Teacher Service. As would be anticipated, the level of support received tended to be in relation to level of identified need.

Of particular interest was the support that was received by the Year 11 cohort, once they moved onto sixth form or college. On the whole the young people spoke very positively about this. The majority of those in college were enthusiastic about being able to request support when it was needed, enjoying the opportunity to be more independent and act as their own advocates. There tended to be a central person (such as a Support Worker, Coordinator of Support or Department for Additional Support) within the college who they knew they could contact if they were experiencing any problems. Of those in the Year 11 cohort who had remained in education, 84.4% (38 of 45) felt that overall there could be no improvement in the services and support that they were receiving in relation to their visual impairment.

Statutory support for transition

Whilst a high proportion of the cohort reported having a Statement of Special Educational Needs (*SEN)*, there were links between having a statement and having an additional special need.

Less than half of the young people recalled having had a transition review, or knowing that they had one scheduled, with those from special schools and resource bases being more likely to have had a transition review. Of those who remembered having a transition review, 77.3% (34) were in attendance for this, while another 11.4% (5) couldn't remember. Less than a quarter (19) of the young people knew that they had received a written transition plan, a document which should be circulated to all in attendance at the review meeting, which should include the young person in question.

The participants were asked to describe in their own words what they thought about the transition support they had received. Half of the young people were positive about the transition support that they had received, with 20.7% (12) evaluating it in a negative way.

Locus of control and 'self theory'

Locus of control is a psychological concept relating to a person's personality. A series of questions can be asked to establish whether a person believes that they are able to control their future, or whether their future is determined by external forces. Someone who has an external locus of control may believe that their behaviour is guided by fate, luck or external circumstances. Those who have an internal locus of control believe that his/her behaviour is guided by his or her personal decisions and efforts. It was found that on average, the perceived locus of control by the young people is fairly neutral, with the majority having scores close to average possible score, as compared to the general population. It will be interesting to see how this changes during the project.

Similarly, questions were asked in the Summer 2010 questionnaire that had been derived from Dweck's 'self theories'. This is the theory that learners can have different 'self theories' about their ability. At the end of the dimension, 'Fixed IQ theorists' tend to believe that ability is fixed at birth, and therefore ability comes from talent rather than from the slow development of skills through learning. At the other end of the dimension, 'Untapped potential theorists' (or 'growth' or 'incremental theorists') who tend to believe that ability and success are due to learning, and learning requires time and effort. Three questions were taken to help ascertain the group which an individual student belonged to, with the intention that this information could be used in a similar way to the locus of control questions. Dweck suggests that there will be 15% of young people who give a mixed response and so their beliefs about intelligence are indeterminate. Of the 75 young people who answered all three questions, 28 (37.3%) were found to be fixed theorists, 38 (50.7%) incremental theorists, with the remaining 9 (12.0%) giving a mixed response. Responses appear to be broadly in keeping with expected figures for the general population; again it will be interesting to see how this changes.

Decisions for the future

In the Summer 2010 questionnaire, the Year 11 cohort were asked about any decisions that they had made for the future. These questions could then be asked again at each of the data captures to find out about any deviations in the plans (including the reasons for these) and to follow the young people in their transitional paths.

At this point in time, the majority of the Year 11s wanted to continue onto sixth form or college, and had made plans about the particular school or college they wanted to go to. Almost 50% had chosen the particular college or school due to it running the particular course they wanted to go to, whilst others were attracted by the college/schools close proximity. Not many spoke specifically about their visual impairment having any influence on their decision, although 16.7% (7) said that one of their reasons for choosing the particular school or college was that they felt it was equipped to meet their needs.

By the Autumn 2010 interviews, following their GCSE examinations, 38 of 46 had moved onto their intended destination. Those who hadn't gave various reasons, such as changing their mind on A-level options, staying on at sixth form rather than going to FE college as they felt they would receive better support there and not getting the grades that they needed.

Planning for careers and the future

Both cohorts were asked in Summer 2010 and Spring 2011 about the guidance that they had received in planning for careers and the future. For many of the Year 9 cohort, the careers advice that they had received by the end of Year 9 was rather limited. Overall, however, the Year 11 cohort spoke positively of the types of support that they had received. Year 11 students were a lot more likely to have spoken to friends about plans for the future, compared with the Year 9 students, illustrating that, being older, they were further along the transition path. Only 2 of 78 respondents reported not having spoken to their parents or carers about their future, demonstrating that the family is a key source of support in transition planning. Of those 76 who had spoken to their parents or carers, 87.1% of Year 9s and 89.3% of Year 11s reported the advice as being very or partly useful, making it the highest valued source of advice by the young people.

A main source of careers advice for those young people who were seeking information in planning their future was reported to be the internet, and to a lesser extent, careers software.

By the Spring 2011 interviews, 60.7% of the Year 9 cohort had received some guidance about what they could do following their GCSE exams. Those who had not did not indicate much concern

at this, with a number suggesting that they were too young yet to really formulate plans for the future.

Similarly, the majority (78.7%) of Year 11 cohort reported having received support in planning their futures in the academic year. Some of those who had not received much guidance expressed concerns about this and how quickly their education in sixth form school or college was going, leaving them minimal time in the next year to make decisions about what they would do next.

It was found that the most common sources of guidance in careers planning were from family members, whilst more of the Year 9 cohort had started discussing their careers plans with their friends. General discussions with school teachers was also reported as a common source of careers advice for the Year 11 cohort, with 72.3% of Year 11s saying that they had had such discussions, compared with only 43.8% of Year 9s. The sources of guidance identified most frequently as being the 'most helpful source of guidance' were family and teachers/tutors.

The majority (61.7%) of the Year 11 cohort by Spring 2011 were planning on continuing onto university, whilst 14.9% planned to get a job. The young people who were interviewed had shown evidence of progression in their transitional decision making, with some who had not been sure before what they wanted to do after finishing their current courses having developed a clearer idea and a number had changed their mind about what courses they would like to study after starting on their post-16 courses.

Almost all of the Year 11 cohort were aware of the increase in university tuition fees, whilst almost two thirds (63.4%) said that the increase in university fees wouldn't make a difference in whether they would decide to go to university or not, with the remaining 31.7% saying it probably would.

In the Summer 2010 questionnaire, the young people were asked if they knew what job they would like to do in the future. Forty one (of 47) of the Year 11 cohort said that they did. By the Spring 2011 interviews, a number had changed their response to this question, demonstrating that transition is a continual process. This was also evident in the responses given by the Year 9 cohort with many who had changed their mind regarding what they wanted to do after their GCSEs, whether they would go to university, and what

job they would like to do when they were older. The consensus from many of the Year 9 cohort was that although they were thinking about their future, they were too young to make such decisions yet.

Work Experience

In Summer 2010, both cohorts were asked about any work experience placements that they had done. Only one Year 9 student reported having had a work experience placement, with most not scheduled to do a placement until Year 10 or Year 11. Those Year 11 students who reported on their work experience placements in either Year 10 or 11 had had the opportunity to do varied types of placement. Any who had done a work placement were asked to rate their overall experience. Positively 81.1% of respondents rated their placement as either Excellent or Good.

By Spring 2011, four of the Year 9 cohort and seven of the Year 11 cohort said that they did some form of part time work. This seems a lower population than might be expected of young people of this age. Of those who didn't have any part time work, 45 said that they would like to have a part-time job. Reasons given for not having a part-time job at the moment included them not having time as they were focussing on their course, there not being any jobs available and being restricted due to their eye sight.

In the Spring 2011 interviews, 7 of the Year 9 cohort and 20 of the Year 11 cohort said that they did some voluntary work (although for a number of the Year 11 cohort, this was as part of their course). When asked, 16 of the young people said that they would like to do voluntary work, giving reasons similar to the reasons given for not having any part-time work as an explanation.

Examinations Experience

There were several types of access arrangements for examinations reported by the young people, including extra time, examinations papers in a preferred format, having a reader and/or a scribe and taking the examination in a different room.

The majority seemed happy with the examination arrangements they had experienced. There were, however, some problems reported, such as confusion over how much extra time the person was allowed for taking their exams (this guidance seemed to be

provided by the QTVI assigned to them at school), problems in modified papers and difficulties in enlarged papers being too large for the desk, as these would typically be in A3 size.

GCSE results of Year 11 students
Following receiving their GCSE results, the Year 11 cohort were asked about their grades for the subjects taken. Of the 46 young people who gave this information, 28 (60.9%) achieved 5 Grades A*-C, including Maths and English, whilst this was unclear for another 3 (6.5%). In 2009/10 the national average achieving five or more GCSE at A*-C, including Maths and English was 53.1%, meaning that our sample performed better than the national average, and suggesting that we have recruited a particularly high achieving sample.

Transition experience of Year 11 students
The Year 11 cohort were asked both in the Autumn 2010 follow up interviews and Spring 2011 interviews how they had found the post-16 transition experience. In Autumn 2010, the majority spoke of how easy they had found the transition experience, although some had had difficulties, such as the college they were now attending not knowing a lot about visually impaired people. One of the main challenges faced was the increased workload.

By Spring 2011, 87.2% (or 41) of the Year 11 cohort were still pursuing the same options as they had reported they were taking in Autumn 2010. Those who had changed their options were still studying, but had either dropped a subject in order to concentrate on a smaller number of courses, or had had to change options due to administrative problems. The majority said that they were enjoying the courses that they were doing and finding the workload manageable. Eight of the forty seven young people thought that the experience of transition after GCSEs could be improved, whilst three were unsure. Examples given of how the experience of transition could be improved included having better career guidance from their school and Connexions, knowing more about the course and having someone help them to mentally prepare for the difference. A number of examples of contributors to positive transition were given. These included having interviews at college where you could find out about the college and ask questions, having support there if it were needed and transitions days and ice breakers.

Transition experience of Year 9 students

The Year 9 cohort between the Summer 2010 questionnaire and Spring 2011 interviews moved from Year 9 onto Year 10 where they would start working towards their GCSEs. The responses of the young people suggest that on the whole the majority had found the transition manageable, and whilst the workload was harder, they found it a positive experience.

1 Background of the RNIB Transitions Project

1.1 Project Overview

This is a report commissioned by RNIB in relation to post-16 transitions from school to further and higher education, training, and employment of blind and partially sighted students. This report focuses on data collection conducted in Summer 2010, Autumn 2010 and Spring 2011.

The research project was designed in 2009 by a team from RNIB and VICTAR (Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research at the University of Birmingham) in response to the Research Brief prepared by RNIB Corporate Research Team: "Longitudinal study from age 14 of blind and partially sighted young people in the UK". The research started in May 2009 and is being carried out in three phases of work:

Phase 1 – Recruitment and survey of educational services
Phase 2 – Survey of young people with visual impairment
Phase 3 – Longitudinal case studies.

This report presents data in relation to Phases 2 and 3 of the project, i.e. a survey of young people with visual impairments, combined with some follow up interviews on their progress. The survey was particularly concerned with the transition planning which is offered to students with visual impairment at the ages 14-16 years (school year 9, 10 and 11), and ascertaining the support that they receive, both in terms of making decisions for the future, and working towards the important qualifications which affect their future. This is a technical report which presents all findings so far. It will be followed by a series of focussed reports that aim to explore keys themes, and will particularly make use of the longitudinal nature of the data.

Young people were recruited into the project through the 18 local authorities, 2 resource bases and 1 special school that had been recruited in Phase 1 of the project. At the time they were asked to identify all the Year 9 and Year 11 students with a visual impairment that they were supporting. Each service provider was asked to complete a short questionnaire identifying the student's initials, gender, ethnic group, preferred reading format, whether

they had additional disabilities, whether the student could independently complete a questionnaire, and details of anything else which could affect the student's potential involvement. Being able to 'independently complete a questionnaire' was used as the project inclusion criteria for the study. All those students who met the criteria were invited to take part through pre-prepared information packs. Those who consented to take part were consenting to be involved in the longitudinal project (with the freedom to request to withdrawal at any time). Since the start of Phase 2, consent forms have been received from 81 young people, although not all have taken part in every stage of the data collection process.

There have been three stages of data collection so far. In summer 2010 the young people completed questionnaires either on paper, online or via telephone interviews – this data collection related to phase 2 of the project - surveying young people with a visual impairment. In Autumn 2010, phase 3 commenced with follow up telephone interviews of the Year 11 group, in order to ascertain how they had done in their GCSE examinations and what they had gone on to do next. Finally, in Spring 2011, telephone interviews were conducted with both the Year 9 and Year 11 cohorts.

1.2 Summer 2010 survey (Year 9 and 11)

The Summer 2010 survey was completed by the young people throughout the summer and early autumn of 2010. This consisted of a self completion questionnaire which was made available in paper form and online through Bristol Online Surveys. Those who hadn't returned their questionnaire by Autumn 2010 were contacted by telephone and given the opportunity to complete the survey as an interview. The questionnaire covered the following topics:

1. You and your family
2. Your visual impairment and support you receive at school
3. Transition planning
4. Work experience
5. Connexions/Careers Wales
6. Decisions for the future
7. The future (Year 11 only)

8. Questions about how you feel (self theories and locus of control)

The summer 2010 survey was completed by 47 Year 11 students and 31 Year 9 students.

1.3 Autumn 2010 survey (Year 11)

The Autumn 2010 survey was completed through a telephone interview with the Year 11 cohort only. This was a short, semi structured interview, building on some of information given in the Summer 2010 survey. The interview covered the following topics:

1. GCSE results
2. Examination arrangements
3. Transition experience post GCSE

The Autumn 2010 survey was completed by 46 Year 11 students.

1.4 Spring 2011 survey (Year 9 and 11)

The Spring 2011 survey was also completed through a telephone interview, but with both the Year 9 and Year 11 cohorts. The interview was longer, and more structured, with a lot of the questions having closed answers. The interview covered the following topics:

1. Current studies/employment
2. Relationships
3. Examinations experience
4. Support being received
5. Transition support
6. Work experience, part time work, voluntary work
7. Travel arrangements
8. Future plans

The Spring 2011 survey was completed by 47 Year 11 students and 28 Year 9 students.

2 Post-16 Transition

Studies from across the world have highlighted the problems that blind and partially sighted people have in obtaining employment (Clements et al, 2011, Shaw et al, 2007, Goertz et al, 2010 and Wolffe et al, 2002). In the UK, the Network 1000 project estimated that the employment rate of people who are registered blind or partially sighted (and of working age) is just 33% (Douglas et al, 2009) similar levels have been found in USA (Shaw et al, 2007) and in New Zealand (La Grow, 2004).

The purpose of the RNIB Transitions Longitudinal study is to try and gain a better understanding of the transitions process that visually impaired young people go through, and identify any aspects of this which are particularly creating a barrier and could be improved upon. By following this group over a number of years, it is hoped that we will be able to create a better picture of what is happening in the transition process for these young people. In 2002, Keil et al (2003) conducted a survey of local educational authority visual impairment services in England, Scotland and Wales. Through the responses they received to this survey they estimated a population of 24,000 blind and partially sighted children, aged between 0-16. This estimate was supported by Morris and Smith (2008) who through their survey estimated a population of 25,000 blind and partially sighted children, aged 0-16.

Although visual impairment is typically a disability associated with the adult population, such numbers, along with the continual problems in entering and retaining employment, demonstrate the importance of understanding the transition process for this group of people.

RNIB (1998) conducted a study to identify the factors that helped or acted as barriers to visually impaired young people in their participation of education and employment. Encouragingly they found strong evidence that blind and partially sighted people were able to obtain equally good qualifications as their non-disabled peers. However, they noted that there had been problems in transition to employment, with only 32% of their sample of 172 young people in employment. One key finding was that positive employment outcomes were aided by satisfactory careers

guidance and work experience. They also found a link between qualification level and employment, with 46% of those with graduate and post-graduate qualifications being in employment, compared to only 17% for those with lower qualifications (GCSE/GCE 'O' level or below).

McDonnall (2010) sought to identify factors that predict future employment for transition-age youth with visual impairments and compared these factors to the factors which predict employment for the general population using data from the USA National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997. The factors which were identified as having a positive impact on employment for visually impaired young people were number of jobs held as a teenager, maths and verbal aptitude, parental support and their self-reported health.

Shaw et al (2007) looked at the work-related experiences of 328 Canadian youths. It was found that youths with low vision were more likely than those who were blind to be currently employed. 59% of participants reported having experienced challenges or barriers to employment. These included restricted resources (such as having information in an appropriate format), attitudes of employers or potential employers (for example not wanting to take the 'risk' or the extra expense), personal problems, job requirements (such as a driving license), and lack of understanding awareness of others.

Pavey et al (2008) used data collected in the Network 1000 project to investigate the experiences reported by participants relating to transition to adulthood and work. They found that those whose visual impairment had come about earlier on in childhood tended to achieve higher academically. In addition, they found that there was a link between higher levels of educational attainment and the likelihood of being employed.

Kirchner et al (2005) in considering the labour market in the USA, report that simply being well educated is not enough for visually impaired young people, and highlight the importance of gaining work experience whilst still in school. In their review of literature on this matter, they also refer to the National Longitudinal Transition Study which found that students with visual impairments were less likely to have worked whilst in high school when compared to other young people with special educational needs, and instead would

choose to focus on their education. They also, using data collected in the Wave Two of the National Longitudinal Study, report the finding that wages are typically lower for visually impaired students, compared to their peers (also with special educational needs).

A longitudinal study was conducted into the Post-16 Transitions of Pupils with Special Education Needs by University of Manchester and the Institute for Employment Studies. This commenced in 2000 with interviews being collected on 617 SENCOs and teachers (who spoke to about 3200 pupils with special education needs). The aim of the study was firstly in Wave One to get an understanding of the students in their sample, particularly relating to their attitudes, expectations and education experience. This would then enable the project to gain an overview of the transition process as the progress of these individuals was followed over a number of years.

Wave One found that pupils with sensory, physical and medical needs tended to have a better learning experience compared to students with other special needs.

Wave Two in 2002-3 found that the young people in their sample had found their transition planning review useful. They had also particularly benefited from the advice of school careers advisers, although parents were reported as being most helpful in terms of making their post-16 transitions, highlighting the importance of a supportive family. However, only one-third of those surveyed had had a meeting with someone from the Careers Service or Connexions since compulsory schooling. In the interviews conducted with parents, particular concerns were raised about the future of those students who attended special schools, or had behavioural, emotional or social development needs. It was also reported that 'examples of relatively smooth transitions seem to be the exception rather than the rule'.

The final wave took place in 2003-4 when the participants were aged 19 or 20. They found that young people with sensory and/or physical difficulties, along with those who had statements of SEN whilst in school, were more likely to have continued in education. Only one-fifth of participants reported having contact with a Connexions Personal Adviser or a careers adviser since Wave Two, whilst almost a quarter had spoken to a Jobcentre Plus

adviser. Those who had received professional support described it as being just as useful, if not better, as the support they had received when they were at school.

It was found that there were four sets of factors which were important in determining the characteristics of the transition process. These were the young person's capacities and characteristics, support from families, the nature and effectiveness of local support systems and the range of opportunities that were available to the young person.

Finally, the report highlighted the problem of the young people not having an individual or an organisation who have overall responsibility in coordinating the support that the young person was receiving. It was felt that this could mean that some people would be lost in the system and not be supported properly.

The report from Wave One of the RNIB Transitions study (Hewett et al, 2010), gives a detailed account of the regulatory framework surrounding transition planning in the UK. It particularly focused on the difference in support received in relation to statementing and the partnership between the different agencies involved in the transition process. In particular, it was found that statementing policies vary from local authority to local authority, with some local authorities deliberately not statementing their students due to the financial burden it can create. Instead VI services needed to work hard to ensure that the process that would naturally happen as a result of the student having a statement, still occurs. The degree of 'effort' that would be put in by the VTS would be proportional to the child's need. The importance of Connexions was highlighted, as the agency which ensures that the transition plan is followed through, and problems which can result of a lack of partnership between the VTS, Schools and Connexions were also highlighted.

The consensus, however, amongst the VTS, Resources Bases and Special School who participated in phase one, is that transition planning could be improved. In particular, several of the services highlighted the potential problems of young people moving onto larger post-16 colleges, where the support they are entitled to is less clearly defined.

3 Project Overview

3.1 RNIB Transitions Project

This report comes as part of a longitudinal study from aged 14 of blind and partially sighted young people in the UK. This project is funded by the RNIB and commissioned to VICTAR, University of Birmingham. The key objectives of the project are:
1. To track the process of transition for blind and partially sighted young people from age 14 for five years
2. To identify the roles of professionals involved
3. To identify the factors that improve or reduce a young person's chance of gaining employment

The project includes the following key phases:
1. Recruit and survey visual impairment services
2. Through these services, recruit and survey a sample of Year 9 and 11 students with visual impairment
3. Follow-up surveys of the sample of students with visual impairment

This report presents findings from phases 2 and 3 i.e. a survey of visually impaired young people investigating the support that they receive during this transition period, with follow up case studies. The objective of phase 2 was to gain an understanding of the support received by the students at this period in the education, particularly as they start in the transitions process. This then forms a basis for tracking the students as we move into Phase 3. This phase focuses on their transitional journey, and hopes to identify along the way any barriers that they may be faced which could be used to explain the low employment statistics within the visually impaired population. It is also hoped that it will be possible to identify any particular successes which could be learned from.

3.2 Method

Letters were sent to different local authorities, mainstream schools with resource bases for pupils with visual impairment and special schools within the England Midlands and Wales to see if they would be willing to take part in the project. Twenty-six service providers were approached, and in all, positive responses (and eventual questionnaires) were received from 18 local authority visual impairment (VI) services, 2 resource bases and 1 special school designated for pupils with visual impairment. A questionnaire was sent to each head of service (or head of school or resource bases) in Autumn 2009. They were requested to complete the questionnaire and return it to the research team at VICTAR. The questionnaire (see Appendix) focused on the blind and partially sighted students that they were supporting in Year 9 and 11, and requested the following information:

- Students initials (therefore not compromising confidentiality)
- Gender
- Ethnic group
- Preferred reading format
- Additional disabilities
- Whether the student could independently complete a questionnaire
- Details of anything else which affect the student's potential involvement

Being able to 'independently complete a questionnaire' was used as the project inclusion criteria for the study and all those students who met the criteria were invited to take part. Pre-prepared information packs were sent to the various local authorities and schools so that they could forward them onto the relevant parents and students. Approximately 143 Year 11 and 119 Year 9 information packs were sent out to parents/guardians of the students identified.

The parent/guardian information packs contained a letter, information sheet and consent form. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) decided that it would be suitable for their child to be involved, they would pass on the student information pack to them. This student pack contained a letter, information sheet and consent form – all prepared according to the young persons' preferred reading

format. For any child who required a font size above 20, a CD was included which contained electronic and audio versions of the information pack. Project team contact details were also included (email and phone number). Provision was made for those young people or families who needed the information in different languages, with translations being made into Polish and Urdu. Follow-up letters were sent by the local authorities and schools to all families approximately two weeks after the initial packs were sent, along with additional follow up letters to those who didn't respond at first. Once a student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) decided that they would like to be involved in the study, they would send their consent forms into the VICTAR office, using the prepaid envelope that was provided.

On receipt of the consent form, a questionnaire would be prepared according to the reading format requested on the student consent form (or sometimes after liaising with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s)). There were two questionnaires – one for Year 9 students and one for Year 11 students, along with some slightly modified versions for Welsh students. The questionnaire (which can be found in the appendix), included the following sections:

1. You and your family
1. Your visual impairment and support you receive at school
2. Transition planning
3. Work experience
4. Connexions / Careers Wales
5. Decisions for the future
6. The Future
7. Some questions about how you feel
8. Final Section

The questionnaire could be completed either on paper, or online at Bristol Online Surveys. For some late respondents, particularly some Braille users, the questionnaire was completed through a telephone interview.

Upon receipt of the questionnaire, a £10 voucher would be sent directly to the student. Reminder letters/phone calls/emails were made to those students who returned their consent forms, but failed to complete the questionnaire. We eventually received completed questionnaires for 78 of the 80 students who had

consented to take part in the project – 47 in Year 11 and 31 in Year 9.

Follow up interviews were also conducted with Year 11 students in the Autumn, following their GCSE exam results. These interviews followed a semi-structured format, focussing on the following questions:

- Would it be possible to tell me how you did in your GCSEs, what you got for each subject?

- Last year you will have taken a number of GCSE examinations. We're interested the 'access arrangements' for these examinations.

- What examination access arrangements did you have (prompts: modified paper, enlarged print, Braille, reader, scribe, extra time)

- Were the access arrangements as you wanted them?
  (a) the exam was in the expected format (that is, what you asked for)?
  (b) the exam was how you would want (that is, if you could choose *any* format)

- How have they found the transition to this new stage? (Prompt: What's been good?; Prompt: What has been difficult? How could it be improved?)

The responses given in the questionnaire were entered into SPSS and analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings are presented in tables which contain frequencies of responses. We also include percentages to help comparison of responses across questions.

Finally, in Spring 2011, further telephone interviews were conducted with both year groups. These interviews focused on:

1. Current studies/employment
2. Relationships
3. Examinations experience
4. Support being received
5. Transition support
6. Work experience, part time work, voluntary work

7. Travel arrangements
8. Future plans

3.3 Comparator Questions

Several questions included in the questionnaire were derived from previous, larger surveys, and results from these surveys are also included to provide a comparison for this group of young people.

3.3.1 Connexions Survey – Wave 2, 2004

This was a report commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills, and presented results of a customer satisfaction survey. In total 18,000 young people took part in the survey, through a range of methods including face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, and postal self-completion questionnaires.

3.3.2 Understanding Society

This is the new UK Household Longitudinal Study, which follows a sample of 40,000 households. A specific questionnaire was devised for 10-15 year olds, and was responded to through a self completion questionnaire by 2163 young people. Data was made available through the Economic and Social Data Service prior to publication.

3.3.3 DFES Post-14 SEN Longitudinal Study, 2001

This was a report commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills, which aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the experiences, achievements and attitudes of young people with SEN during transition from secondary education to early adult life and to identify strengths and weaknesses in the transition process and to highlight barriers to further education, higher education, training, employment and independent living. Interviews were conducted with 2313 young people who were in Year 11 at the time.

3.4 Reporting strategy

As noted in the method, the data presented in this report has been mainly gathered from three separate surveys of students with visual impairment: self completed questionnaire in summer 2010 (both Year 9 and Year 11 cohorts); a short interview with the Year

11 cohort in autumn 2010 (all of whom had now left Year 11); and a interview in spring 2011 (both Year 9 and Year 11 cohorts). This relatively complex design means that presenting findings can be challenging. We have presented the data in four sections:

- Sample demographics and representativeness (overviewing the sample at the beginning of the data collection, and drop-out as the project has proceeded)
- Findings – summer 2010 (overview of the findings which were solely collected through the self-completion questionnaire in the summer of 2010)
- Findings – summer 2010 and spring 2011 (overview of the data which was collected at both these times but is connected by topic, e.g. work experience, changing views and plans for the future)
- Findings – autumn 2010 and spring 2011 (overview of the data which was collected at both these times but is connected by topic, e.g. reflection upon experience in examinations, GCSE results)

A number of tables are referred to throughout the report, some of which may be found in the appendix. The data is presented in terms of both numbers and percentages. As our sample numbers are low, the percentages should be interpreted cautiously, and numbers within individual cells of tables referred to at all times.

For convenience, and to avoid confusion, the Year 9 cohort are referred to as Year 9 throughout the report, although in the Spring 2011 interviews they had all moved onto Year 10, whilst the Year 11 cohort by Autumn 2010 and Spring 2011 had moved onto Year 12.

4 Sample demographics and representativeness

4.1 Project sample and population

One important consideration is whether the sample of 78 young people we received responses from is representative of the population of students identified by the services on 'Questionnaire 2'. In total, 323 students across Year 9 and 11 were identified, although not all were targeted as some were unable to 'independently complete a questionnaire.' This comparison of our sample to the population includes all 262 students who were being identified as 'yes' or 'unsure' to the question 'could this person independently complete a questionnaire'. We did also receive responses from some students who were not on our original list, and so some of the demographic information was not available for these students. Students were recruited from 14 different VTS providing mainstream support, 2 resource bases and 2 special schools.

Tables presenting the demographic data may be found in the appendix.

Overall, the representation by males and females in the sample is closely proportional for Year 9 students. For Year 11 students, we have proportionally more females, and less males, although considering the relatively small sample size, our sample could be considered well representative of the population.

Ensuring a good ethnic representation was a priority during the recruitment process. For each young person identified as not being of British origin, contact was made with the relevant service to establish whether that person, and their families, would be able to read English versions of the information packs. Those families who were identified as potentially having difficulty in reading English were supplied with information packs in their first language. We do have an over representation of White respondents, with Asian or Asian-British being under represented. Only four of the possible participants required an information pack in a different language.

Initially, taking all the students who were identified on questionnaire 1, we had 31.8% in Year 9 and 24.7% in Year 11 who were described as having additional special needs. However, information packs were only sent to students who were identified as being able to independently complete a questionnaire. As there was an association between those identified as having additional needs and their ability to complete the questionnaire independently, the population from which we eventually recruited the participants had proportionally less young people with additional special needs.

The report of Wave 1 of the RNIB Transitions Project (Hewett et al, 2010) investigated the importance of statementing. It was found that in many local authorities, whether a student had a statement or not was linked to the level of service provision they received. However, in some authorities, they would deliberately choose not to statement, but still ensure that those students with the greatest need had the same level of support as they would do if they had been statemented. The levels of statementing for the population as presented in Table 47 were calculated from 'Questionnaire 1'. In this questionnaire the services were requested to state how many students they supported had statements. Some of the services did not answer this question, and as some students may have left or joined the service in between Questionnaire 1 and 2, the figures presented are not strictly accurate. They do however, still give a good indication. We see in that our sample consists of proportionally more statemented students than those identified in Questionnaire 1 (61.7% compared to 32.5% for Year 11 and 64.5% compared to 35.5% for Year 9)

Throughout the report, preferred reading format is used as a proxy for the extent of a person's visual impairment. To be able to capture within our sample the difference that different levels of visual impairment can have upon a young person's transition, it was necessary to try and get the sample as representative as possible. To do this, we tried to make the process as accessible as possible, with information packs produced according to the students preferred format, CDs with electronic versions of the information packs (including audio versions) for those requiring a font size above point 20, braille versions for braille users. The questionnaire was also available in preferred format, along with an online version which was tested and found to be compatible with

screen readers. Table 49 in the appendix shows that, overall, our sample is largely well represented across the different categories.

The number of Welsh students within our sample is over representative of the population from which we recruited. However, as only two of the regions from which we recruited in Wales had students in Year 9 and 11, this could be considered beneficial in order to help us gain a better understanding of any differences between the experiences of Welsh and English young people. In particular, there are likely to be differences between the support offered by Connexions in England and Careers Wales.

The small sample size must be taken into account when assessing the representativeness of our sample to the population from which the young people were sampled. Overall, the sample does appear to be a good representation of the population, although the following points are noted:
- There is an underrepresentation of Asian or Asian British young people
- There is an overrepresentation of those with additional special needs, Statements of Special Educational Needs, Braille users and young people from Wales

4.2 Participant drop-out (summer 2010 to spring 2011)

Participant drop-out is summarised as follows:
- Initially in Summer 2010 forty eight Year 11 students had been recruited, and thirty one Year 9 students, with one of the Year 11 students not completing the questionnaire in time for analysis.
- In Autumn 2010, forty six Year 11 students were contacted for follow up interviews, with it being not possible to contact one young person.
- In Spring 2011, all forty six Year 11 students from the Autumn 2010 interviews were contacted again, and contact was also made with the young person who had failed to complete the Summer 2010 questionnaire. Twenty-seven of the initial Year 9 students were contacted for the Spring 2011 interviews, along with an additional young person who had delayed in sending in the consent forms at the start of the project.

This information is summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Participant Levels for each data collection period

	Year 11	Year 9
Summer 2010	47	31
Autumn 2010	46	N/A
Spring 2011	47	28

It has not been possible to make contact with one participant from Year 9 and one participant from Year 11, and therefore it is assumed they are no longer taking part in the project. Other participants who have not been included in the most recent data capture are believed to still be involved, but it has not been possible to arrange an interview time with them prior to this report.

At the start of the Spring 2011 interviews, each young person was reminded that they were free to withdraw from the project at any time, but all those spoken to said that they were happy to still be involved.

5 Findings – summer 2010

5.1 You and your family

5.1.1 Family

The young people were asked to 'Please list the people who live with you most of the time, and their relationship to you'. Table 51 (in the appendix) shows that the household compositions of the young people are very mixed, although the majority are living with both parents or both parents and their sibling(s).

One important factor in a young person's transition is the level of support that they have from their family, and so a number of questions were asked to ascertain how supported the young person felt. These questions were taken from a national survey, with the data collected by the national survey being used as a comparator.

In the national survey, 82.5% of young people said that their parents were 'always or nearly always interested' in how they are doing at school, whilst 14.6% said that they were 'sometimes' interested. Our results suggest we have recruited young people

from particularly supportive households, with 98.7% saying their parents were 'always or nearly always interested' and the remaining 1.3% saying their parents were 'sometimes' interested.

The second question related to parents/guardians/carers attendance at school parent's evenings. In the national survey, 82.5% of young people said that they parents would always or nearly always attend school parents evenings, whilst 13.3% said that they were 'sometimes' attend, with only 1.1% saying they would hardly ever attend. Again, our results are more positive, suggesting we have recruited young people from particularly supportive households.

The final question specifically asked whether the young person felt supported by their family. In the national survey, 78.9% of young people said that they feel supported by their family in most or all of the things that they do, whilst a further 19.6% reported feeling supported by their family in some of the things they do and another 1.2% reported not feeling supported by their family in the things that they do. In this sample, 86.9% felt supported in most or all of the things they do, whilst a further 14.1% feel supported in some of the things they do.

The answers to these three questions demonstrate how well the students feel supported in what they are doing in life. Studies have shown that support from families is highly important in the transition process. A literature review contained in the report on Post-16 Transitions of Pupils with Special Educational Needs (2001) highlighted a number of studies which had found a positive relationship between parental involvement and the schooling and transition experiences of young people with and without SEN. The results of our survey are encouraging with all young people saying their parents/carers are interested in how they do at school 'always' (98.7%) or 'some of the time' (1.3%), although this doesn't appear to translate in all cases in terms of them attending parents evenings, with a lower proportion of 87.7% who said their parents would 'always attend'. Positively, all young people said that they feel supported by their family in all, 'most or some of the things that they do'. Overall the results demonstrate that the young people in the survey feel well supported in comparison to young people who responded to the national survey. However, it is possible that the nature of the questionnaire meant that there was a bias towards students saying that they felt supported, with 17 of the 31 Year 9

students and 14 of the 47 Year 11 students saying that they received help in completing the questionnaire, and some interviews being conducted by telephone, meaning that the young people might have felt obliged to say that they were feeling supported.

5.1.2   Computing and Internet use

97.4% of students have access to either their own computer, or a shared one in the household, and all of those surveyed report having computers with access to broadband, demonstrating that the internet is becoming more of a standard commodity at home, rather than a luxury item. These proportions were mirrored by respondents to the Understanding Society project where 94.9% reported using a computer at home.

Becoming increasingly popular with young people are social networking sites. 65.9% of respondents to the Understanding Society questionnaire reported belonging to a social website, compared with 79.5% from our sample (although it should be noted that we were recruiting young people aged 14-16 who would be more likely to be using such websites than the younger recipients of the Understanding Society survey, which recruited from age 10-15.

Adjusting for those young people in both the Transitions survey and those in the comparator Understanding Society survey who stated that they didn't use a social website, it was found that the amount of time that the young people reported spending online was similar for both surveys. 38.7% from the Transitions Project report spending less than an hour per day on social websites, compared with 36.8% from the Understanding Society survey, whilst 48.4% of the Transitions Project sample would use social websites for 1-3 hours, compared with 45.6% from the Understanding Society survey.

5.1.3   Hobbies and After-School Activities

The young people were also asked to tell us of three things they spend their time doing outside of school hours. This produced a wide range of responses. As they were only listing three activities (although some listed four), this list could not be considered exhaustive of the activities that they partake in, but it does give a

good indication of the types of activities that blind and partially sighted young people are getting involved in. Some responses were not included in the analysis as it was not entirely clear what was meant by the answers given.

Table 2: We are interested in how you spend your time outside of school hours. List three things that you spend time doing:

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Sport	15	48.4%	21	44.7	36	46.8%
Socialising with friends	7	23.3%	23	48.9	30	39.0%
Playing music	5	16.7%	14	29.8	19	24.7%
Using computer / internet	8	26.7%	10	21.3	18	23.4%
Watching TV	7	23.3%	9	19.1	16	20.8%
Listening to music	3	10.0%	12	25.5	15	19.5%
Reading	5	16.7%	9	19.1	14	18.2%
Playing computer games	5	16.7%	5	10.6	10	13.0%
Youth group / youth theatre	3	10.0%	5	10.6	8	10.4%
School work	1	3.3%	5	10.6	6	7.8%
Time with family	3	10.0%	2	4.3	5	6.5%
Part time job or voluntary work	1	3.3%	3	6.4	4	5.2%
Photography	1	3.3%	2	4.3	3	3.9%
Another type of club	1	3.3%	1	2.1	2	2.6%

The table above presents the most common hobbies, and reveals that those in our sample have a very wide range of interests and activities. Many referred to 'work' as an activity, but it was unclear whether this was a part time job, or homework, and so wasn't included in the figures above. Other activities mentioned include walking, and after school clubs such as chess club.

For 20.8% of the young people, all the activities that they listed would have been ones that they would do independently from their peers. Examples would include reading, listening to music and watching TV.

Table 59 (in the appendix) shows the relationship between those who only identified independent activities and the young person's preferred reading format. Taking preferred format as an indication of the severity of the young persons' visual impairment, we see that there is no apparent association between this and whether the young person spends time outside of school with their peers. This provides some positive evidence that level of visual impairment is not impacting on the young peoples' opportunities to spend time with their peers outside of school.

Similarly, Table 60 (in the appendix) shows the relationship between those who only identified independent activities and whether the young person had received mobility training (training in how to move about confidently and safely). Another consideration might be that the young people who were not participating in activities with their peers were those who had not received mobility education (training in how to move about confidently and safely) and were therefore less confident in going out. However, as table 68 shows, there is no relationship between the two factors; those who only identified independent activities were no more or less likely than others to have received mobility education.

5.2 Your visual impairment and support you receive at school

5.2.1 Explaining their visual impairment

Of the students who were surveyed, 85.9% felt they were able to explain their visual impairment to someone else, whilst others either said that they wouldn't be able to (6.4%), and the rest declined to answer the question (7.7%). The types of response given varied across three different categories – a medically based description, a description of how their visual impairment practically affects them, and a combination of the two.

Table 3: Type of response given to the question: 'Would you be able to explain your visual impairment to someone else? If so, what would you say?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Medical Explanation	11	47.8%	24	57.1%	35	53.8%
Physical Explanation	8	34.8%	10	23.8%	18	27.7%
Combination	4	17.4%	8	19.0%	12	18.5%
Total	23	100.0%	42	100.0%	65	100.0%

There were a range of responses given by the young people to this question. These have been broadly categorised as a medical explanation (for example, the medical name for their condition), an explanation of how it affects them physically (for example, needing large print or needing to sit near the front in the classroom) or a mixed response. The majority of the young people chose to respond with a more medical orientated response, with 53.8% focusing specifically towards this, and a further 18.5% who referred to it in a more mixed response (medical and physical explanation).

Some of the responses given included:

"My eyes shake, can't hardly see and sometimes I need help with things"

"I have optic atophy which means that I am colour blind. Everything is quite blurry and I can't read anything but size 72 without feeling ill or straining my eyes."

"Yes, I have Nystagmus and ocular albinism, caused by an undeveloped muscle in my eye."

"I have albinism [sic]. My eyes wobble which makes it harder to focus on objects."

5.2.2 Equipment used in the classroom

Table 4: In which of the following ways do you read? Year 9 and Year 11

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)	No (N)	No (%)
Ordinary print (with or without a magnifier)	46	59.7%	31	40.3%
Large print (with or without a magnifier)	38	49.4%	39	50.6%
Braille	11	14.3%	66	85.7%
Listen to audio materials	18	23.4%	59	76.6%
Use computer speech output	15	19.5%	62	80.5%
Someone reads to you	23	29.9%	54	70.1%
Other	7	10.0%	70	90.0%

Approaching half of our sample use magnifiers. 'Large print' and 'very large print users' (18 point +) tend to use magnifiers for reading print, whilst those who prefer a normal to large print (12-16 point) would tend not to use a magnifier. Examples of other ways of reading given were using a clear plastic coloured sheet to help with the black and white contrast, using a dome or monocular, or CCTV.

Table 5: What specialist equipment do you use at school? Year 9 and Year 11

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)	No (N)	No (%)
Your own laptop computer	33	47.8%	36	52.2%
Magnifier	28	40.6%	41	59.4%
Magnification software	21	30.4%	48	69.6%
Screen reading software	14	20.3%	55	79.7%
Perkins brailler	11	15.9%	58	84.1%
Monocular/telescope/ binoculars	12	14.4%	57	82.6%
Other	9	13.0%	60	87.0%
CCTV	8	11.6%	61	88.4%
Electronic Braille note taker (e.g. Braille-lite)	4	5.8%	65	94.2%

The table above gives a breakdown of the type of equipment being used across the two year groups. Table 64 to Table 70 in the

appendix look more specifically at these specialist equipments being used by blind and partially sighted young people in schools, according to preferred format, and provide further description of what the specialist equipment are.

Taking preferred format as an indication of level of visual impairment, we see that CCTV and laptops tend to be used by young people with a range of visual impairment. Monoculars/telescope and binoculars are used exclusively by those preferring normal to large print, whilst magnification software is mostly used by those who prefer large and very large print. Screen reading software is predominately used by large print, very large print, Braille and electronic users. As would be anticipated, electronic Brailler notes and Perkins Braillers are used by young people with preferred format of Braille, although two who prefer very large print also identify that they use a Perkins Brailler.

Examples of other specialist equipment used include coloured sports equipment and a lamp.

5.2.3   Mobility training

Some young people with visual impairment receive training in how to move around confidently and safely. This is called mobility education or mobility training.

Within our sample, 55.1% of the young people have received some mobility training, and 11.5% were unsure whether they have done or not.

Those who received mobility training are predominately young people who have a preferred format of large print and above, and Braille users. Follow up phone calls with the young people from one special school revealed that mobility training is seen as an essential part of their school curriculum.

Table 6: Which of the following mobility aids do you use? Year 9 and 11

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)	No (N)	No (%)
I use a long cane	15	20.5%	58	79.5%
I use a symbol cane	9	12.3%	64	87.6%
I use a guide cane	31	42.5%	42	57.5%
I walk with someone who acts as a 'sighted guide'	15	20.5%	58	79.5%
None of these	48	65.8%	25	34.2%
Other	4	5.5%	69	94.5%

Mobility aids are tools which can be used by people with visual impairment to assist them in getting around. A long cane is used to provide safety and orientation, a symbol cane is used to alert attention to others that an individual has a visual impairment and a guide cane acts as a combination of the two.

The table above demonstrates that the majority (65.8%) of respondents do not use any mobility aids, whilst there are others who would use one or more types of aids, the most commonly used being a guide cane. Examples of other mobility aids used include echolocation, a wheelchair user, and assistance from parents.

Mobility education and training is something which could be anticipated as making a real difference in the future for those who go away for university or need to travel for employment, and so it will be interesting in the future to see what a difference they feel the training that they have received at this age makes later on in life.

5.2.4 Support in School

A Qualified Teacher of Visually Impaired Students (QTVIs) 'is a teacher who has received specialist training and holds an additional qualification to work with children with sight problems. Some teachers of children with visual impairments are based in schools – others are known as visiting or peripatetic teachers.' (RNIB, 2010).

73.1% (57) of the students reported receiving some kind of support from a QTVI, with a further 10.3% who were unsure. There are concerns that some of the respondents might not know if the

support that they receive is from a Teaching Assistant based within the School, or from a QTVI as it's possible that the distinction may not have been made to them. It is also possible that some of the QTVIs will spend more time in working alongside the young person's teacher and advising them, than actually working with the young person.

There does not appear to be an association between the number of young people receiving support from a QTVI and whether they have a Statement of SEN or not. However, it should be recognised that the young people's understanding of the job roles of those supporting them may not be accurate, and also there are only a limited number of young people who don't have Statements of SEN to serve as a reference.

Table 7: What type of support do you receive from the QTVI? Year 9 and Year 11

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
One to one support/teaching	30	49.2%
Mobility training	15	24.6%
Preparation of material	21	34.4%
Provide specialist material	20	32.8%
Unsure	5	8.2%
Other	14	23.0%

This table shows that the support that is received by QTVIs is quite varied. Young people at Special Schools and Resource Bases will be taught all the time by QTVIs, whilst those in mainstream schools are more likely to have a QTVI coming into the school at set intervals to help support them. It should be noted that the role of many QTVIs is in fact to advise teachers and also to make assessments and recommendations, rather than to provide direct teaching support.

Examples of other type of support included the QTVI coming in at regular intervals to see how they are doing, assessments, modifying and supplying equipment, and helping in practical lessons such as science.

Table 8: Do you get support from a TA or LSA?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
No	7	23.3%	13	28.9%	20	26.7%
Yes, all of the time	10	33.3%	9	20.0%	19	25.3%
Yes, for some of the time each day	4	13.3%	8	17.8%	12	16.0%
Yes, a few times each week	5	16.7%	7	15.6%	12	16.0%
Yes, one a week	1	3.3%	3	6.7%	4	5.3%
Yes, less than once a week	2	6.7%	3	6.7%	5	6.7%
Unsure	1	3.3%	2	4.4%	3	4.0%
Total	30	100.0%	45	100.0%	75	100.0%

Teaching assistants (TAs) or Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) are usually staff from within a school. They often provide support to pupils with visual impairment and to their teachers.

A similar number of young people reported that they get similar support from a teaching assistant or learning support assistant as they would a QTVI. The amount of support received varies across the respondents, with 37.8% having daily support and 29% having less frequent support throughout the week.

The amount of support received by the young people from a TA or LSA appears to depend upon whether they have a Statement for SEN, with 55.6% of those who don't have a statement saying that they don't have any support from a TA or LSA, compared to 56.5% of those with a Statement for SEN who say they have support every day. Again, it should be remembered that there are only 18 young people who stated that they do not have a Statement of SEN to serve as a comparison.

Table 9: What type of support do you receive from the TA or LSA? Year 9 and 11

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)	No (N)	No (%)
One-to-one support/teaching	30	55.6	24	44.4
Mobility training	4	7.4	50	92.6
Preparation of material	21	38.9	33	61.1
Unsure	6	11.11	48	88.9
Other	11	20.4	43	79.6

The table above demonstrates that the main types of help being received from TAs and LSAs are one-to-one support or teaching and the preparation of materials. Examples of other types of support received from a teaching assistant or learning support assistant include reading off the whiteboard, general support in lessons, help for mobility problems, helping with reading if needed and copying text off the whiteboard.

5.3   Statutory Support for Transition

The questionnaire defined transition planning as the support received in planning the young person's future after the age of 16, including advice on careers and future education. Data for Year 9's and 11's is presented separately, as they are at different stages of the transition process.

5.3.1   Statementing and Annual Review process

Typically, the nature of the statutory transition support available to a young person with a visual impairment is largely determined by whether they are statemented or not. The government guidance to parents regarding statements reads that 'a statement of special educational needs (SEN) sets out your child's needs and the help they should have. It is reviewed annually to ensure that any extra support given continues to meet your child's needs' (Directgov, 2010). Local authorities carry out the statementing process, and will generally statement according to a young person's need. However, Hewett et al (2010) demonstrated that some (although a minority) of the Local Authorities would actively not statement their visually impaired students (largely due to the financial implications of this) as they felt that they could provide a better service without. Instead, they would actively ensure that the young person was receiving the support they needed, rather than having a Statement,

which would then make this support mandatory. Therefore when interpreting responses given to these questions, particularly in terms of reference of whether a young person had a statement or not, these different statementing policies should be considered.

Two other measures which can be put in place for supporting young people with SEN are School Action, and School Action Plus. School Action is where the school informs a young person's parents or carers that they believe their child has special educational needs and that they may need extra of different help. School Action Plus is an extension of School Action, where the school expresses concerns about the internal support that they can provide for a child or young person, and so they seek the help from external support services – an example of which could be the Visiting Teacher Service.

Young people on School Action or School Action Plus will have an Individual Education Plan, with regular reviews attached to this. Therefore, although the Annual Review is typically a process attached to a Statement of Special Educational Needs, as all of our sample have SEN we would anticipate them to have had some form of review.

Table 10: Do you have a statement for special educational needs?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	20	64.5%	29	61.7%	49	62.8%
No	6	19.4%	12	25.5%	18	23.1%
Not sure	2	6.5%	5	10.6%	7	9.0%
Unknown	3	9.7%	1	2.1%	4	5.1%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

A large number of the young people in the sample have a statement for special educational needs. As already identified in Section 3.1, the number of statemented visually impaired young people is over represented in this sample. It is possible, that as some of them have additional special needs, they principally have a statement as a result of their other special needs, or as a result of the combination of the two. This potential relationship was investigated and it was found that 13 of the 15 students identified with additional special needs had a Statement for SEN suggesting that statementing is more likely for those who require support for

multiple needs, although 33 of the 55 students (60%) who don't have additional special needs have a Statement.

One important event for young people with SEN is the transition review. In the questionnaire a transition review was defined as 'an annual meeting at school which is held to talk about a young person's future', and a transition plan as 'a written document which describes plans about their future'.

We would hope to see all students having had a transition review. However, 25.8% of Year 9s and 29.5% of Year 11s report not having one, whilst only 42% of Year 9s and 47.4% of Year 11s are confident of having one, or that they had one scheduled.

This was investigated further and it was found that proportionally more young people attending special schools and resource bases seem to be having transition reviews (although it should also be noted that proportionally more young people at special schools and resource base have a Statement of SEN).

Department of Health (2007) speak of the importance of a people-centred transition review. This means that the transition review should be conducted with the wishes and the needs of the individual at the centre. For example, instead of considering the services which are already in existence and where the young person would best fit into these, consideration should instead be in terms of what services could be given to the young person to help them best to meet their objectives. It is therefore important that the young person involved is in attendance at the transition review.

For a fully person-centred transition review all those people involved in supporting the young person would be expected to be in attendance. This would include the young person's parents or carers, a representative from the school (likely the SENCO), a representative from the Local Authority (for example the QTVI who would come into the school), and a representative from Connexions. Therefore, for all annual reviews (at least those with statements) we would expect all relevant bodies to be in attendance. For those students with a statement, having an Annual Review is a formal part of the statementing process. However, it could still be anticipated that students without a statement will still have some form of annual review process.

Table 11: Did you attend the transition review?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	11	73.3%	23	79.3%	34	77.3%
No	3	20.0%	2	6.9%	5	11.4%
Not sure / can't remember	1	6.7%	4	13.8%	5	11.4%
Total	15	100.0%	29	100.0%	44	100.0%

Overall, 77.3% report being in attendance at the transition review, with a further 11.4% who are not sure or can't remember. Whilst this is a relatively high percentage for both year groups, it still suggests that not all service providers are conforming to policies recommending that all young people should be in attendance at the review.

After a transition review has been conducted, the school is responsible for drafting the transition plan. Once this has been written, it should be circulated to all those in attendance at the review, including the young person and their family and Connexions who are responsible for ensuring that the content of the transition plan is put into action.

Table 12: Do you have a written transition plan?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	5	16.1%	14	30.4%	19	24.7%
No	13	41.9%	18	39.1%	31	40.3%
Not sure	13	41.9%	14	30.4%	27	35.1%
Total	31	100.0%	46	100.0%	77	100.0%

We see that almost a quarter of the young people report having a written transition plan, whilst another 35.1% are not sure if they have received one or not.

The table below details who responded in saying they had a transition plan, according to their response to the question 'In this school year, have you had a transition review?'

39.4% of those who had a transition review received a copy of their transition plan, whilst a further 42.4% are not sure. This could be because their parents/carers wouldn't have thought of showing

it to them, as they would have been aware of the content anyway. However, there are still 18.2%, or 6 of the 33 who had had a transition review who report not having a written copy of the transition plan.

To conclude the section, the young people were asked 'Could you describe in your own words what you think about the transition support you have received?' These responses were coded into the categories 'positive response', 'neutral response' and 'negative response' along with those who were not sure or couldn't remember.

Table 13: Responses to Transition Support received

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Positive response	10	45.5%	19	52.8%	29	50.0%
Neutral response	4	18.2%	6	16.7%	10	17.2%
Negative response	3	13.6%	9	25.0%	12	20.7%
Not sure/can't remember	5	22.7%	2	5.6%	7	12.1%
Total	22	100.0%	36	100.0%	58	100.0%

Positive Response:

The response to the support received by the young people is fairly mixed. 29 out of the 58 respondents, or 50% gave a positive response. Examples of typical responses include:

"Very good, don't struggle in lessons, get everything done."

"Very good support and useful"

"Helpful in several areas, have got an idea about what want to do. Exceptionally helpful in thinking about what might want to do, but may change in the future."

> "The transition support I have received has been useful. I don't think there is anything that could improve the support I have been given."

Neutral Response:

10 of the 58 responses, or 17.2% were more neutral responses (generally expressing that the support wasn't bad, but it didn't necessarily help them in any way). Examples include:

> "It's been ok. I just tell her all my details. I haven't learnt anything though!"

> "Was alright but thought about it before, not that helpful, but was there."

Negative Response:

There were 12 out of 58, or 20.7% that were more negative responses (those who didn't receive support at all, or felt that they didn't receive the support needed). Examples of this included:

> "I have had none other than that which all students receive."

> "It's taken time to get things sorted because of complications with sixth forms."

> "I don't really think anything of it, over the year I haven't required additional help - and I don't really see the importance, to me, of these meetings"

Within the negative responses, there were also those who expressed concern over the lack of transition support that they had received.

> "Looking at this questionnaire and seeing what is offered to people who are visually impaired I have realised I have had little transition support."

> "I have not received any support following my career plans after year 11."

Finally, there are those students who doubt the effectiveness of the transition support they receive:

> "My transition support has been alright, except in life I don't think they can really help me."

5.4 Connexions/Careers Wales

The questionnaire defined Connexions and Careers Wales as being an organisation for young people aged between 13-19, living in England (for Connexions) and Wales (for Careers Wales) and wanting advice on getting to where they want to be in life. They also provide support up to the age of 25 for young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities (or both).

Grove et al (2003) explain the importance of a personal advisor with working young people with special education and support needs. They describe the Connexions Personal Advisor as being 'at the heart of the new service' (p12). They also explain how Connexions have a particular responsibility towards those students with statements of special educational need. They conclude that the transition planning process prior to Connexions was unsatisfactory for those with special educational needs, and highlight Connexions as being well positioned to resolve these problems.

Questions which were asked in a previous questionnaire relating to Connexions were used in the Year 9 and 11 questionnaire, to serve as a comparison for the experiences of the young people in our sample. This consisted of a general survey, and within the survey identified three different priority levels to look specifically at the support they received. These priority groups were:

- Priority one: 'Intensive support' for those with multiple problems, or for those not in education, training or employment post-16

- Priority two: 'Supported'. In depth guidance and help for those at risk of not participating effectively in education and training

- Priority three: 'Minimum intervention'. General information, advice and guidance.

Our sample would be most appropriately defined as Priority 2 –
'Supported' - In depth guidance and help for those at risk of not
participating effectively in education and training. The other priority
groups were 1 – 'Intensive support' for those with multiple
problems, or for those not in education, training or employment
post-16, and 3 – 'Minimum Intervention' – general information,
advice and guidance (DfES, 2004). Although the survey included
those aged 13-20, the data was also presented by age group, and
so it was possible look specifically at those aged 13-15 (the closest
age group to our sample).

The young people were asked whether they had heard of
Connexions/Careers Wales prior to completing the questionnaire.
All students in Year 11 had heard of either Connexions or Careers
Wales. However, only 61.3% of Year 9s had heard of them,
suggesting that contact for many may not occur until after Year 9.
Overall, these percentages are lower than found by the
Connexions survey, when in Wave 2 of the survey, they found that
96% of young people aged 13-15 had heard of Connexions.

We looked to see whether students in Wales were more or less
likely to have heard of Careers Wales than students in England
were to have heard of Connexions. However, due to the smaller
number of Welsh students, it's hard to identify any real difference,
with roughly equal proportions of who had and hadn't heard of
Connexions/Careers Wales before they had taken part in our
survey.

**Table 14: Have you ever talked to a Connexions
Service/Careers Wales Personal Adviser? Year 9**

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Yes – in person	12	38.7%
Yes – on the telephone	0	0.0%
Yes- as part of group	3	9.7%
No	15	48.4%
Don't know	2	6.5%

Table 15: Have you ever talked to a Connexions Service/Careers Wales Personal Adviser? Year 11

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Yes – in person	42	93.3%
Yes – on the telephone	4	8.9%
Yes- as part of group	11	24.4%
No	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%

The two previous tables demonstrate the contact that Year 9s and 11s have had with Connexions Service or Careers Wales Personal Advisors. The majority of Year 9s had not had any contact with a personal advisor, whereas 93.3% of Year 11s reported having spoken to them in person. The Connexions Survey revealed that 85% of priority 2 respondents had had one-to-one contact with a Connexions Service Personal Advisor, with personal contact increasing as the young people get older. The fact that the young people in our survey see Connexions Service Personal Advisors less often as part of a group session or by talking on the telephone also corresponds with the results of the Connexions Survey.

The data was also looked at specifically to see if there were any identifiable differences for those who received support from the Connexions Service and those who received support from Careers Wales. As previously highlighted, making comparisons with such small numbers of Welsh students is difficult, but the level of service between the two does appear fairly consistent.

Meeting in person is by far the most common form of contact between the young people and the organisation whether it is Careers Wales or Connexions. For those who have met with Connexions and Careers Wales staff, their opinion on the support received varies considerably. For the Year 11s who have had the most contact with the organisations, 24 of the 45 students say it's made no difference to their overall confidence, whilst 2 of the 45 say it's made them less confident overall. Only 16 out of 45 young people say that it's helped them be more confident overall.

In the original comparison survey for those aged 13-15, 59% of respondents said that Connexions had made them more confident overall, 39% said it made no difference to their overall confidence, and 1% said that it had made them less confident. Although we have a much smaller sample size than the Connexions study,

these differing results possibly demonstrate that Connexions and Careers Wales are not managing to support visually impaired young people as well as other young people.

A comparison was made of how positive the young people had found their contact with Connexions according to whether they had a Statement of SEN or not. For those who had a statement, 17 of 42 found that they were more confident overall, compared with only 4 of the 17 of those who didn't have a Statement of SEN. Those who didn't have a Statement instead were less sure about how helpful the contact had been, with 4 of the 17 saying they weren't sure, compared with 4 of the 42 who did have a Statement of SEN.

A comparison was also made looking at the impact that contact with Connexions or Careers Wales had had on the young people, according to their location and correspondingly, the organisation which supports them. The results showed that whilst the opinion towards Connexions is rather mixed, all of the students living in Wales had a rather neutral opinion on Careers Wales, and all said that it has made no difference to their overall confidence.

5.5   Locus of Control and 'self theory'

5.5.1   Locus of Control

Locus of control is a psychological concept relating to a person's personality. A series of questions can be asked to establish whether a person believes that they are able to control their future, or whether their future is determined by external forces – or in other words whether a person has an internal or external locus of control. Someone who has an external locus of control may believe that their behaviour is guided by fate, luck, or other external circumstances. Those who have an internal locus of control believe that his/her behaviour is guided by his or her personal decisions and efforts.

Several questions were asked in order to ascertain the young persons' locus of control. It is hoped that this information may provide a useful insight to the attitudes of the young people at present, and also as they continue with the transition process, and also to investigate whether the locus of control is affected by external circumstances.

The questions were sourced from Wave 2 of the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England (LSYPE). Although unfortunately the possible responses were slightly modified, so cannot be used as a direct comparison.

Table 72 to Table 87 detail the overall responses given by the young people to each individual locus of control question, whilst below we have a description of the results for each individual question:

- A person who believes that it is usually a person's fault if they are not a success in life could be described as having an internal locus of control. Table 72 in the appendix shows that there is an approximately even distribution between those young people who strongly agree or agree with this statement (25 of 78), compared to those who would strongly disagree or disagree with it (26 of 78).

- A person who believes that even if you do well at school you will still have a hard time getting the right kind of job could be described as having an external locus of control. Table 81 in the appendix shows a tendency towards a view of having an external locus of control, with 37 or 78 young people strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement, compared to those who would strongly disagree or disagree (22 of 78).

A person who believes that working hard at school will help them later on in life could be described as having an internal locus of control. We see in
- Table 82 in the appendix that the majority of the young people (72 of 76, or 94.7%) strongly agree or agree with this statement

- A person who believes that someone like themselves does not have much of a chance in life could be described as having an external locus of control. We see in

Table 83 in the appendix that the majority of the young people (57 of 77 or 74.1%) strongly disagree or disagree with this statement.

- A person who believes that can decide what will happen in their life could be described as having an internal locus of control. The response to this question (shown in Table 84 in the appendix) is fairly mixed, although a higher proportion strongly agreed or agreed (38 of 78) compared to those who strongly disagreed or disagreed (22 of 78).

- The question 'Doing well at school means a lot to me?' could be considered more neutral, not really ascertaining a person's tendency towards an internal or external locus of control, although it could be argued that for those who would express doing well at school meaning a lot to them, that they are likely to perceive benefits in their life from doing well at school. We see in Table 85 the majority of young people stated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement (74 of 77 or 96.1%)

- A person who believes how well you get on in this world is mostly a matter of luck could be described as having an external locus of control.

Table **86** in the appendix shows that the majority of young people disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement (44 of 77) compared to those who strongly agreed or agreed (12 of 77).

- A person who believes that if you would work at something you will usually succeed can be described as having an internal locus of control. Table 87 shows that the majority of the young people agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (69 of 76 or 94.7%).

The responses given were also summed together to give an indication of the range of perceptions of an individual's external locus of control. The lower the score, the greater the individual would consider their internal locus of control. Seven questions were used in constructing the sum for locus of control, with a possible value of 1 to 5 for each question, meaning that the lowest possible score was 7 (strong sense of internal locus of control), with the highest possible score being 35 (strong sense of external locus of control) and the average score being 17.5.

The table below presents the sums of the locus of control questions for those who gave answers (excluding a response of 'don't know') for all questions.

Table 16: Sum of Locus of Control Scores

Score	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Internal	14	87.5%	32	82.1%	46	83.6%
Middle	2	12.5%	3	7.7%	5	9.1%
External	0	0.0%	4	10.3%	4	7.3%
Total	16	100.0%	39	100.0%	55	100.0%

On average, the perceived locus of control by the young people is fairly neutral, with the majority having scores close to the average possible score, emphasised by the mean score of respondents being 16.4.

5.5.2 Dweck's 'self theories'

Dweck questions come from the psychological theory devised by psychologist Carol Dweck that learners can have different 'self theories' about their ability. At one end of the dimension, 'Fixed IQ theorists' tend to believe that ability is fixed at birth, and therefore ability comes from talent rather than from the slow development of skills through learning.

At the other end of the dimension, 'Untapped potential theorists' (or 'growth' or 'incremental theorists') tend to believe that ability and success are due to learning, and learning requires time and effort. The following questions as used by Dweck were used to ascertain the group which the individual students belong to.

- How much do you agree or disagree that: You have a certain amount of intelligence, and you really can't do much to change it?
- How much do you agree or disagree that: Your intelligence is something about you that you can't change very much?
- How much do you agree or disagree that: You can learn new things, but you can't really change your basic intelligence?

The combined responses for each individual were taken to ascertain the appropriate Dweck category for each individual young person. Dweck suggests that there will be 15% of young people who give a mixed response and so their beliefs about intelligence are indeterminate. Our results presented in the table below show a reasonable approximation of this. The answers to

three questions were summed together, and then averaged to obtain a mean score, giving the following distribution:

Table 17: Dweck Categories

	Year 9 and 11 (N)	Year 9 and 11 (%)
Fixed	28	37.3%
Middle	9	12.0%
Incremental	38	50.7%
Total	75	100.0%

5.6 Decisions for the future

5.6.1 Post-16 decisions

Table 18: When you have finished at school/Year 11 what are you planning to do?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Go onto sixth form or college	25	80.6%	45	95.7%
Leave full time education at 16	1	3.2%	0	0.0%
Undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship	1	3.2%	2	4.3%
Not sure	4	12.9%	0	0.0%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%

Both cohorts were asked what they were planning to do once they finished school. The table above shows that 45 of the 47 Year 11 students were planning on continuing onto sixth form or college. There were also two Year 11 students who were planning to undertake a modern apprenticeship in accountancy in health and social care (higher).

Table 19: Where do you plan to undertake your full time education after finishing Year 11?

	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)
Sixth form at the same school as now	15	33.3%
Sixth form at a different school from now	4	8.9%
A sixth form college	4	8.9%
A college of further education	21	46.7%
A specialist college	1	2.2%
Another type of college	0	0.0%
Total	45	100.0%

At this stage, it had been necessary for the Year 11 students to consider where they would like to go to continue with their education. A third wished to move onto sixth form at their current school, whilst almost half hoped to go onto a college of further education.

5.6.2 Reasons for choosing a particular school or college

There were a range of decisions made about where to continue their full time education after Year 11. For some students, the decision they make is likely to be largely influenced by where they live. For example, in large cities, there is more of a focus on moving to specialist sixth form centres, whereas in more rural locations, it is more likely that there will be a sixth form attached to the school where they have taken their GCSEs. To gain a better understanding of this, we asked the young people to explain their reasons for choosing the particular college or school they have done.

Table 20: Reasons given for choosing the particular college or school

Reason	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Runs the particular course they want to do	20	47.6%
Friends attending college/school	2	4.8%
Know/get on with the staff	8	19.0%
Know the environment of the school	3	7.1%
College/School is close by / easily accessible	11	26.2%
College/School has good facilities	4	9.5%
College/School is equipped to meet their needs	7	16.7%
Wanted a change	3	7.1%
College/School has a good reputation	3	7.1%

Course

The most common reason given for choosing the particular college or school was that they run the particular course that they young person wanted to do. Examples of responses given include:

"Because I like the look of the course"

"I chose [the college] because it was the only college that did the course that I wanted"

Close by/easily accessible:

A further common reason that was given was that the college/school was close by or easily accessible. For some young people, this decision would just be a logical decision, as it makes more practical sense in attending somewhere close to home. However, for some young people, we see that they felt restricted into their decision:

"I am worried about travelling and what help I am entitled to, so I chose the nearest college."

"Other options were too difficult to travel to"

People:

Knowing people at the school or college (staff or friends) was also highlighted by a number of the young people.

"It has nothing to do with visual impairment, my friends are staying and I know the subject teachers well."

"They are offering me a particular course that I liked and the teachers and people know me."

Equipped for needs:

For others, knowing that the school or college was equipped to meet their needs was important:

"Only school for blind in Britain that offers national curriculum, too hard in mainstream, didn't want to go elsewhere."

"I feel that they will all support my individual learning needs."

"I wanted to take maths and biology and because of Braille it is easier there than in mainstream."

Change:

Other responses came from individuals who wanted a change from their current school environment:

"It is a well known college for good education, also I have had past experiences at school and wish to go and meet new people and start fresh (bullying)."

"I spent 5 years [at special school]. Although the experience is useful for many young people I felt that my education would be no different there or in mainstream school. I missed the friends I had at home and I wanted to be more integrated into the sighted world as I believe that is extremely important."

5.6.3 Applying for new School or College

Typically, when moving to another school or college, or continuing at sixth form at their existing school, Year 11 students need to make some form of official application. Schools and Colleges will also put on open days to allow the young people a chance to visit and become familiar with the surroundings, aiding them in their

decision making. For students with special educational needs, the school or college may wish to conduct some form of assessment of needs to establish the support that the young person may need. This information could also be gathered from speaking to Visiting Teacher Services, if a link between them and the School/College exists. For young people with a statement the school/college should (with the young person's permission) have received a copy of the Learning Difficulty Assessment from the local authority. This is known as a Section 139a Assessment.

The most common forms of contact with the school or college were an interview (33) and application form (36), with 29 young people reporting having both an interview and completing an application form, whilst 29 of the 45 young people also chose to visit the school or college. Only 24.4% reported having an assessment of needs, although it is possible this process could have happened without their knowledge.

Types of course

Table 21: Type of courses intending to take

	Year 11(N)	Year 11 (%)
A-levels	19	45.2%
BTEC/Diploma	10	23.8%
Combination of BTEC/A-levels	4	9.5%
Vocational Courses	9	21.4%
Total	42	100.0%

Year 11 students were also asked which course(s) they were planning to study. Varied responses were given, from traditional A-level subjects, to more vocational subjects. Examples of vocational courses include Animal Care and Management, Child Care and ICT Office Skills whilst BTEC/Diplomas included Business, Health and Social Care and Music Technology.

The young people were asked to select from a list of options to explain why they wanted to do those particular courses. They were able to select more than one answer. The majority (28) wanted to take the course so they could apply for university, whilst 13 had a specific job in mind (although speaking to the young people at a

later date, a number of these also wanted to go to university, in order to help them pursue this specific job). Only 13.6% (6) said that they didn't know why they had chosen those particular courses, demonstrating that that most of the Year 11s had some form of transition plan in mind.

5.6.4   Financing education after Year 11

One concern for education post Year 11 can be the expense involved. For example, young people may need to buy their own stationary, textbooks, pay for trips related to the course and pay to travel to a school/college further away than previously.

The majority of young people (61.0%) felt that their parents would support them through their education, although 16 young people when asked how they would fund their studies after completing Year 11 identified the education maintenance allowance as a source of finance from a list of possible sources, whilst another 11 identified part-time work (however, it should be noted that we do not know if they would be reliant on that source of money or not).

5.6.5   University

Due to the project being a longitudinal study, it was also necessary to gain an understanding of the future educational ambitions of the young people recruited for the project. Therefore, Year 11s were asked if they had thought about what course or subject they would like to study at university, whilst the Year 9s were asked if they wanted to go to university. 60.6% of the Year 11s have decided what course of subject they might like to study at university. Examples include ICT, Medicine, Music, English, Teaching and Psychology. The Year 9s who obviously are further away from needing to make any decisions, are less decisive about whether they would want to go to university, with 12 (38.7%) saying they would like to go, but a further 12 saying they didn't know.

5.6.6   The Future

Table 22: Year 11 - What do you WANT to be doing in 12 months time?

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Work full time	4	8.5%
Learn a trade / work-based training	4	8.5%
Be unemployed	0	0.0%
Part time education	4	8.5%
Full time education	39	83.0%
Looking after family and home	1	2.1%
Something else	1	2.1%
Unsure	1	2.1%

Table 23: Year 11 - What do you THINK you'll be doing in 12 months time?

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Work full time	2	4.3%
Learn a trade / work-based training	3	6.4%
Be unemployed	0	0.0%
Part time education	3	6.4%
Full time education	41	87.2%
Looking after family and home	1	2.1%
Something else	0	0.0%
Unsure	1	2.1%

The majority of respondents thought they would doing the same thing in the next 12 months as they reported wanting to do. One respondent had only identified that they **thought** they would be working full time in 12 months but said that they **wanted** to be working full time, learning a trade and in part time education. A further respondent **wanted** to be both in education and employment, but **thought** they would only be in education in twelve months time. We see from the two tables above that the majority of respondents both wanted to, and thought that they would be in, full time education.

Year 9's and 11's were also asked if they knew what sort of job or trade they would eventually like to do. A higher percentage of Year 11s (87.2% felt that they knew what they would like to do, compared to the Year 9s (54.8%), again demonstrating that they have moved further along in the transition and decision-making process than the Year 9s have done. Examples of jobs aspired to by Year 11 students included accountancy, performing arts, being a vet, teacher, journalist and a clinical psychologist. One person was less confident on a specific job but said "I would like to be doing something to suit my creative pulses [sic], but I not sure what exactly that would be."

6 Findings – summer 2010 and spring 2011

This section combines responses from the Summer 2010 questionnaire and the Spring 2011 interviews. During this time, the Year 11 students have moved into Year 12 (and in one instance into a modern apprenticeship), whilst the Year 9 students have moved into Year 10. For convenience, they will still be referred to as 'Year 9' and 'Year 11' throughout the rest of the report.

6.1 Planning for careers and the future

6.1.1 Careers Advice – Summer 2010 surveys

Careers advice for young people aged 13 and above comes from two main sources. The school must provide programmes of career education to all pupils in Years 7 to 11. This is done in conjunction with Connexions, a government support service for all young people aged 13 to 19 (and up to the age of 25 if they have SEN). (Teachernet.gov.uk)

In the Summer 2010 survey, the young people were asked to give a detailed breakdown of how useful they had found each individual source of advice. The young people were asked about the experience in seeking advice from:

Personal interviews with a careers advisor
74.5% of Year 11s describe their interviews with careers advisors as either very or partly useful, compared to 43.3% of Year 9's, although 46.7% of Year 9s hadn't had an interview with a careers advisor, suggesting that this is something which comes about after Year 9.

Talks from a careers advisor

72.3% of Year 11s found talks from careers advisors very or partly useful, with less than 20.0% saying they were not at all useful. Again these talks appear to happen beyond Year 9, as 44.8% of Year 9s report that they haven't had a talk from a careers advisor.

Interviews with school teachers

Interviews with school teachers are less common for both Year 11 and Year 9, although of those in Year 11 who report having had interviews with school teachers, 81.5% identified them as very or partly useful and in Year 9 all of them found it useful.

Informal talks with school teachers

66% of Year 11s found informal talks with school teachers very or partly useful, whilst this seems a common source of careers advice for Year 9s, with only 5 saying they haven't had such discussions, and 74.2% of them saying they were useful or partly useful.

Other people giving talks

The response for other people giving talks was a bit more mixed, as could be anticipated as these talks could have come from a variety of sources. However, 58.1% of Year 9's and 59.6% of Year 11's have found talks from other people useful.

Careers leaflets

Careers leaflets seem less common, although it could be that they were not available in an accessible format, and this explains why over 40% of Year 9's and 30% of Year 11s haven't seen any. Of those who did see them, 70.5% of Year 9s and 59.4% of Year 11s identified them as useful.

Visits to careers libraries

Visits to careers libraries also seem less frequent, with 80% of Year 9s and 66% of Year 11s never having visited one. Of those who have, 50% of Year 9s describe them as useful and 76.5% of Year 11s.

Friends

Proportionally more Year 11s report speaking to friends about plans for their future compared with the Year 9s, demonstrating that their thoughts are progressing more towards their future

careers as they get to Year 11. Obviously, as their friends are not trained in giving careers advice, how useful these conversations would have been will vary from person to person, although 75% of Year 9s and 76.2% of Year 11s report that the advice was very or partly useful.

Visual impairment support teachers/ teaching assistants

For visual impairment support teachers and teaching assistants there is a very mixed response. This could be partly due to, as identified in the previous section, problems for the young person in knowing the difference between the two types of people providing them support. 58.6% of Year 9s report having spoken to a visual impairment support teacher and finding it very useful or useful, along with 48.9% of Year 11s. 48.3% of Year 9s found visual impairment teaching assistants very or partly useful, but only 30.3% of Year 11s (although approximately 40% in each year group haven't spoken to a visual impairment teaching assistant about their future plans).

Connexions Service/Careers Wales Personal Advisors

Contact with Connexions Service and Careers Wales Personal Advisors appears to increase between Year 9 and Year 11, with 54.8% of Year 9s reporting not having spoken to them in Year 9, compared to only 8.5% in Year 11. Of those Year 11s who have spoken to a Personal Advisor from these services, 70.2% have found them useful, or partly useful.

The Connexions Service and Careers Wales should, in particular, be providing support to those young people who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, and so it is of interest to see how useful the respondents found the support provided by Connexion Service/Careers Wales Personal Advisors according to whether they were statemented or not. Responses are only presented for Year 11 students, due to the fact that 61% of Year 9 students hadn't spoken to a personal advisor, and so it is not possible to make a comparison.

There is possible evidence of students with Statements of SEN finding discussions with Connexions Service/Careers Wales Personal Advisors more useful than those without, with 41% (12 out of 29) of those young people with statements finding it 'very useful' compared to only 8.3% (1 out of 12) of those who don't

have a statement (although caution must be made in drawing this comparison, due to how small the numbers are).

Parents/Carers

Only 2 of the 78 respondents report not having spoken to their parents or carers about their future, demonstrating that this is a key source of advice in their transition planning. 87.1% of Year 9s and 89.3% of Year 11s report this advice as being very or partly useful, making it the highest valued source of advice by the young people.

Other family members

Conversations with other family members are less frequent, with 35.5% of Year 9s and 25.5% of Year 11s saying they hadn't spoken to other family members about it. In total, 51.6% of Year 9s and 61.7% of Year 11s found this advice very or partly useful.

Work experience

Work experience seems to be uncommon in Year 9, with 90.0% of respondents reporting not having had any, in contrast to only 6.4% in Year 11. For those Year 11s, 85.1% said that work experience had been very or partly useful to them in planning their future, demonstrating that this is another important source for them as they decide their futures.

Examples given of other types of support received included correspondence with people over the internet, offer of visiting colleges with visual impairment teacher, home visits by visual impairment service, and one young person who identified their mother as a source of help, saying 'my Mum is sorting it all out to get what I need, it is too tricky for me to do it.'

Table 24: How do you find out about careers advice?

	Year 9 Yes (N)	Year 9 Yes (%)	Year 11 Yes (N)	Year 11 Yes (%)
Careers software	8	25.8%	9	19.1
Internet	16	51.6%	28	59.6
Email	4	12.9%	3	6.4
Library	2	6.5%	5	10.6
None	5	16.1%	2	4.3
Other	8	25.8%	16	34.0

The table above demonstrates that a main source of careers advice for those young people who are seeking to find out information in planning their future is the internet, and to a lesser extent, careers software (students from one of the special schools reported having careers software preinstalled on the laptops that they would use).

Other examples of ways in which the young people said they would find out about careers advice include (for Year 9's) directly from the careers advisor, people setting up meetings (although the young person doesn't state who with), through school and (for Year 11's) career's teachers and teachers at their school, connexions, friends and family, leaflets, their resource base, work experience.

6.1.2   Careers advice – Spring 2011

In the Spring 2011 interviews, the young people were asked to identify who they had received guidance from about what they could do once they had finished their current course of study.

The majority (60.7%) of Year 9 students had received some guidance about what they could do following their GCSE exams, as is expected as it is a component of the national curriculum. Those who had not did not indicate much concern at this, with a number suggesting that they were too young yet to really formulate plans for the future.

Similarly, the majority (78.7%) of Year 11 students reported having received support in planning their futures in that academic year. Some of those who had not received much guidance expressed concerns about this and how quickly their education in sixth form school or college was going, leaving them minimal time next year to make decisions about what they would do next.

Table 25: Have you received any guidance from any of the following?

	Year 9 Total (N)	Year 9 Total (%)	Year 11 Total (N)	Year 11 (Total %)
Personal interview with careers advisor	15	53.6%	14	29.8%
Talks from careers advisor	12	42.9%	18	38.3%
Interviews with school teachers	3	10.7%	15	31.9%
General discussion with school teachers	14	43.8%	34	72.3%
Other people giving talks	9	32.1%	18	38.3%
Careers leaflets	11	39.3%	18	38.3%
Visit to careers library	6	21.4%	5	10.6%
Friends	21	75.0%	33	70.2%
Visual impairment support teachers	10	35.7%	8	17.0%
Connexions Service Personal Advisor	15	55.6%	17	36.2%
Parents/Carers/Family members	21	75.0%	43	91.5%
Other family members	1	3.6%	5	10.6%
Someone you worked for on a work experience placement	2	7.1%	12	25.5%
Other	4	14.3%	21	44.7%

The table above lists the potential sources of guidance that the young people may have benefited from in planning their futures. The most common sources of guidance are from family members (75.0% of Year 9 students and 91.5% of Year 11 students), whilst we also see that a number will talk to their friends about their plans (75.0% of Year 9 students and 70.2% of Year 11 students) demonstrating that considerations of their future plans is something that they are actively involved in.

General discussions with school teachers appears to be more common for Year 11 students, with 72.3% of Year 11s saying they have had such discussions, compared with only 43.8% of Year 9s.

Examples of other sources of advice from the young people included:

- Pathways
- Observing others who were further along the qualification route
- Attending university open days
- Attending careers events
- Attending a workshop
- Attending specific days scheduled at college devoted to thinking about the future
- Having representatives from local universities coming in to speak at college about what university is like
- Attending a four day 'taster' at a residential college to see what it would be like

The young people were asked to identify the most helpful source(s) of guidance that they had received so far. The table below details the responses given (some listed more than one source):

Table 26: Most helpful source(s) of guidance for planning future (Year 9 and 11)

Source of guidance	Total (N)	Total (%)
Careers advisors	9	12.0%
Family	16	21.3%
Teachers/Tutors	14	18.7%
Combination of advice received	8	10.7%
External people	4	5.3%
Independent	3	4.0%
Work experience	4	5.3%
Classes at school	5	6.7%
Other	7	9.3%

The sources of guidance identified most frequently as being the 'most helpful source of guidance' were family and teachers/tutors. 8 of the 75 said that they thought it was the combination of advice received that was most helpful.

Other types of guidance that were highlighted included observing others at a more advanced stage, the annual review process and a supportive boyfriend.

Those who identified a source of guidance that they found the most helpful were asked to explain why this was the case.

Careers advisors

> "Knew lots, had researched as part of his job, and had a wide knowledge."

> "Tell you about what you can do, based on what you like."

Family

> "Know what's best for me"

> "Experienced it, know what it's like."

> "Easier to talk to them about it."

Teachers/Tutors

> "They know about all the options – easy to talk to."

> "Giving advice on applying for jobs and CVs"

Combination of advice received

> "None in particular, a number have been highly important. Family have given encouragements in different areas. Teachers noticed I was good at computing and suggested that route."

> "All helpful when put together, but singularly not much impact."

External people

> "I want to go to university. It's useful hearing about it from university representatives who gave useful information."

> "Had talks from stage school, specialist places giving advice on what would be best. [Helpful because] they go to the place."

Independent

> "Nothing has been greatly helpful. Own research been best."

> "Main advice came a while back, but that was helpful as it means I can now research for myself."

Work experience

> "Tour around radio 1 was very helpful. Want to work there in the future, gave an idea of what it's like."

Class discussions

> "Make it more understandable"

Other

> Observing others – "Helped to see a possible career path."

> Talking to friends or adults they know that are visually impaired. "Because they have been in the same boat. Spoken to mobility officer who worked for RNIB, understands deeper. Better than Connexions who don't have the specialist understanding."

Table 27: Are you happy with the level of guidance that you have received so far?

	Year 9 Total (N)	Year 9 Total (%)	Year 11 Total (N)	Year 11 (Total %)
Yes	23	82.1%	44	93.6%
No	4	14.3%	3	6.4%
Unsure	1	3.1%	0	0.0%
Total	28	100.0%	47	100.0%

The majority of the young people interviewed were happy with the level of guidance that they had received so far, with 82.1% of Year 9s and 93.6% of Year 11s saying, they were happy. Those who were not happy were invited to comment on this further:

> "Could be better – not enough for Year 12s. Just been told to look on the net. The assistance is not there."

"School should be talking more about it to everyone. There's no general programme on it – might pick up more next year."

"Should be given more options, bring in more leaflets and have more one to one talks."

"Need to guide you more – not at the end of Year 10 and there's not long left (just Year 11). It will go quickly and will leave not knowing what to do."

The information on careers guidance that has been gathered so far shows that it comes from a variety of sources, with some sources being more useful than others. More personal advice from those who know the young person, along with personal experience tend to be valued higher. The level of support from schools and colleges seem to vary, suggesting that in a number of cases, the level of support received depends on how proactive the school is in this area, and how much of a priority it is to them. This is something which can be investigated further in a more detailed report.

6.2   Work Experience

6.2.1   Work Experience Placements

Work experience placements generally occur in Year 10 or 11, although some young people will have the opportunity in Year 9. Work experience gives young people a chance to learn more about the working world, and the opportunity to try working in a particular area they are interested in.

6.2.2   Year 9 Students

Only one year 9 student reported having had a work experience placement (a low number would be anticipated as typically placements are in Year 10 or 11. This young person's placement involved catering at school, and they rated it as excellent.

6.2.3   Year 11 Students

The Year 11 students were also asked about short-term work experience placements. It was found that schools are relatively evenly divided in whether choosing to conduct work experience in Year 10 or in Year 11, with 19 having a placement in Year 11 and

26 having a placement in Year 11. Of those who answered these questions three students reported having work experience in both years, whilst two didn't have work experience in either.

One concern with blind and partially sighted young people when going on work placements is that the places they are going to will not be able to cater for their needs, and therefore there could be a temptation for schools to place them in environments which would be better adapted to their needs, rather than somewhere which really interests them. Examples could include placements within the school or a placement at a charity for people with visual impairment.

However, the responses given to the type of work done show that the placements were very varied, and for many students the work experience they had related well to the type of career they were considering. Examples of work experience placements include:
- Working backstage at a theatre
- Working at an engineering firm, taking part in some of the day to day tasks
- Working at primary schools or nurseries
- Working at a law firm
- Working at a magazine
- Retail work

One young person reported that they worked at a company who specialise in producing software for blind and visually impaired people, although this was something of particular interest to that respondent. Another young person went and worked at a local charity for people who are blind, although it is not clear whether this was a placement that they were particularly interested in, or not.

Those who had done a work placement were asked to rate their overall experience. Positively, 81.1% of respondents rate their placement as either Excellent or Good.

Twenty seven of the Year 9 students reported in the Spring 2011 interviews that they had either done a work experience placement that year, or would be doing one in the summer term.

6.2.4   Paid or Voluntary Work

American Foundation for the Blind (2010) highlight the importance of paid work experience for young people who are starting to make the transition from education into employment. They describe such paid work experience as a key ingredient for the transition program.

All of the young people were asked in Summer 2010 if they did any paid work. 3 of the 29 respondents from Year 9 reported having some paid work, with a slightly higher percentage of 8 out of 41 from Year 11. These figures are slightly lower than those reported by the DFES Post-14 SEN Longitudinal Study where 28.9% of Year 11s had stated that they did work they were paid for (although it should be remembered that this study applies to young people with a range of SEN). The majority of the young people who have paid work use normal to large print (8 of 11 or 72.7%) suggesting a possible barrier for those with greater visual impairments in gaining any part time employment, whilst only one had any additional special needs.

Not all jobs carried out by young people will be regular weekly work (an example of this could be babysitting) and so we also asked if they had done any paid work in the last week. Of the three Year 9s who do some form of paid work, 2 had done so in the last week, along with 5 of the 8 Year 11s.

Examples of paid work include admin for their father's business, delivering leaflets/papers, retail, working at horse stables, and helping collect glasses at local bar/club. These jobs were typical of those reported in the DFES Post-14 SEN Longitudinal Study. The number of hours of paid work they had done in the last week ranged from 3-7, and averaged at 4 hours.

A further source of work experience can be some form of voluntary work. This can be a useful way of developing skills and experience that it wouldn't otherwise be possible to get. Three respondents from year 9 and 10 respondents from year 11 reported doing some sort of voluntary work. Examples of voluntary work included helping at a youth club for disabled children, dog-sitting, helping at nurseries, helping at a classes/groups for younger children, helping an elderly friend in her home, and working in a charity shop. Voluntary work was something possibly more widely available to those with a larger preferred font size, with 69.2% (or 9

or 12) of those with voluntary work have a preferred font size of 18 or above (including Braille or electronic)

In Spring 2011, the young people were again asked whether they do any work that they are paid for. Four of the Year 9 and seven of the Year 11 young people had part time work – similar to the figures found in Summer 2010.

Types of work done were again similar to what was reported previously:
- Collecting glasses
- Waitress at a hotel
- Works at a florist
- Teaching private tuition for music lessons
- Work at football ground selling pies and drinks at half time
- Waiting
- Shop assistant
- Delivering leaflets
- Pot washer in a kitchen

Those who didn't have a part time job were asked whether they would like one. In response 16 Year 9 students (69.6%) and 29 Year 11 students (74.4%) said they would like one. Those who answered 'yes, they would like a part-time job' were asked the reasons why they don't have a part time job at the moment.

Table 28: Reasons for not having a part time job at the moment (Year 9 and 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Focussing on courses	18	34.6%
None available	12	23.1%
Eye sight	8	15.4%
Not tried to get one	4	7.7%
Waiting to hear from application	2	3.8%
Residential student	4	7.7%
Too young	3	5.8%
Other	8	15.4%

A lot of the young people interviewed said that their main reason for not having a part time job was that they had limited time, either due to the courses they were taking, or other extra-curricular commitments. A number said that they were looking to hopefully

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get work over the summer holidays. Those who had been looking for work had struggled to find anything, with limited jobs being available, and for some, finding that any jobs that were available were not suitable for them (for example, not being able to see labels at a supermarket). Those who referred to eye sight as a barrier tended to be those with a larger preferred font size or Braille users.

The young people were also asked again if they did any voluntary work. Seven of the Year 9s and 20 of the Year 11s said that they did. Several of the Year 11 students who reported doing voluntary work, were doing so as part of their course. This has still been included within this table, as it is still valuable work experience that should be noted.

Examples of voluntary work included:
- Helping at a library
- Helping at a youth group
- Helping at a clothes shop
- Mentoring at school
- Coordinating the production of a magazine for new students
- Coffee mornings at a local sheltered housing complex
- Coaching at a rugby club
- Mini apprenticeship working on different ideas in a music technology environment, helping produce a song for some kids

Examples of voluntary work as part of placements included:
- Working at a nursery once a week
- Working with adults with learning difficulties at a day centre
- Working at a kennels

Those who did not do any voluntary work were asked firstly if they would like to do some voluntary work, and if applicable, the reasons why they don't do any voluntary work at the moment. Six of the Year 9 students and 10 of the Year 11 said they would like to do some voluntary work. These 16 were then asked the reason why they don't do any voluntary work at the moment.

When those who wanted voluntary work were asked why they hadn't got any voluntary work, the answers given were similar to those given to part time jobs – too many commitments already, hadn't got round to it, or in one case, "I wouldn't know where to

start". For a lot of them their general responses indicated that they had never really given much thought to doing any voluntary work, particularly where it would have involved them finding something themselves. Those who did voluntary work tended to already be in the situation where it was natural for them to get involved – for example, coaching rugby with younger children at the club they would normally play at.

7 Findings – autumn 2010 and spring 2011

7.1 Examinations Experience

The Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research were commissioned in 2010 to investigate into the examinations experience of visually impaired people. Results were presented in Douglas et al (2010). Following on from this report, it was decided to interview those young people who had recently taken their examinations and find out more about their experience. The young people were asked about the access arrangements they received, whether the arrangements were as they expected and what they would change about these access arrangements if they were able to do so. These questions were asked in both the Autumn 2010 follow up interviews and the Spring 2011 interviews.

There are several types of access arrangements that visually impaired young people may be offered including extra time, examination papers in preferred format, a reader, a scribe and taking the examination in a separate room.

A number of people reported having extra times in their exams, of varying proportions.

For one young person, they experienced problems with their schools lack of knowledge of the support they were entitled to.

> "I needed access to ICT, enlarged print and time. These were ok apart from the extra time issue where they would only give me 25% extra time, but I never finished my mock exams due to lack of time… I then had to fight to get 50% for the paper exams… and now I find out I could have had more according to what staff say at [special school]…"

The young people interviewed described being asked what type of format they would prefer. Some requested large print, whilst others said that they were happy with the standard papers. Special provision was made for some, such as photocopied onto A3 green paper and maths papers with 3D shapes. Most who received enlarged papers had them on A3 paper, which caused problems for some.

> "Instead of A3 would have been better on A4, as ran out of space on his desk."

> "Another paper was enlarged a bit too big, wouldn't fit on the desk and had to put it on the floor. Mentioned it to support service – they said they would talk to the school."

> "I hated having large papers, they were fiddly and not necessary"

There were also reported problems with the modified papers for some of the young people:

> Papers were perfect (in terms of format), but some papers were muddled up. Had question a in the front of the book, then b at the end of the book. Didn't realise that hadn't done it all. Teacher asked if she had finished and only then realised that there were the blank pages before the next question. Finished with ten minutes to spare, but doesn't think would have noticed the other question if the teacher hadn't spoken to her.

> "Papers contained lots of mistakes – for example French questions were written incorrectly, maths and science – the grids were wrong, grammar was wrong. In History two of the questions were identical and couldn't answer that question, knocked confidence."

> "Sometimes exam boards have problems getting Braille maths papers right, so my maths teacher has to check through the paper first and there were a few mistakes, like 10 written instead of 100"

Some of the young people benefited from have access to a laptop in their examinations, or for specific examinations (such as English and History which would presumably require more writing.

Further provisions referred to by some of the young people were having a scribe (7 or 14%) and a reader (7 or 14%), and more were offered such support but decided not to take it.

A final access arrangement given to some was the option to sit in a smaller room, away from the main exam hall. Such arrangements had a mixed response:

> …was happy although was sitting in a classroom on his own with people distracting [other people in resource base]

> "Was happy, nice being in a smaller room, no way that it could have been improved."

> Only provision given to him was extra time in autism base. "Was helpful having it in the resource base."

> Could have been improved by not having as many support workers [in the room], it delayed the start of the exam. There were children in there who didn't have an exam and they were distracting her beforehand.

The young people were also asked whether the access arrangements were how they would have wanted them and whether the examinations were in the expected format (that being what they had asked for).The majority of respondents to this question (36 or 85.7%) were happy with the access arrangements they had. Those who weren't identified problems such as not being given sufficient extra time or not being offered extra time at all, questions in the papers being muddled up, graphs and print too small to read for maths paper, papers containing mistakes and enlarged papers onto A3 being too large and 'fiddly'.
Finally, the young people were asked whether the access arrangements could have been improved in any way. The majority of those questioned said that they were completely happy with the access arrangements as they were, and that they couldn't have been improved upon. Some of the young people, however, did

come up with some suggestions on how improvements could have been made:

> "Instead of A3 would have been better on A4 as ran out of space on the desk"

> "Found sitting in a classroom in resource base with other people distracting, so would be better to avoid this"

> "Ideally would have liked to have it on a computer"

> "The way that enlarged papers were laid out could have been improved – for example avoiding empty pages"

7.1.1   Spring 2011 interviews

The Year 9 and Year 11 young people were also asked about their examination experience in the Spring 2011 interviews. Similar responses to those made in the Autumn follow up interviews were given, although a number of the Year 11 young people have chosen courses which are assessed through coursework, meaning they do not have to sit any exams.

7.2   Travel

In the Spring 2011 interviews, both the Year 9 and Year 11 students were asked some questions about how they would get to school or college each day.

Table 29: How do you usually get to school/college/work?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Walk	9	32.1%	5	10.6%
Taxi	6	21.4%	8	17.0%
Get a lift	3	10.7%	3	6.4%
Bus	5	17.9%	14	29.8%
Train	0	0.0%	2	4.3%
Resident	4	14.3%	4	8.5%
Other	1	3.6%	11	23.4%
Total	28	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 29 shows that the young people get to school or college in a variety of ways. Limited problems were reported, with only one person said that they were unhappy with their transport arrangements. Those who may have mobility problems in getting to school either had taxis provided by the council, or were residential students.

In some instances, their satisfaction could potentially be due to them being used to their current arrangements, or simply them being happier in being able to use the simplest method. For example, one Year 9 student stated that they would get a lift from various family members to school, because although they had a disability bus pass they were unable to use it before 9.30, and didn't have the confidence in using the bus independently.

The Year 11 participant who wasn't happy with the transport arrangements listed a number of reasons for their dissatisfaction, including being bullied by others using the bus, and not being allowed to walk to the bus stop due to it being on a very busy street.

7.3   GCSE and equivalent results of Year 11 students

Following receiving their GCSE results, the Year 11 young people were asked their grades for each of the subjects taken. These grades have then been taken to calculate overall point scores. These scores are only available for 40 of the young people. Some did not feel comfortable giving their full set of results, whilst others when giving details of their courses gave insufficient information to establish the level of qualification that they had taken. When interpreting the points, it is worth considering that some young people take more GCSEs and other qualifications than other, so a higher points total does not always entirely relate to higher grades.

Table 30: GCSE and equivalent results achieved by Year 11 Students

Points	Total (N)	Total (%)
101-199	2	5.0%
200-299	6	15.0%
300-399	12	30.0%
400-499	13	32.5%
500-599	6	15.0%

600-699	0	0.0%
700+	1	2.5%
Total	40	100.0%

For reference, GCSE points are as follows:

Table 31: GCSE Point Allocations

Grade	Points
A*	58
A	52
B	46
C	40
D	34
E	28
F	22
G	16

We see that, as is typical with GCSE examinations, the results are widely spread, with 60.5% of respondents achieving between 300 and 499 points. Assuming an average equivalent of 9 GCSEs per person, this equates to the majority averaging approximately A's-D's.

Table 32: GCSE – Achieved 5 Grades A*-C, including Maths and English Language

	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)
Yes	28	60.9%
No	15	32.6%
Unclear	3	6.5%
Total	46	100.0%

Perhaps of more importance is the number of young people achieving 5 Grades A*-C, including Maths and English, as this is a key government statistic. The table above shows that 60.9% of respondents reported grades that equated to this, whilst for another 6.5% it was more unclear. In 2009/10 the national average achieving five of more GCSE at A*-C, including Maths and English, was 53.1%, meaning that our sample performed better than the national average (Department for Education, 2010).

7.4 Transition experience of Year 11 students

Follow up interviews were conducted with 47 of the 48 Year 11 students in our sample. The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain the grades which they received in their examinations at the end of Year 11 (reported above), review how they found any access arrangements made for the examination process and discuss the transition that they have made following Year 11.

7.4.1   Experience of transition after first month

The Year 11 students were also asked about their transition since getting their examination results. Firstly, it was verified whether they had continued with their intended plans as described in the Summer 2010 Year 11 Questionnaire, and if not, what the reasons for their change in destination were. Secondly, the young people were asked about their transition experience into this next stage in their life, how well it was going, and how it could have been improved upon.

The majority (38 of 46, or 82.6%) of the Year 11 students had continued onto their planned destination, although some have decided to change the course they are studying. Those who have changed their destination or course gave a variety of reasons including:
- Changing their mind about A-level options due to not enjoying the content of one of them
- Deciding to go to Sixth form rather than Further Education College due to young person thinking they would get better support there
- Previous school recently opening a new Sixth Form and liked the look of the courses being offered there
- Previous choices not fitting in with timetable
- Decided didn't want to be restricted by taking an apprenticeship and that a qualification would be better
- Not being accepted into FE College
- Wanting a change
- Not getting grades needed

Finally, the young people were asked questions about how they had found the transition to this new stage in their lives. Prompts were also asked about what particularly had been good, what had been difficult, and how the transition could have been improved.

Ease of transition into new environment

Of those who spoke of how easy they had found the transition to their new courses or jobs, the majority spoke positively of the experience. Thirty six of those interviewed spoke of how the easy they had found in the transition experience Reponses included:

"Smoothly, everything has been good. Easy settling in…"

"I don't really see a difference"

"Really easy…"

However, there were three young people who hadn't found the transition quite as straight forward:

"Not easy because the college doesn't know a lot about visually impaired people"

"Haven't received much post-16 transition support"

Support being received

Some of the young people referred to the support that they were receiving. A number mentioned that they were happy with the fact that they were now able to ask for support when they needed it:

"Good – I can do what I want but get support"

"…It's really different at College, they treat you like an adult. At school they always asked if you wanted help but I prefer to ask for help myself"

Of those who did refer to support they were receiving, the majority of the comments were positive, although there were also some cases of students who were struggling with lack of sufficient support.

Positive Experiences of Support:

"Tutors are really understanding, especially with font size"

"Been good with materials, one-to-one support for every lesson, has someone to go to."

Negative Experiences of Support:

> "There are continuing problems getting a laptop with modified print/font… I am having to wait for this and this makes homework a problem"
> In Key skills, all in small print, training adviser reads it out to her. Would have been better in large, but just got on with it.

Positive about courses

A number of those who completed the interviews were very positive about the courses they were doing, even if they had found the transition difficult, whilst no one made any negative comments about their chosen courses.

> "It's marvellous, loving it, better option than the course would have been"

> "It's been difficult, but I'm enjoying it."

Workload

One difficult aspect for some of the students, as could be anticipated, was the increase in volume and level of work.

> "Ok so far, bit stressful with the coursework and the amount you have to do."

> "The main difficulties are a bigger workload, but I expected this."

Travel

A number of the young people mentioned difficulties that they were finding with travel, although for some this was simply due to the length of time it would take them to get to college.

> "The only difficulty has been having to get two buses… it takes me an hour to get to college."

> "I was getting a taxi (paid for by the LA) to college, but I was arriving late for lessons but this is now improving."

7.4.2 Experience of transition after first two terms

The Year 11 group were asked in Spring 2011 if they were still pursuing the same options as they had described in the Autumn 2010 follow up interviews. They were also asked how much they were enjoying what they were doing, how they were finding the workload, how well they had settled in, and again were invited to evaluate their experience of transition after GCSEs.

The majority (87.2% or 41 of the 47) are still pursuing the same options as they were taking in Autumn 2010. Those who have changed their options are still studying, but have either dropped a subject in order to concentrate on a smaller number of courses, or had to change due to administrative problems (such as changing the final qualification gained or amending timetables).

Table 33: Are you enjoying the courses that you are doing?

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes, very much	41	87.2%
No, not really	1	2.1%
Somewhere in between	5	10.6%
Not sure	0	0.0%
Total	47	100.0%

Most of the young people said that they were enjoying the courses that they were doing (87.2%), with those who said 'somewhere in between' enjoying some of their options, but not all. The person who is currently not enjoying their course stated that the current course that they are on is not challenging enough. They have moved from mainstream school where they struggled during GCSEs into a specialist college, and with the support receiving are achieving higher academically.

Table 34: How are you finding the workload?

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Manageable	40	85.1%
Unmanageable	1	2.1%
Somewhere in between	6	12.8%
Not sure	0	0.0%
Total	47	100.0%

Most of the Year 11 group were finding the workload manageable, with some in this category having already dropped some options in order to make the work more manageable. The person who was finding the work unmanageable spoke of the large gap between GCSE and A-level, likening it to "tackling a mountain".

Eight of the forty seven young people thought that the experience of transition after GCSEs could be improved, whilst three were unsure. Those who said that they thought the experience of transition could be improved were asked how, whilst those who said no improvement could be made were asked to identify what they thought had made the transition experience easier.

How could the experience of transition be improved?

- Having better careers guidance from the school and connexions
- Knowing more about the course
- Finding some way to bridge the gap between GCSE and A-level
- Wasn't prepared enough, could have done with someone to sit down and explain how different it would be
- Limiting the gap in time between finishing GCSEs and starting A-levels
- Having more time to prepare for going. Only heard the funding decision from the Welsh Assembly a week before starting at a residential college

What was done to make the transition process a positive one?

- Having interviews at college where you could find out about the college and ask questions
- Teaching approach at GCSE similar to that of AS
- External people coming into school to say what would happen next
- Having support there, if needed
- Coursework easier as able to go at own pace
- Stayed in same college so knew the teachers and way around
- Important information being passed onto the college, such as need for extra time, enlarged papers, writing in black pen on the whiteboard
- Transitions days and ice breakers

7.4.3 Relationships

The Year 11 cohort were interviewed to find more about the friendships that they had developed since the transition after GCSEs. Of the 47 interviewed, 44 felt that they had a network at friends at school or college. Of the three who didn't, one was struggling due to feeling that the other young people around them did not know how to act around them, because of their visual impairment. Another was at a college with largely older people and although they felt able to mix well with the other members of the group, wouldn't classify them as friends.

Table 35: How would you best describe the friendships that you have at school/college/work?

	Total (N)	Total (%)
One or two close friends	11	23.9%
A group of friends	25	54.3%
A wide range of acquaintances	10	21.7%
Total	46	100.0%

The types of friendships experienced by the young people were mixed, although the majority (54.3%) said that they had a group of friends. Some reported that although they had one or two particularly close friends, they were also part of a wider group, making it more difficult to classify. Positively, all forty seven of the young people said that they felt they had settled in either good or average, with most saying good (85.1%).

Table 36: In terms of friendships and relationships, how does this compare to when you were taking your GCSEs

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Easier	27	57.4%
Harder	2	4.3%
Same	17	36.2%
Don't know	1	2.1%
Total	47	100.0%

The table above shows that a number of the young people had found friendships and relationships easier compared to when they were taking their GCSEs. They were asked why they thought they had found friendships and relationships easier, harder or the same. Some examples of responses are given below:

Easier

People are more mature

Was being bullied, but now people have backed off a bit, so can relax

Had issues at school, new college was a new start

Easier to socialise. More time free, not as hard on hours. Everyone that bit older.

Harder

In classes with older people and on own more because of doing an apprenticeship

Making friendships from scratch

Same

Same people and have enough time to see friends

Continuation of friendships

7.4.4 Support received

Thirty six (76.6%) of the cohort said that they were receiving support at school/college. The young people were then asked who they received support from, or if they at least knew who to go to if they did need support. A number of people, particularly those in

Further Education colleges spoke of a particular contact they could go to if they needed support, examples given were 'support worker', 'coordinator of support', 'Department for Additional Support' and 'Learner Support Service'.

Those who needed assistance in terms of modified materials would typically have this provided by their class teacher, whilst a few would still have support within the classroom.

Finally, others received support from their tutors, during tutorial times where they would be able to discuss any problems that they might have.

Table 37: What kind of support are you receiving?

	Total (N)	Total (%)
One to one support/teaching	18	38.3%
Mobility training	15	31.9%
Preparation of material	33	70.2%
Provision of specialist equipment	26	55.3%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Other	7	14.9%

The most common forms of support received were preparation of material or provision of specialist equipment. There was an emphasis in the responses by the young people of being equipped to work independently in the classroom. The following are various examples of responses given by the young people about the support they received, or support they thought they would benefit from receiving:

One to one support/teaching

One to one support when asks for it

Have one to one if needed, but no one dedicated to helping

Receives support if ask for it

Mobility training

Might be getting a guide dog, would be good to have mobility training around the local area, don't know who to go to
Had mobility training provided by the Wilberforce trust

[Mobility training] coming, but taken a long time to get arranged, keen to have.

Preparation of material

Material is prepared by the lecturers

Material provided on green paper

Material available on computer and can get it printed off and enlarged

Worksheets prepared by the technician in Braille before lessons

Provision of specialist equipment

Was able to bring in a laptop, but worried about it being stolen. Would benefit if they were provided with a laptop. CCTV

Magnifier, but had problems with accessing sufficiently large print texts – magnifier doesn't work well with English literature books as the print is more grainy and doesn't magnify well

Provided with a Braille note embosser

Other

Write in dark ink on the board

Has note takers – know the course as well, which helps
In maths has 3D models of diagrams

Has Braille lessons

In order to ascertain the continuity of their support, the young people were asked how their current level of support compared to what they received at the start of the year. The majority (36 or

80.0%) said that they were receiving the same amount of support. Those who said they were receiving less support tended to follow this statement by saying that they thought it was a good thing, emphasising their desire to be able to work more independently. A further important consideration was whether they were provided with course material in a format that they could readily access. When asked this, 43 of the 47 young people reported that they received the course material in a format that they could access either all or nearly all of the time or most of the time. One person who said that they rarely or never received the course material in a suitable format had been having disagreements with the school and supporting visual impairment service about the support that was needed, with the school and VTS concluding that it was possible for her to manage with standard print and a magnifier, whilst the student wished to have enlarged materials – particularly books for English where it was harder to read the print in novels with a magnifier.

Table 38: Overall, do you think the services and support you receive in relation to your visual impairment could be improved?

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	5	11.1
No	38	84.4
Not sure	2	4.4
Total	45	100.0%

The table above shows that of the 45 who answered whether there could be an improvement in their visual impairment support and services, 38 didn't think that there could. Those who suggested that the support and services they receive could be improved, mainly focussed on improvements to materials to make them accessible:

> "Get materials blown up a bit more."

> "Sometimes not had materials in an accessible format… wastes time. Not been so bad lately, having to pound it into her. It would be improved if the material was ready, but I understand that the person has a lot on."

Finally, it was enquired whether the young people still heard from the Visiting Teacher Service (VTS). There was a mixed response to this question, with 20 saying they did, a further 20 saying they didn't and one person who wasn't sure. All those who had received support from the VTS were asked whether they were satisfied with the amount of support they are receiving from the VTS (even if they weren't receiving any contact now, to ascertain whether they thought they should do). Of the 34 who answered this question, 30 said they were satisfied. Of those who weren't, one thought that they should be assessed more often and be monitored regarding how they were doing, in order to advise teachers of any changes in need. Another was rather negative about the support being received and suggested that they should be doing a lot more, including providing appropriate enlarged resources and making provision in a more timely manner. Finally another reflected that it "was nice to get support from them" but couldn't identify anything specific that they were missing receiving.

7.4.5 Future Plans

Table 39: Once you have finished these courses what are you planning on doing?

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Go to university	29	61.7%
Get a job	7	14.9%
Further course	4	8.5%
Other	4	8.5%
Unsure	3	6.4%
Total	47	100.0%

The Year 11 young people had previously been asked what they wanted to do following the completion of their courses. Their most recent plans are shown in the table above. Seven of the young people had changed their minds or formed new ideas about what they wanted to do after completing the courses. Three who weren't sure what they wanted to do have now decided that they would like to move onto further courses or university, two who wanted to get a job have now decided that they would prefer to go to university, whilst one who wanted to go to university has now been put off by the university fees. Finally, one young person who wanted to go to university is still hoping to do so at a later date, but will have to delay this due to personal circumstances.

Of the 29 young people who said that they wanted to go to university, 28 of these had some idea of what course they wanted to study, although 15 had changed their mind about which course they would like to do since the Autumn 2010 interviews.

One consideration relating to university was whether the planned increase in university tuition fees would put any of the young people off going to university. They were first asked whether they are of the increase in tuition fees. Almost all (40 or 95.2%) of those who answered this question said that they were. Next they were asked whether the increase in University tuition fees would make any difference to whether or not they would decide to go to university.

The majority (63.4%) said that the increase in university fees wouldn't make a difference in whether they would decide to go to university or not, whilst another 31.7% said it probably would. One young person interviewed said it probably wouldn't make a difference in the likelihood of them going, but it could affect the timing as their parents would need to pay for their brother to complete university first.

In the Summer 2010 questionnaire, they had also been asked if they knew what job they would like to do in the future. Forty one (of 47) of the Year 11 cohort report knowing what sort of job they would like to do. This was the same number who said they knew what job they wanted to do in the Summer 2010 questionnaire, but there were some swapping of responses, with some who before did not know what job they wanted to do now having a better idea, and some who thought they had an plan for a future job, but have subsequently changed their minds.

Since the Summer 2010 questionnaire, ten of the respondents have changed their response to the question 'Do you know what job you would like to do in the future?' Four of these young people have changed their minds about what type of job they would like to do, one has since realised their previous choices were not suitable for them and one person thought they had an idea but have since changed their mind and haven't an alternative. Four young people before didn't have any idea of what they wanted to do, but now do, or at least have a broad area in mind, whilst one final young person has decided to broaden their proposed area of work as

they have realised it's very competitive, and so want to increase their options.

7.5 Transitions Experience of Year 9 students

7.5.1 Experience of transition into GCSEs after first two terms

All of the Year 9 participants spoken to in Spring 2011 had moved onto taking their GCSEs.

The young people were asked how they had found the change with moving from Year 9 to Year 10 and starting their GCSEs. The responses of the young people suggest that on the whole they have found the transition manageable, and whilst the workload is harder, they have found it a positive experience and were prepared for the step up.

Examples of positive responses included:
"Lot more work, otherwise it's been great"

"It was alright, struggled at the start with lessons, but fine now. Geography was hard, French easy. Settled in fine."

"It's a bit harder, expected it to be harder though."

"Been gradual, work difference, but not too bad. Exams daunting, but actual step not too bad."

There was only one real example of a more negative experience:
"Hard – really hard. Loads and loads of coursework, not as easy to understand."

When asked, all twenty eight interviewed said that they have found the workload manageable (20) or somewhere in between manageable or unmanageable (8).

7.5.2 Support received

The majority of those interviewed reported that they are receiving some form of support in lessons (23 or 82.1%).This support is mostly provided by teaching assistants (13 of the 27, or 48.1%), whilst 9 have support from QTVIs. All of those from a special

school report having support from a QTVI, whilst the other five who said they received support from a QTVI are in mainstream education.

Table 40: What kind of support are you receiving?

	Total (N)	Total (%)
One to one support/teaching	13	46.4%
Mobility training	8	28.6%
Preparation of material	21	75.0%
Provision of specialist equipment	22	78.6%
Unsure	0	100.0%
Other	1	3.6%

The most common types of support being received were preparation of material or provision of specialist equipment (21 and 22 of the 28, respectively). The following are various examples of responses given by the young people about the support they received, or support they thought they would benefit from receiving:

One to one support/teaching
- Sometimes has one to one support and teaching, but not often
- Having one to one support and teaching for Braille lessons
- Has support five hours a week

Preparation of material
- Have large print documents, handouts instead of textbooks
- Been provided with enlarged copies of worksheets
- Braille materials

Provision of specialist equipment
- Been provided with a magnifier, telescope, modified glasses for chemistry
- Been given a mouse which enlarges what's on the screen if you click on it. Can take this to use at different computers across the school
- Talking calculator, scientific equipment and a laptop

Other

- Parents tend to provide any specialist equipment
- Purple sheet overlay

The Year 9 cohort were asked how the level of support they receive now compares to what they received previously whilst they were in Year 9. The responses were mixed with most (16 of 27) having the same amount of support, but also 6 receiving more support and 5 receiving less.

One person was particularly negative about receiving less support:
> "Apparently there are people who need it more. I don't think that's true."

Another person described the difference that having more support had made to them:
> "Massive difference in terms of support received - lots more sheets blown up, everything prepared so I can be independent in lessons."

Most of the Year 9 group appear to be receiving the same amount of contact from the VTS as they had previously. A number of those interviewed said that the support that they would receive from the QTVI would involve them coming in at regular intervals (for example twice a term) to see how they were, and if they needed help with anything.

Table 41: Thinking about the course material you receive, do you get this in a format you can access?

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes, all or nearly all of the time	14	51.9%
Most of the time	11	40.75
Some of the time	2	6.3%
Rarely or never	0	0.0%
Total	27	100.0%

The majority of the young people are receiving the course material in a format they can access 'all or nearly all of the time' (51.9%) or 'most of the time' (40.75%).

For one person, having the enlarged materials makes a significant difference in how well they could manage in lessons.

> "Been given a magnifier but I don't need it - fine with enlarged sheets and being sat at the front."

Finally, the young people were asked whether they thought that overall the support and service they were receiving in relation to their visual impairment could be improved. Six of the twenty eight young people thought that the services and support that they receive in relation to their visual impairment could be improved. These were prompted to suggest methods which they thought could be used to make these improvements. The responses given included:

> "Could be improved by having more support in school - more assistance in class - more one to one support from TA. I can't access when teachers are explaining on the board. In the past the TA would explain what's happening. Support outside of school is strong."

> "More equipment" (CCTVs are old)

> "If had unlimited money, but that's not realistic. Would like a Braille note taker if could afford one, that would be really useful. Other magnifiers, but they are really expensive."

> "Used to get touch typing lessons, but they aren't doing that anymore. Miss having that…would prefer to have a laptop but they wouldn't give me on".

7.5.3 Future Plans

The Year 9 cohort had been asked in Summer 2010 what their plans were for once they had completed Year 11. Two of the 28 young people who were interviewed had changed their mind about what they wanted to do next. One had planned to leave full time education at 16, whilst another wasn't sure if they wanted to stay on or not. Now they are both intending to continue onto college.

Table 42: What are your plans once you have finished Year 11?

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Go onto sixth form or college	25	89.3%
Undertake a modern apprenticeship	1	3.6%
Get a job	0	0.0%
Unsure	2	7.1%
Total	28	100.0%

One consideration for those continuing in education post Year -11 would be the financial provision to do this. Discussions of the potential negative impacts of withdrawing Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) have been prominent within the media. However, only 7 of the 28 young people interviewed had heard of EMA. As EMA is only available to families below a certain income level, it is possible that a number of those interviewed would not have been eligible for EMA, and so it wouldn't have been something that had been discussed with them. All of those who had heard of EMA were aware of the government plans to stop EMA, whilst another person after some prompting and description of EMA said that they had been aware of this too.

They were asked whether it would make any different to whether or not they would carry on into full time education after Year 11. Whilst most were unaware of EMA and so couldn't really respond reliably to any questions asked about it, ten were asked whether the withdrawal of EMA might make any difference to whether or not they decide to carry on into full time education after Year 11. The answers were mixed with two saying it would, three saying they weren't sure, and the further five saying it wouldn't make a difference.

The Year 9 cohort were also asked whether they wanted to go to university. Of those interviewed, 12 (42.9%) knew that they wanted to go to university, whilst a further 10 (35.7%) were unsure. Four of the young people changed their minds on this question since the Summer 2010 questionnaire. One has been put off by the increased fees and decided that they do not want to go anymore. The other three weren't sure about going to university, but are now considering it, or have decided that they would like to go.

Twenty of the twenty eight interviewed had heard about the increase in tuition fees (although it should be noted that some of those who said no were from Wales, where the tuition fees situation is different as the decisions are made by a different body, who wish to provide Welsh domiciled students with a tuition fee grant to cover the increase in tuition fees). Nine said that it would make a difference in whether they decide to go to university or not, whilst a further four were unsure. Seven did not answer the question as they didn't feel they understood the finances involved with university well enough, with some saying that it was something their parents would deal with.

Of the 28 interviewed, 11 said they had an idea about what they would like to study at university. The general response from those interviewed was that it was a bit early for them to have made such a decision.

Finally, the young people were asked whether they knew what job they would like to do eventually (this again was a question that they had been asked in the Summer 2010 questionnaire). Whilst sixteen of the twenty eight young people said that they knew what job they would like to do eventually, seven of the group had changed their response since the last questionnaire. Two who had career areas in mind have now decided that they do not wish to work in that area anymore, three who didn't have an idea in Summer 2010 now have identified careers they are interested in, whilst a further two have changed the type of job that they are interested in.

8 Conclusions and future plans

Transition is something which every young person goes through, as they move from compulsory education and start thinking about what courses they would like to do, whether they want to go to university and ultimately what job they would like to do.

This report has highlighted experiences of transition that wouldn't be that different to those of the typical young person as they go through this process. However, there are also examples of experiences which are specific to those young people who have disabilities and even more specifically to those who have a visual impairment.

8.1 Key Findings

8.1.1 Support Received

It should be observed that throughout this report, the majority of young people have spoken positively of the support that they have received so far in their specialist support in education, and the support that they have had in planning for their future.

Initially in Year 9 and Year 11, the types of support that the young people receive can largely be seen to depend on those who support the young people, such as their teachers, learning support assistants and QTVI being diligent in their roles. Examples include ensuring that material is prepared in advance of lessons to the young person's preferred format. The data collected through this research suggests that on a whole those who are supporting the young people are doing a very good job, with the majority of young people satisfied with the support that they receive. However, it is important to remember that there is evidence, both through the phase 1 data collection and through informal discussions with service providers that a number are choosing to work beyond their job descriptions in order to provide the level of service that they do.

Once leaving Year 11, the emphasis tends to be on the young person in acting as their own advocate. This is particularly the case for those who move onto college where the young people are encouraged to request support when they need it. In parallel with the more independent style of learning post-16, the opportunity is

there to be more proactive in obtaining the resources needed and explaining to others what support you need and when. This is something which was seen as very positive by a number of those who took part in the Spring 2011 interviews, and can also be seen as good preparation for university and employment where the responsibility is more upon the individual to explain to others what provisions need to be made for them to engage in the course/role.

This also raises the potential issue of over support - particularly as young people get older and would naturally be striving to become more independent. Here we have the delicate balance of ensuring that the young person has sufficient support to be able to engage in their studies, and still have the opportunity of being able to get grades and qualifications comparable to their sighted peers, whilst at the same time it is important to be able to nurture them to be able to become more independent and learn how to support themselves, as this is what they will need to do once they have moved on from this phase in their lives.

8.1.2 Statutory support for transition

The statutory support surrounding SEN is a complicated one, and the statutory support relating specifically to transition support is no exception. At present the government has been proposing reforms to this system. One of the main challenges that has been highlighted in support for transition is the involvement of multi-agencies and their different roles. The limitations of this process have been evidenced in this report with not everyone receiving some form of review process, not all young people being in attendance at their transition reviews and transition plans not being made available to all of the young people.

8.1.3 Planning for careers and the future

In the Summer 2010 questionnaire, parents/carers and having work experience were identified as the most helpful sources of careers advice. This emphasises the importance of getting a work placement for the young people to experience what it is like to be in the workplace.

Some of those with a more severe visual impairment explained their frustration at not really knowing what jobs they would be able to do. The advice given tended to be rather generic and directed to the group, rather than being specific to them as individuals. This

along with the fact that the most helpful sources of guidance tended to be given by those who knew the young people best (family and teachers) suggests the importance of someone who knows them and understands their visual impairment and what they are or aren't capable of giving careers advice. This obviously rests on the assumption that those giving the advice would be equipped and knowledgeable to do so, which is less likely for the more non traditional routes that some might choose.

A number of people mentioned the opportunity to attend open days, careers events and taster days as a very useful source of guidance. Travelling to somewhere new for such an event would be a daunting prospect for most teenagers, but for blind and partially sighted young people who haven't had mobility training in travelling to that location, it would be even more of a challenge.

8.1.4 Work experience, Paid and Voluntary work

Many of the Year 11 cohort had had the opportunity to do a work placement within a variety of different industries. Most who had done a placement rated it as 'excellent' and later highlighted it as one of the most helpful sources of careers guidance.

Several of the young people have managed to get part time jobs, giving them valuable work experience for the future. However, others have detailed reasons why they have been unable to get work. For some this is due to a lack of part time work being available, which is understandable in the downturn in the economic climate in 2010 and 2011. Others were limited due to most of the typical jobs that teenagers would do, such as paper rounds and working in a supermarket perceived as not being a possibility due to their eyesight. Those at residential college also felt they were restricted as they lived in two different locations, so it wouldn't really be possible to get any work for the whole year.

For those unable to get any paid time work, voluntary work seems, for some, a useful way to get relevant experience to aid them in gaining future employment. However, for many they had similar problems such as a lack of time to do any voluntary work. Those who could have looked into voluntary work did not appear to have really considered the possibility of this, with most who did do some form of voluntary work gaining this opportunity through existing hobbies, although this is likely to be the case for their sighted peers also.

8.1.5 Examinations Experience

The majority of the participants who answered questions on examination access arrangements were happy with the arrangements that had been made for them. Arrangements included a variety of percentages of extra time, modified papers, having a reader/scribe and being able to sit in a separate room.

For most, the arrangements seemed to work well, although there were some suggestions of how the examination experience could be improved. The modified papers were particularly highlighted – especially the enlarged ones on A3 paper that caused problems due to their size on the small desks used and also due to problems with editing of the paper.

Opinions on being able to sit in separate rooms were mixed, with some finding it really beneficial, whilst others had problems with being disturbed by others in the room who were not taking exams. Whilst it is understandable that making provisions such as this can be complicated, it highlights the importance of asking the young person what they would prefer, and also not just looking for the most convenient option.

Finally, there were concerns from some about the amount of extra time that they were allowed in taking the examinations. One person had only found out what they were entitled to after leaving a mainstream school and going into a specialist school, whilst others gave indication that knowledge on this matter within schools is quite mixed, giving argument for a more transparent set of rules for making such decisions being made widely available.

8.2 Future Plans

By the end of the Spring 2011 data capture, there were still 78 young people involved in the longitudinal project. The intention is to continue following the progress of these individuals as they continue along their transition journey, in order to identify any barriers that may be faced along the way. Whilst until now, the support for the majority of those involved in the project has been largely positive, with them achieving high grades and having successfully moved onto the next stage of their studies, there may be greater challenges for them as they move from education settings into employment. Unfortunately the evidence of troubles

that blind and partially sighted people face in gaining employment is overwhelming. It is hoped, however, that their experiences will we can learn from.

Future data captures will consist of both general surveys of the two cohorts, focussing specifically at the stage of transition that they are in at that point in time, along with more detailed case studies, looking both at the individual and those around them, such as their family and teachers.

There are also plans to look at specific areas which may affect blind and partially sighted young people, such as social networking sites and work experience placements. We hope that the data will provide us with a detailed picture of the factors that improve or reduce young people's chances of making the transition to independent adulthood and employment.

In the future we intend to produce a series of focussed reports that aim to explore key themes and to make more use of the longitudinal nature of the data.

9 Appendix of Tables

Project sample and population

Table 43: Gender (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 9 Population (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Year 11 Population (%)
Male	18	58.1%	61.3%	20	42.6%	49.0%
Female	13	41.9%	38.7%	27	57.4%	51.0%
Total	31	100.0%	100.0%	47	100.0%	100.0%

Table 44: Ethnic Group (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 9 Population (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Year 11 Population (%)
White	27	87.1%	79.8%	42	89.4%	75.5%
Black or Black British	1	3.2%	3.4%	1	2.1%	4.9%
Asian or Asian British	2	6.3%	14.3%	3	6.4%	12.6%
Mixed	0	0.0%	1.7%	1	2.1%	1.4%
Other	1	3.2%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.4%
Missing	0	0.0%	0.8%	0	0.0%	4.2%
Total	31	100.0%	100.0%	47	100.0%	100.0%

Table 45: Is English your first or main language? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)
Yes – I only speak English	22	71%	39	83.0%
Yes – English is my first or main language, but I speak other language(s)	5	16.1%	7	14.9%
No – another language is my first language	3	9.7%	1	2.1%
I am bilingual	1	3.2%	0	0.0%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 46: Additional Special Needs (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 9 Population (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Year 11 Population (%)
Yes	8	25.8%	16.8%	7	14.9%	18.9%
No	20	64.5%	83.2%	39	83.0%	81.1%
Unsure	3	9.7%	0.0%	1	2.1%	0.0%
Total	31	100.0%	100.0%	47	100.0%	100.0%

Table 47: Statements (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 9 Population (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Year 11 Population (%)
Yes	20	64.5%	35.5%	29	61.7%	32.5%
No	6	19.4%	64.4%	12	25.5%	67.5%
Unsure	2	6.5%	0.0%	5	10.6%	0.0%
Unknown	3	9.7%	0.0%	1	2.1%	0.0%
Total	31	100.0%	100.0%	47	100.0%	100.0%

Table 48: Type of School Attended (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Type of School	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Mainstream	23	74.2%	37	78.7%	60	76.9%
Resource Base	4	12.9%	2	4.3%	6	7.7%
Special School	4	12.9%	8	17.0%	12	15.4%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

Table 49: Preferred format for reading (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Font Size (Point)	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 9 Population (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Year 11 Population (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	17	54.8%	52.9%	22	46.8%	51.7%
Large print (18-27 point)	8	25.8%	31.1%	17	36.2%	30.1%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	1	3.2%	7.6%	2	4.3%	7%
Braille	5	16.1%	7.6%	5	10.6%	4.9%
Electronic	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	2.1%	2.1%
Missing	0	0.0%	0.8%	0	0.0%	4.2%
Total	31	100.0%	100.0%	47	100.0%	100.0%

Table 50: Welsh (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Font Size (Point)	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 9 Population (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Year 11 Population (%)
Yes	3	9.7%	5.0%	7	14.9%	11.9%
No	28	90.3%	95.0%	40	85.1%	88.1%

You and your family

Table 51: Household composition (Summer 2010, Year 9 and 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Lives with both parents	12	15.6%
Lives with one parent	4	5.2%
Lives with parent and step-parent	0	0.0%
Lives with both parents and sibling(s)	41	53.2%
Lives with one parent and sibling(s)	8	10.4%
Lives with parent and step-parent and sibling(s)	6	7.8%
Other	6	7.8%
Total	77	100.0%

Table 52: My parents/guardians carers are interested in how I do at school? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Always or nearly always	31	100.0%	45	95.7%	76	98.7%
Sometimes	0	0.0%	1	2.1%	1	1.3%
Hardly ever	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not sure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	31	100.05	46	100.0%	77	100.0%

Table 53: My parents/guardians/carers come to school parent's evenings? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Always or nearly always	28	90.3%	38	82.6%	66	87.7%
Sometimes	3	9.7%	6	13.0%	9	11.7%
Hardly ever	0	0.0%	2	4.3%	2	2.6%
Never	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not sure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	31	100.0%	46	100.0%	77	100.0%

Table 54: Do you feel supported by your family – that is the people who live with you? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
I feel supported by my family in most or all of the things I do.	28	90.3%	39	83.0%	67	86.9%
I feel supported by my family in some of the things I do.	3	9.7%	8	17.0%	11	14.1%
I do not feel supported by my family in the things I do	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Unsure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	31	100%	47	100%	78	100%

Computing and Internet use

Table 55: Do you use a computer at home? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes, I have my own computer	20	64.5%	35	74.5%	55	70.5%
Yes, I share with other people	11	35.5%	10	21.3%	21	26.9%
No	0	0	2	4.3%	2	2.6%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

Table 56: Do you belong to a social website such as Bebo, Facebook or MySpace? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	23	74.2%	39	83.0%	62	79.5%
No	8	25.8%	8	17.0%	16	20.5%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

Table 57: How many hours do you spend chatting or interacting with friends through a social website like that on a normal school day? (For those recipients who report using a social website) (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
None	2	8.7%	2	5.1%	4	6.5%
Less than an hour	11	47.8%	13	33.3%	24	38.7%
1-3 hours	8	34.8%	22	56.4%	30	48.4%
4-6 hours	0	0.0%	2	5.1%	2	3.2%
7 or more hours	2	8.7%	0	0.0%	2	3.2%
Total	23	100.0%	39	100.0%	62	100.0%

Hobbies and After School Activities

Table 58: Young person only identified activities they would do independently: (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	7	23.3%	9	19.1%	16	20.8%
No	23	76.7%	38	80.9%	61	79.2%
Total	30	100.0%	47	100.0%	77	100.0%

Table 59: Young people who only identified activities they would do independently of their peers. By Preferred Format (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Font Size (Point	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	4	26.7%	4	18.2%	8	21.1%
Large print (18-27 point)	1	12.5%	4	23.5%	5	20.0%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	-
Braille	2	40.0%	1	20.0%	3	30.0%
Electronic	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	-
Total	7	23.3%	9	19.1%	16	20.8%

Table 60: Young person only identified activities that they would do independently of their peers against Mobility Training (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Have you ever had any mobility training?	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	5	31.3%	8	29.6%	13	30.23%
No	1	10.0%	1	6.7%	2	8.0%
Unsure	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	1	11.1%
Total	7	23.3%	9	19.1%	16	20.8%

Your visual impairment and support you receive at school

Table 61: Would you be able to explain your visual impairment to someone else? If so, what would you say? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	23	74.2%	44	93.6%	67	85.9%
No	4	12.9%	1	2.1%	5	6.4%
No response	4	12.9%	2	4.3%	6	7.7%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

Table 62: Do you use magnifiers ('low vision devices') for reading print? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	36	46.8%
No	35	45.5%
No, I do not read print	6	7.8%
Total	77	100.0%

Table 63: Do you use magnifiers ('low vision devises') for reading print? – by font size (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)	No (N)	No (%)	No, I do not read print (N)	No, I do not read print (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	11	28.9%	27	71.1%	0	0.0%	38	100.0%
Large print (18-27 point)	20	80.0%	5	20.0%	0	0.0%	25	100.0%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	3	100.0%
Braille	2	20.0%	2	20.0%	6	60.0%	10	100.0%
Electronic	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%

Table 64: Users of CCTV by preferred format (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

CCTV	Total (N)	Total (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	3	37.5%
Large print (18-27 point)	2	25.0%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	1	12.5%
Braille	1	12.5%
Electronic	1	12.5%
Total	8	100.0%

(A CCTV is a magnification tool which magnifies printed material and photographs.)

Table 65: Users of Monocular/telescope and binoculars by preferred format (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Monocular/telescope/ binoculars	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	5	41.7%
Large print (18-27 point)	7	58.3%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	0	0.0%
Braille	0	0.0%
Electronic	0	0.0%
Total	12	100.0%

(Monoculars/telescopes and binoculars are types of magnifiers which aid a visually impaired person in looking at things in a distance.)

Table 66: Users of personal laptop computers by preferred format (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Your own laptop computer	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	8	24.2
Large print (18-27 point)	14	42.4
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	3	9.1
Braille	7	21.2
Electronic	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0%

(Some young people will have laptops provided for them to assist them in their lessons.)

Table 67: Users of electronic Braille note takers by preferred format (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Electronic Braille note taker (e.g. Braille-lite	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	0	0.0%
Large print (18-27 point)	0	0.0%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	0	0.0%
Braille	4	100.0%
Electronic	0	0.0%
Total	4	100.0%

(These are small and portable devices with Braille keyboards.)

Table 68: Users of Perkins Brailler by preferred format (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Perkins brailler	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	0	0.0%
Large print (18-27 point)	0	0.0%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	2	18.2%
Braille	9	81.8%
Electronic	0	0.0%
Total	11	100.0%

(Perkins Brailler is a machine which can be used to write Braille, and works in a similar way to a typewriter.)

Table 69: Users of screen reading software by preferred format (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Screen reading software	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	1	7.1%
Large print (18-27 point)	3	21.4%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	3	21.4%
Braille	6	42.9%
Electronic	1	7.1%
Total	14	100.0%

(This is software which can be used to interpret and read out information being displayed on a computer screen.)

Table 70: Users of magnification software by preferred format (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

Magnification software	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	6	28.6%
Large print (18-27 point)	9	42.9%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	3	14.3%
Braille	2	9.5%
Electronic	1	4.8%
Total	21	100.0%

(This is software which allows magnification of the content on a computer screen.)

Table 71: Have you ever had any mobility training? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	16	51.6%	27	57.4%	43	55.1%
No	11	35.5%	15	31.9%	26	33.3%
Unsure	4	12.9%	5	10.6%	9	11.5%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

Table 72: Have you ever had any mobility training? By preferred font size (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)	No (N)	No (%)	Not sure (N)	Not sure (%)	Total N	Total (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	12	30.8%	22	56.4%	5	12.8%	39	100.0%
Large print (18-27 point)	18	72.0%	4	16.0%	3	12.0%	25	100.0%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	100.0%
Braille	10	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	100.0%
Electronic	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1	100.0%
Total	43	55.1%	26	33.3%	9	11.5%	78	100.0%

Table 73: Do you get support from a QTVI? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	23	74.2%	34	72.3%	57	73.1%
No	4	12.9%	9	19.1%	13	16.7%
Unsure	4	12.9%	4	8.5%	8	10.3%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

Table 74: Do you get support from a QTVI? According to whether young person has a Statement for SEN (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Statement –Yes (N)	Statement –Yes (%)	Statement –No (N)	Statement –No (%)	Statement – Not Sure (N)	Statement – Not Sure(%)
Yes	35	71.4%	13	72.2%	7	100.0%
No	11	22.4%	1	5.6%	0	0.0%
Unsure	3	6.1%	4	22.2%	0	0.0%
Total	49	100.0%	18	100.0%	7	100.0%

Connexions/Careers Wales

Table 75: Have you ever talked to a Connexions Service/Careers Wales Personal Advisor – Yes in Person (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	English (N)	English (%)	Welsh (N)	Welsh (%)
Yes	47	70.1%	7	77.8%
No	20	29.9%	2	22.2%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	67	100.0%	9	100.0%

Table 76: Have you ever talked to a Connexions Service/Careers Wales Personal Advisor – Yes on the telephone (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	English (N)	English (%)	Welsh (N)	Welsh (%)
Yes	4	6.0%	0	0.0%
No	63	94.0%	9	100.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	67	100.0%	9	100.0%

Table 77: Have you ever talked to a Connexions Service/Careers Wales Personal Advisor – Yes as part of a group (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	English (N)	English (%)	Welsh (N)	Welsh (%)
Yes	13	19.4%	1	11.1%
No	54	80.6%	8	88.9%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	67	100.0%	9	100.0%

Table 78: Have you ever talked to a Connexions Service/Careers Wales Personal Advisor – No (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	English (N)	English (%)	Welsh (N)	Welsh (%)
Yes	14	20.9%	1	11.1%
No	53	79.1%	8	88.9%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	67	100.0%	9	100.0%

Table 79: Has your contact with Connexions/Careers Wales (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	English (N)	English (%)	Welsh (N)	Welsh 11(%)
Made you more confident overall	22	37.3%	0	0.0%
Made you less confident overall	3	5.1%	0	0.0%
Made no difference to your overall confidence	23	38.9%	8	100.0%
Don't know	11	18.6%	0	0.0%
Total	59	100.0%	8	100.0%

Locus of Control and 'self theory'

Table 80: If someone is not a success in life, it is usually their own fault?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	1	3.2%	3	6.4%	4	5.1%
Agree	8	25.8%	13	27.7%	21	26.9%
Neither	8	25.8%	15	31.9%	23	29.5%
Disagree	6	19.4%	15	31.9%	21	26.9%
Strongly disagree	4	12.9%	1	2.1%	5	6.4%
Don't know	4	12.9%	0	0%	4	5.1%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

Table 81: Even if I do well at school, I'll have a hard time getting the right kind of job?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	2	6.5%	3	6.4%	5	6.4%
Agree	11	35.5%	21	44.7%	32	41.0%
Neither	3	9.7%	8	17.0%	11	14.1%
Disagree	10	32.3%	7	14.9%	17	21.8%
Strongly disagree	1	3.2%	4	8.5%	5	6.4%
Don't know	4	12.9%	4	8.5%	8	10.3%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

Table 82: Working hard at school now will help me get on later on in life?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	13	44.8%	25	53.2%	38	50.0%
Agree	14	48.3%	20	42.6%	34	44.7%
Neither	1	3.4%	1	2.1%	2	2.6%
Disagree	0	0.0%	1	2.1%	1	1.3%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	1	3.4%	0	0%	1	1.3%
Total	29	100.0%	47	100.0%	76	100.0%

Table 83: People like me don't have much of a chance in life?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	1	3.3%	2	4.3%	3	3.9%
Agree	4	13.3%	2	4.3%	6	7.8%
Neither	4	13.3%	3	6.4%	7	9.1%
Disagree	6	20.0%	16	34.0%	22	28.6%
Strongly disagree	14	46.7%	21	44.7%	35	45.5%
Don't know	1	3.3%	3	6.4%	4	5.2%
Total	30	100.0%	47	100.0%	77	100.0%

Table 84: I can pretty much decide what will happen in my life?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	2	6.5%	6	12.8%	8	10.3%
Agree	11	35.5%	19	40.4%	30	38.5%
Neither	7	22.6%	6	12.8%	13	16.7%
Disagree	6	19.4%	12	25.5%	18	23.1%
Strongly disagree	1	3.2%	3	6.4%	4	5.1%
Don't know	4	12.9%	1	2.1%	5	6.4%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%	78	100.0%

Table 85: Doing well at school means a lot to me?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	11	36.7%	27	57.4%	38	49.4%
Agree	18	60.0%	18	38.3%	36	46.8%
Neither	1	3.3%	2	4.3%	3	3.9%
Disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	30	100.0%	47	100.0%	77	100.0%

Table 86: How well you get on in this world is mostly a matter of luck?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	2	6.7%	2	4.3%	4	5.2%
Agree	2	6.7%	6	12.8%	8	10.4%
Neither	7	23.3%	11	23.4%	18	23.4%
Disagree	8	26.7%	20	42.6%	28	36.4%
Strongly disagree	10	33.3%	6	12.8%	16	20.8%
Don't know	1	3.3%	2	4.3%	3	3.9%
Total	30	100.0%	47	100.0%	77	100.0%

Table 87: If you work hard at something you'll usually succeed?

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	12	38.7%	22	46.8%	34	44.7%
Agree	15	48.4%	20	42.6%	35	46.1%
Neither	0	0.0%	3	6.4%	3	3.9%
Disagree	2	6.5%	2	4.3%	4	5.3%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	0.0%
Total	29	100.0%	47	100.0%	76	100.0%

Table 88: How much do you agree or disagree that: You have a certain amount of intelligence, and you really can't do much to change it (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	0	0.0%	3	6.4%	3	3.9%
Agree	5	17.2%	4	8.5%	9	11.8%
Mostly agree	6	20.7%	7	14.9%	13	17.1%
Mostly disagree	3	10.3%	11	23.4%	14	18.4%
Disagree	10	34.5%	14	29.8%	24	31.6%
Strongly disagree	5	17.2%	8	17.0%	13	17.1%
Total	29	100.0%	47	100.0%	76	100.0%

Table 89: How much do you agree or disagree that: Your intelligence is something about you that you can't change very much (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	2	6.7%	3	6.4%	5	6.5%
Agree	6	20.0%	8	17.0%	14	18.2%
Mostly agree	7	23.3%	8	17.0%	15	19.5%
Mostly disagree	1	3.3%	9	19.1%	10	13.0%
Disagree	10	33.3%	11	23.4%	21	27.3%
Strongly disagree	4	13.3%	8	17.0%	12	15.6%
Total	30	100.0%	47	100.0%	77	100.0%

Table 90: How much do you agree or disagree that: You can learn new things, but you can't really change your basic intelligence (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Strongly agree	3	9.7%	2	4.3%	5	6.5%
Agree	10	32.3%	11	23.9%	21	27.3%
Mostly agree	7	22.6%	9	19.6%	16	20.8%
Mostly disagree	3	9.7%	8	17.4%	11	14.3%
Disagree	8	25.8%	11	23.9%	19	24.7%
Strongly disagree	0	0%	5	10.9%	5	6.5%
Total	31	100.0%	46	100.0%	77	100.0%

Decisions for the future

Table 91: When considering where to go, did you do any of the following (Summer 2010, Year 11)

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Visit	29	64.4%
Have an interview	33	73.3%
Have an assessment of needs	11	24.4%
Fill in an application form	36	80.0%
None of these	4	8.9%

Table 92: Do you want to do these courses so that you can (Summer 2010, Year 11)

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Apply for university	28	63.6%
Apply for a specific job	13	29.5%
Get on a training course for a specific job	5	12.8%
Some other reason	3	6.8%
Don't know	6	13.6%

Table 93: If you do return to school or college, how do you think your education and living expenses will be paid? (Summer 2010, Year 11)

	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Education Maintenance Allowance	16	39.0%
Through part-time work	11	26.8%
Parents will support me	25	61.0%
Other relatives will support me	1	2.4%
Some other way	4	9.8%
Don't know	2	4.9%

Table 94: If you hope to go to university, have you decided what course or subject you would like to study there? (Summer 2010, Year 11)

	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)
Yes	20	60.6%
No	5	15.2%
Don't know	8	24.2%
Total	33	100.0%

Table 95: Do you want to go to University? (Summer 2010, Year 9)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)
Yes	12	38.7%
No	7	22.6%
Don't know	12	38.7%
Total	31	100.0%

Table 96: Do you know what sort of job or trade you want to do eventually? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Yes	17	54.8%	41	87.2%
No	5	16.1%	5	10.6%
Don't know	9	29.0%	1	2.1%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 97: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Personal Interview with careers advisor (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	7	23.3%	14	29.8%
Partly useful	6	20.0%	21	44.7%
Not at all useful	1	3.3%	10	21.3%
Unsure	2	6.7%	0	0.0%
Not had an interview with careers advisor	14	46.7%	2	4.3%
Total	30	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 98: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Talks from careers advisor (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	7	24.15	12	25.5%
Partly useful	7	24.1%	22	46.8%
Not at all useful	0	0.0%	9	19.1%
Unsure	2	6.9%	0	0.0%
Not had a talk from a careers advisor	13	44.8%	4	8.5%
Total	29	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 99: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Interviews with school teachers (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	7	24.1%	9	19.1%
Partly useful	5	17.2%	13	27.7%
Not at all useful	0	0.0%	5	10.6%
Unsure	4	13.8%	4	8.5%
Not had an interview with a school teacher	13	44.8%	16	34.0%
Total	29	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 100: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Informal talks with school teachers (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	7	22.6%	18	38.3%
Partly useful	16	51.6%	13	27.7%
Not at all useful	0	0.0%	6	12.8%
Unsure	3	9.7%	2	4.3%
Not had a informal talks with a school teacher	5	16.1%	8	17.0%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 101: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Other people giving talks (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	7	22.6%	10	21.3%
Partly useful	11	35.5%	18	38.3%
Not at all useful	1	3.2%	6	12.8%
Unsure	0	0.0%	3	6.4%
Not had other people give talks	12	38.7%	10	21.3%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 102: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Careers leaflets (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	2	6.9%	7	15.2%
Partly useful	10	34.5%	12	26.1%
Not at all useful	3	10.3%	12	26.1%
Unsure	2	6.9%	1	2.2%
Not seen any careers leaflets	12	41.4%	14	30.4%
Total	29	100.0%	46	100.0%

Table 103: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Visiting the careers library (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	2	6.7%	6	12.8%
Partly useful	1	3.3%	7	14.9%
Not at all useful	0	0.0%	3	6.4%
Unsure	3	10.0%	0	0.0%
Not visited the careers library	24	80.0%	31	66.0%
Total	30	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 104: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Friends (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	4	13.3%	10	21.7%
Partly useful	11	36.7%	22	47.8%
Not at all useful	2	6.7%	7	15.2%
Unsure	3	10.0%	3	6.5%
Not spoken to friends about it	10	33.3%	4	8.7%
Total	30	100.0%	46	100.0%

Table 105: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Visual Impairment Support Teachers (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	8	27.6%	8	17.8%
Partly useful	9	31.0%	14	31.1%
Not at all useful	2	6.9%	5	11.1%
Unsure	1	3.4%	2	4.4%
Not spoken to visual impairment support teachers about it	9	31.0%	16	35.6%
Total	29	100.0%	45	100.0%

Table 106: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Visual impairment teaching assistants (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	6	20.7%	7	16.3%
Partly useful	8	27.6%	6	14.0%
Not at all useful	3	10.3%	6	14.0%
Unsure	0	0.0%	7	16.3%
Not spoken to visual impairment teaching assistants about it	12	41.4%	17	39.5%
Total	29	100.0%	43	100.0%

Table 107: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Connexions Service Personal Advisor (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	7	22.6	15	31.9
Partly useful	4	12.9	18	38.3
Not at all useful	1	3.2	7	14.9
Unsure	2	6.5	3	6.4
Not spoken to Connexions Service Careers Wales Personal Advisor about it	17	54.8	4	8.5
Total	31	100.0	47	100.0

Table 108: How useful have Connexions Service Personal Advisors been? By Statement for SEN? (Summer 2010, Year 11)

	Very useful (N)	Partly Useful (N)	Not at all useful (N)	Unsure (N)	Not spoken to PA (N)	Total (N)
Statement SEN - Yes	12	8	5	1	3	29
Statement SEN – No	1	8	2	1	0	12
Statement SEN – Not sure	2	2	0	0	1	5
Total	15	18	7	2	4	46

Table 109: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Parents/carers (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	17	54.8%	30	63.8%
Partly useful	10	32.3%	12	25.5%
Not at all useful	1	3.2%	2	4.3%
Unsure	2	6.5%	2	4.3%
Not spoken to parents/carers about it	1	3.2%	1	2.1%
Total	31	100.0%	47	100.0%

Table 110: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Other family members (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	9	29.0	13	27.7
Partly useful	7	22.6	16	34.0
Not at all useful	3	9.7	2	4.3
Unsure	1	3.2	4	8.5
Not spoken to other family members about it	11	35.5	12	25.5
Total	31	100.0	47	100.0

Table 111: In planning your future, how useful have the following been? Work experience (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Very useful	3	10.0%	25	53.2%
Partly useful	0	0.0%	15	31.9%
Not at all useful	0	0.0%	4	8.5%
Unsure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not done any work experience	27	90.0%	3	6.4%
Total	30	100.0%	47	100.0%

Findings – Summer 2010 and Spring 2011

Planning for careers and the future

Table 112: Have you been given any guidance yet about what you could do once you have finished your GCSE exams? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	17	60.7%
No	11	39.3%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 113: Have you received any support in this academic year (since September 2010) for thinking about your future plans? (Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Year 11 Total (N)	Year 11 Total (%)
Yes	37	78.7%
No	10	21.3%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Total	47	100.0%

Work Experience

Table 114: During Year 9 did you / will you have a short-term work experience placement as part of your school curriculum? (Summer 2010, Year 9

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)
Yes	1	9.7%
No	26	77.4%
Don't know	4	12.9%
Total	31	100.0%

Table 115: During Year 11 did you/will you have a short-term work experience placement as part of your school curriculum? (Summer 2010, Year 11)

	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)
Yes	19	43.2%
No	24	54.5%
Don't know	1	2.3%
Total	44	100.0%

Table 116: During Year 10 did you/will you have a short-term work experience placement as part of your school curriculum? (Summer 2010, Year 11)

	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)
Yes	26	57.8%
No	17	37.8%
Don't know	0	0.0%
Total	45	100.0%

Table 117: If you have had a work placement, how would you rate the overall experience? (Summer 2010, Year 11)

	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)
Excellent	22	59.5%
Good	8	21.6%
Okay	1	2.7%
Poor	3	8.1%
Don't know	3	8.1%
Total	37	100.0%

Table 118: Do you do any work you are paid for? (Summer2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Yes	3	10.3%	8	19.5%
No	25	86.2%	33	80.5%
Don't know	1	3.4%	0	0.0%
Total	29	100.0%	41	100.0%

Table 119: If yes, did you do any paid work in the last week? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Yes	2	66.7%	5	62.5%
No	1	33.3%	3	37.5%
Total	3	100.0%	8	100.0%

Table 120: Do you do any work you are paid for? (Summer2010, Year 9 and Year 11) – Yes, by preferred font size

Font Size (Point)	Year 9 (N)	Year 9(%)	Year 9 Sample (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Year 11 Sample (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	2	66.7%	54.8%	6	75.0%	46.8%
Large print (18-27 point)	0	0.0%	25.8%	2	25.0%	30.1%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	1	33.3%	3.2%	0	0.0%	7.0%
Braille	0	0.0%	16.1%	0	0.0%	4.9%
Electronic	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	2.1%
Missing	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.2%
Total	3	100.0%	100.0%	8	100.0%	100.0%

Table 121: Do you do any voluntary work (which you are not paid for)? (Summer 2010, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Yes	3	10.0%	10	23.8%
No	26	86.7%	32	76.2%
Don't know	1	3.3%	0	0.0%
Total	30	100.0%	42	100.0%

Table 122: Do you do voluntary work? (Summer2010, Year 9 and Year 11) – Yes, by preferred font size

Font Size (Point)	Year 9 (N)	Year 9(%)	Year 9 Sample (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)	Year 11 Sample (%)
Normal to large print (12-17 point)	1	33.3%	54.8%	3	30.0%	46.8%
Large print (18-27 point)	2	66.7%	25.8%	5	50.0%	30.1%
Very large print (≥ 28 point)	0	0.0%	3.2%	0	0.0%	7.0%
Braille	0	0.0%	16.1%	1	10.0%	4.9%
Electronic	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	10.0%	2.1%
Missing	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.2%
Total	3	100.0%	100.0%	10	100.0%	100.0%

Table 123: Do you do any work you are paid for? (Spring 2011, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Yes	4	14.3%	7	15.2%
No	24	85.7%	39	84.8%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	28	100.0%	46	100.0%

Table 124: Would you like a part time job? (Spring 2011, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Yes	16	69.6%	29	74.4%
No	5	21.7%	8	20.5%
Unsure	2	8.7%	2	5.1%
Total	23	100.0%	39	100.0%

Table 125: Do you do any voluntary work (which you are not paid for)? (Spring 2011, Year 9 and Year 11

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Yes	7	25.0%	20	43.5%
No	21	75.0%	26	56.5%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	28	100.0%	46	100.0%

Table 126: Would you like to do voluntary work? (Spring 2011, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Yes	6	31.6%	10	41.7%
No	10	52.6%	9	37.5%
Unsure	3	15.8%	5	20.8%
Total	19	100.0%	24	100.0%

Examinations Experience

Table 127: Extra time received (Summer 2010, Year 11)

	Year 11 (N)	Year 11 (%)
None	2	4.7%
1-25%	8	20.9%
26-50%	7	14.0%
51-75%	1	2.3%
76-100%	5	11.6%
Unspecified	16	37.2%
Unknown	4	9.3%
Total	43	100.0%

Travel

Table 128: Are you happy with the transport arrangements for getting to school/college? (Spring 2011, Year 9 and Year 11)

	Year 9 (N)	Year 9 (%)	Year 11 (N)	Year 11(%)
Yes	23	100.0%	39	97.5%
No	0	0.0%	1	2.5%
Unsure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	23	100.0%	40	100.0%

Transition Experience of Year 11 students

Table 129: Is there any way that you think the experience of transition after GCSEs could have been improved? (Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	8	17.0%
No	36	76.6%
Not sure	3	6.4%
Total	47	100.0%

Table 130: Do you have a network of friends at school/college/work? (Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	44	93.6%
No	3	6.4%
Not sure	0	0.0%
Total	47	100.0%

Table 131: Overall, how well do you think you have settled in socially? Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Good	40	85.1%
Average	7	14.9%
Poor	0	0.0%
Total	47	100.0%

Table 132: Are you receiving support at school/college? Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	36	76.6%
No	11	23.4%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Total	47	100.0%

Table 133: How does this compare to what you received previously at the start of the year – that is this academic year? Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
More	5	11.1%
Less	4	8.9%
Same	36	80.0%
Total	45	100.0%

Table 134: Thinking about the course material you receive, do you get this in a format you can access? Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes, all or nearly all of the time	32	69.6%
Most of the time	11	23.9%
Some of the time	2	4.3%
Rarely or never	1	2.2%
Total	46	100.0%

Table 135: Do you still receive any support from the Visiting Teacher Service, or hear from them at all? Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	20	48.8%
No	20	48.8%
Unsure	1	2.4%
Total	41	100.0%

Table 136: Are you satisfied with the amount of support you are receiving from the Visiting Teacher Service? Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	30	88.2%
No	3	8.8%
Somewhere in between	0	0.0%
Unsure	1	2.9%
Total	34	100.0%

Table 137: Have you heard about the increase in University tuition fees? Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	40	95.2%
No	2	4.8%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Total	42	100.0%

Table 138: Would the increase in University tuition fees make any difference to whether or not you decide to go to university? Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	13	31.7%
No	26	63.4%
Unsure	2	4.9%
Total	41	100.0%

Table 139: Do you know what job you would like to do in the future? (Year 11, Spring 2011)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	41	87.2%
No	4	8.5%
Not sure	2	4.3%
Total	47	100.0%

Table 140: Have they changed their response since the Summer 2010 questionnaire? Spring 2011, Year 11)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	10	21.7%
No	36	78.3%
Total	46	100.0%

Transitions Experience of Year 9 Students

Table 141: How have you found the workload? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Manageable	20	71.4%
Unmanageable	0	0.0%
In between	8	28.6%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 142: Are you receiving support in lessons? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	23	82.1%
No	5	17.9%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 143: Who do you receive support from? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
QTVI	9	33.3%
Teaching Assistant	13	48.1%
Both	3	11.1%
Not sure	2	7.4%
Total	27	100.0%

Table 144: How does this compare to what you received previously, whilst you were in Year 9? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
More	6	22.2%
Less	5	18.5%
Same	16	59.3%
Not sure	0	0.0%
Total	27	100.0%

Table 145: Are you still receiving the same amount of contact from the Visual Impairment Teaching Service as you did previously? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
More	1	5.0%
Less	3	15.0%
Same	14	70.0%
Not sure	2	10.0%
Total	20	100.0%

Table 146: Overall, do you think the services and support you receive in relation to your visual impairment could be improved? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	6	18.8%
No	20	62.5%
Not sure	2	6.3%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 147: Do you know what Educational Maintenance Allowance is? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	7	25.0
No	21	75.0
Unsure	0	0.0
Total	28	100.0

Table 148: Have you heard that the government plans to stop paying Educational Maintenance Allowance? ((Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	8	28.6%
No	20	71.4%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Total	20	100.0%

Table 149: Would this make any difference to whether or not you decide to carry on into full time education after Year 11? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	2	20.0%
No	5	50.0%
Unsure	3	30.0%
Total	10	100.0%

Table 150: Do you want to go to university? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	12	42.9%
No	6	21.4%
Unsure	10	35.7%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 151: Have you heard about the increase in tuition fees that you would have to pay to go to university? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	20	71.4%
No	8	28.6%
Unsure	0	0.0%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 152: Would the increase in tuition fees make a difference in whether you decide to go to university or not? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	9	42.9%
No	8	38.1%
Unsure	4	19.0%
Total	21	100.0%

Table 153: Do you know what you want to study at university? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	11	39.3%
No	1	3.6%
Unsure / Not applicable	16	57.1%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 154: Do you know what job you would like eventually? (Spring 2011, Year 9)

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Yes	16	57.1%
No	1	3.6%
Unsure	11	39.3%
Total	28	100.0%

10 References

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