



Transitions planning and coronavirus—what happens now?

Information for families from ARC Scotland and the Scottish Transitions Forum

If your young person is due to finish school in June, you'd usually be starting to finalise from January what he or she will be doing next, and how it's going to happen.

Coronavirus has had a major impact on schools and how the planning process can operate—but you should still expect to be able to get information and support around the options available.

No one can say when things will get back to anything approaching normal, but families still need to prepare for life beyond school.

We realise it's stressful, so we've tried to give you a steer through the things you need to be aware of—and what you can be doing now.

Transitions meeting

You should have a transition meeting to explore available options and work out a plan – including contingency plans in case things don't work out the way you expect.

If you haven't had this, or you're not sure what should be happening, try contacting the school to find out more.

Transition planning meetings should involve professionals, for example from health, social work, Skills Development Scotland, college, university and any others you and your young person think may help plan for their future goals and aspirations. These professionals should still be working together to make the plan a reality, even if the current situation makes things more difficult.

If you can't find out more through the school, because of coronavirus or other issues, we've identified things you can consider to help you plan and prepare.

Transitions To Do list

Don't try and tackle everything all at once. We've put together a short to do list for you. Take it one thing at a time – Rome wasn't built in a day!

- Money
- Information sharing
- Legal matters
- Life skills
- Continuing education
- Employment
- Transport

You'll find links for more information on all these at the end



Money

You should make sure you know what funding options are relevant for you, your young person and your family.

This might include Self-Directed Support; the Independent Living Fund's Transition Fund; welfare benefits such as Personal Independence Payment and Carers' Allowance; or funding such as the Disabled Student Allowance from the Students' Award Agency Scotland (SAAS).

Every local authority area sets its own eligibility criteria for a Self-Directed Support budget. If your young person isn't eligible, you can still explore other sources of funding to see how they might be able to support you.

If you already know what financial and social support is available, you should be exploring how best to use your budget. Talk to local support organisations or other organisations such as a Centre for Inclusive Living to find out what might be available and begin planning how they can meet your young person's needs.

If you haven't heard about progress for your budget, maybe speak to your social worker or social services to ask when you can expect a decision.



Information sharing

You also need to have an idea of who will help your young person take their next steps into adult life. Make sure you've thought about what information they might need to help things go smoothly.

If you don't know who needs this information, speak to your young person's key contact in school or social services. Other professionals around your young person should be making sure this is happening too, so you can try asking them.

If that still doesn't help, you might want to create your own list of people you think should have relevant information about your young person's needs. Many families develop a personal communications plan, sometimes called a communications passport, that can be shared with others to make them aware of how best to support a young person. A communications passport can be printed or shared digitally, and it can include anything you and your young person think is important.

Information shouldn't be shared without your young person's consent, so it's important you and they know what is being shared and why.



Legal matters

Think about what legal provision is right for you and your young person to make sure they can receive appropriate help in managing their financial affairs and their health and welfare.

This is linked to what is termed their capacity, which is their ability to make safe decisions about these aspects of their life.

If you are not sure about this, find out about Guardianship, Powers of Attorney, and parental rights and responsibilities. You can find information from the Office of the Public Guardian, or through your local carers' organisation.

If you are already clear which type of provision is appropriate for your young person, now is the time to start this process through a solicitor. Legal aid funding is still available for guardianship applications so the process needn't be costly, but it can take time to get this in place.

If you already have either Guardianship or Power of Attorney for your young person, make sure you know how to exercise these powers.



Life skills

If your young person is moving on this year, they might need particular life skills they don't currently have – for example, being able to travel independently, cook for themselves, or make an appointment to see a doctor or dentist.

Now might be the time to make a list of everyday tasks they will eventually need to be able to carry out, and to help them come up with a plan to practise these. One advantage some families have found in the current circumstances is that they have more time to focus on these skills at the young person's pace.

You might like to explore other sources of support to help them develop life skills further, or to try something new. The ILF Transitions Fund supports young people to progress their skills and engage in the community. [You can read more about how to apply here.](#)



Employment

If employment is part of your young person's transitions plan you might already have an idea of what they might like to do. If not, you may want to explore employment options locally, including in-work training through modern apprenticeships, voluntary work, and work placements.

Organisations such as Skills Development Scotland can help with this. They can also support young people to complete an application and identify support they might need in the workplace.

Social firms often provide work opportunities and experience for young people with additional support needs. You can approach them yourself to find out how their processes work.

You may also be entitled to additional support to help your young person into work. [You can find out more about this on the Talking About Tomorrow website.](#)



Continuing education

At this point you should know what your young person might want to do, either to continue their education or to explore other options such as employment, volunteering or practical learning through modern apprenticeships or community based learning.

If they want to continue their education, they will need to identify a course – at college or university, or in the community. They need to know what skills and qualifications are required, and how to apply for the course. Independent living skills will be particularly important if a course means they will be living away from home or in a hall of residence.

You can approach the relevant college or university to find out what their plans are for young people starting this year. You should also know what support is available, and what additional funding your family may qualify for: Lead Scotland can help you check this. Extra financial help can also be available for siblings of young people with additional support needs.



Transport

You should have a rough idea of what the young person's transport options will be.

If your young person has had transport provided to get to school, this is currently very unlikely to continue into adult services. This makes it even more important to plan for how they may get to college, work, or wherever they need to be.

You might want to explore with them how confident they are about using public transport or learning to drive. The ILF Transitions Fund can help pay for solutions that might help someone become more independent, for example driving lessons or one-to-one travel training.

Wellbeing and mental health



Looking after your mental health, and that of your young person, has never been more important.

Finding ways to manage stress and reduce anxiety make a huge difference, not only to dealing with the changes in everyday living but in starting to plan and prepare for the next steps. There are lots of online resources to help. Here are a few to try:

Carers Scotland: [List of current sources of help and advice](#)

Shared Care Scotland: [Short Breaks for Strange Times](#)

Scottish Government: [COVID-19 information for supporting disabled children, young people and their families](#)

Reach: [Support and information for young people during school/college closures](#)

British Deaf Association: [Accessible information on COVID-19 for BSL Users](#)

Scottish Commission for Learning Disability (SCLD) —guidance and self-help booklets for people with learning disabilities: [Information on Coronavirus](#)

Scottish Autism – resources for autistic people: [Coronavirus and your wellbeing](#)

NSPCC: [Advice if a child is struggling with their mental health or anxiety about coronavirus](#)

Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH): [Mental health support for children and young people](#)



Useful links for more information

Money

Turn2Us benefit calculator: <https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk/AboutYou>

LEAD Scotland guide to funding and grants available to support education: <https://www.lead.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Guide-to-Grants-for-Individuals-from-Charitable-Trusts-Nov-19-Update.pdf>

ILF Transition Fund: <https://ilf.scot/transition-fund/>

Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS): <https://www.saas.gov.uk/forms/dsa>

Information Sharing

PAMIS: [Digital Passports](#)

MyCommPass: [My Communication Pass](#)

Legal Matters

Office of the Public Guardian: [Impact of coronavirus on Guardianship Orders and Power of Attorney](#)

Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (CYCJ): [COVID-19: Guidance on supporting young people in conflict with the law](#)

Transport

ILF Scotland is currently accepting new applications for young disabled people aged 16-25: <https://ilf.scot/transition-fund/>

Enable Me Travel App (ipad/iphone only): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=of1Gusb0jfw&list=PLmfw5m-qq1wgLW30vr-3hgF5zgl9UGw54&index=3&t=0s>

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/enable-me/id1257578856>

Life Skills

ILF Scotland is currently accepting new applications for young disabled people aged 16—25: <https://ilf.scot/transition-fund/>

Disability Information Scotland with national and local information on social support and support providers: [Coronavirus \(Covid19\) Help and information](#)

Continuing Education

LEAD Scotland: [Free learning options during the coronavirus](#)

LEAD Scotland: <https://www.lead.org.uk/support-for-disabled-people-to-learn/>

Scottish Funding Council: [Further and higher education updates](#)

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA): [Coronavirus support - Schools, learners and teachers](#)

Employment

Enable—support and guidance available to all young people with additional support needs in the senior phase of school anywhere in Scotland: [Stepping Up Live](#)

Skills Development Scotland - information on current support available: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Social Firms Scotland: <https://socialfirms.org.uk/>

Contact—Talking About Tomorrow: <http://www.talkingabouttomorrow.org.uk/getting-a-job/support-for-disabled-people-to-get-into-work/>