# Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill – detailed call for views

## About you

### 1. Please read the privacy notice below and tick the box below to show that you understand how the data you provide will be used as set out in the policy.

[Privacy notice](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/ecyp/disabled-transitions-detailed-call-for-views/#pasted-question-163352812831-52166-163352812844-46704)

[A privacy notice for young people submitting their views to committees is available to read here](https://www.parliament.scot/about/information-rights/data-protection/privacy-notices/committees-submitting-your-views-to-a-committee-young-person).

(Required) I have read and understood how the personal data I provide will be used.

### 2. How your response will be published

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(Required) I would like my response to be published in its entirety

If you do not want your response to be published in its entirety and would like to discuss your options, please contact the Committee before making your submission: [ECYP.committee@parliament.scot](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/ecyp/disabled-transitions-detailed-call-for-views/ECYP.committee%40parliament.scot)

### 3. What is your name?

Dr Catriona Burness, Parliamentary & Policy Manager, RNIB Scotland

Rosie Dempsey, Deputy Lead, Children, Young People, Families & Education, Devolved Nations, RNIB

### 4. What is your email address?

If you enter your email address, then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response.

Email (Required)

catriona.burness@rnib.org.uk; and rosaleen.dempsey@rnib.org.uk.

### 5. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

 Individual Organisation

### 6. Name of organisation

Name of organisation (Required)

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Scotland

### 7. Information about your organisation

Please add information about your organisation in the box below

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Scotland is the country’s leading charity working with blind and partially sighted people. We support children, young people and adults with sight loss and help them to live independent lives.

According to RNIB’s most recent estimates, in Scotland around 183,000 people live with a significant degree of sight loss. The Scottish Government’s Pupil Census 2021 revealed that there were 4,930 school-pupils with a visual impairment in Scotland. [https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-census-supplementary-statistics/.]

Whilst delivering on the aims of the Bill will depend on funding being available, RNIB Scotland welcomes its overall aims.

Through our work with blind and partially sighted children and young people we are aware of the need to identify solutions to the problems that children and young people with disabilities can face transitioning from secondary education.

There are several crucial transition points such as moving from home to school, from primary to secondary education and moving on beyond secondary education. We suggest that a universal plan should apply to all these transition points and would have a wider benefit if applied to all pupils. Transitions should be looked at holistically evaluating the support which should be provided to the young person, parents and guardians, siblings and school, college and university staff involved in the transition. Any work in this area should build on existing good practice.

## General questions about the Bill

### 8. What are your view on the overall aims of the Bill and whether the Bill can meet these aims?

We support the intention to have a national transitions strategy. This should consider previous and current work including:

* Identification of data gaps in transitions;
* Raising awareness amongst parents and guardians of support available for their child upon leaving school;
* Work by ARC Scotland to embed the seven Principles of Good Transitions - see [https://arcscotland.org.uk/networks-forums/scottish-transitions-forum/](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Farcscotland.org.uk%2Fnetworks-forums%2Fscottish-transitions-forum%2F&data=05%7C01%7CCatriona.Burness%40rnib.org.uk%7C15821f5c26944f9e95c808daa6146d98%7C5d45337cd19243fcaa5805557c9171bc%7C0%7C0%7C638004903900120197%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2B7EPBMiGEgh0zaFC8Ailxm%2BgHgjKyIs3jbWMY741l0M%3D&reserved=0);
* Transitions work being carried out by clinical networks e.g., Visual Impairment Network for Children & Young People (VINCYP) – work in progress, specialist groups chaired by Scottish government e.g., Disabled Children and Young People’s Action Group (DCYPAG) and other disability organisations e.g., RNIB Link:
	+ <https://www.rnib.org.uk/young-people-school-life-and-planning-ahead-making-transition-school/transition-guide-bridging-gap>.

The Transitions Bill should be further developed in partnership with children and young people and their parents and guardians, approaching transitions holistically and looking at how to achieve the best result for the child.

Delivery of the aims of the proposed Transitions Bill could also usefully be connected to the new Curriculum Framework for Children and Young people with a Vision Impairment (CFVI).

The Framework was developed in collaboration with parents, children, and young people along with professionals from a range of disciplines and experiences working for major sight sector organisations and networks across the UK. These included cross-border charities such as RNIB; Guide Dogs UK; and the Thomas Pocklington Trust. The Scottish Association for Visual Impairment Education (SAVIE); the Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC); and the University of Edinburgh have also been involved.

The Framework aims to support children and young people with vision impairment access an appropriate and equitable education. RNIB Scotland will be working with colleagues to promote the Framework approach over the next three years in the hope that it might be incorporated into Scottish government guidance.

For information, the Framework presents outcomes within 11 teaching areas:

* Facilitating an Inclusive World
* Sensory Development
* Communication
* Literacy
* Habilitation: Orientation and Mobility
* Habilitation: Independent Living Skills
* Accessing information
* Technology
* Health: Social, Emotional, Mental and Physical Wellbeing
* Social, Sports and Leisure
* Preparing for Adulthood

It provides a shared vocabulary to be used by children and young people, their families and professionals in the UK who work with them. A shared vocabulary supports both better communication and purpose.

At the heart of the Framework is a set of three fundamental aims:

* To help clarify and define the elements of specialist skill development, interventions and best practice support that are considered to be essential for children and young people with vision impairment;
* To assist qualified specialist practitioners in raising the awareness amongst other professionals and parents of the need for children and young people with vision impairment to be taught skills that enable them to access the curriculum and the wider world with as much independence as possible;
* To aid discussions and understanding amongst all involved in a child/young person’s education of how and when these skills should be taught by suitably qualified specialists and reinforced by non-specialists.

Each element of the Framework is aimed at helping children and young people acquire the skills they need to prepare for adulthood, also a key element of the Transitions Bill.

### 9. Do you think that changing the law is the best way to do what the Bill is trying to do?

Whilst good practice relating to transitions is important, a change in the law will make it easier for transitions for young people with disabilities to be formally monitored. Whilst it could be argued that it is not necessary to make the transitions plan a statutory right, creating a statutory right gives a basis for entering objections should arrangements fall short.

### 10. Could there be any unexpected or unforeseen effects of the Bill (as it is currently written)?

We have not identified any unexpected or unforeseen effects of the Bill.

## General questions about the Bill continued

### 11. Does the Bill add to, or duplicate, any existing legislation?

The Bill will add to existing provision in relation to Additional Support Needs and strengthen the monitoring aspects of transition planning for children and young people.

### 12. What do you think the financial impact of the Bill on the Scottish Government, local authorities or other bodies could be?

Whilst it is likely there will be a financial impact on Scottish Government and Local Authorities, it could be mitigated by enacting the transitions plans for each young person at the earliest possible stage. Proper planning will ensure that the young person is assessed for the correct support. This therefore reduces the risk of purchasing equipment that is unsuitable e.g., in the case of a young person with vision impairment, the wrong piece of assistive technology

### 13. How will the Bill affect (for better or worse) the rights and the quality of life of the people covered by the Bill?

We hope the bill will cement the rights of children and young people with disabilities, including vision impairment, to a planned and monitored process for transition to adulthood.

As part of her consultation on the Bill, Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP met with members of RNIB Scotland’s youth campaigning group Haggeye. They raised several points which underline the importance of having a planned and monitored process for transition to adulthood. The following statements have been anonymised:

* One member received 11 years of support while at primary and secondary school but “when it came to leaving school, the support vanished”.
* Another came from England but registered with Glasgow Sensory Service to get mobility training before moving to study in Glasgow. They “still haven't had this support” and emphasised the need for mobility and orientation at the transition point. They thought there was a “postcode lottery in terms of whether you can get support or not”.
* The Haggeye members referred to the difficulties of social care services not yet fully restarting post-Covid.
* Another said that she felt fortunate to have an extra year at school after losing her sight in her sixth year and to have the support of a QTVI and use of a Vision Book and magnifier. However, at college she found “one lecturer was very hostile to disability”, providing information in Font size 8.

## National Transition Strategy

The Bill would require the Scottish Government to introduce a National Transitions Strategy (sections 1 to 6 of the Bill).

### 14. Do you agree with introducing a strategy, and that a Scottish Minister should be in charge of it?

RNIB Scotland agrees with introducing a strategy.

We support the intention behind creating a Minister for Transitions and recognise the benefits it would bring in putting transitions on the government’s agenda. However, we think this role would have to be a role that cut across several departments including education, employment, finance, and health to ensure that it covers all elements of transition.

## Transition plans

The Bill places a duty on local councils to prepare and implement transition plans for each disabled child and young person within their local authority area (sections 7 to 13 of the Bill). They would also have to explain:

How plans are going to be prepared and managed

What would happen if there was a disagreement about what was in a plan or how it was working?

### 15. Do you agree with the proposals relating to transition plans?

We note that the Policy Memorandum for the Bill states that:

“Section 12(1) of the Bill requires the local authority to appoint an officer of the local authority in relation to preparing, managing and co-ordinating the transitions plans, and to keep them under review. This gives the local authority flexibility about who should be appointed. While the young person is at school, however, it is expected that this would be the young person’s guidance teacher or another member of the school’s pastoral care staff, given that they already have pastoral care duties and responsibilities for children at the school. A member of the local authority’s education department would fulfil this role where the local authority is funding an educational placement for the child at a private, specialist school within the local authority area or through an out of area placement outside the local authority area. Similarly, it is expected that a social worker would be appointed after the young person has left school, as they are most likely to provide support to the disabled young person once the disabled young person has left school.”

We appreciate that the Bill is outlining provision to cover a spectrum of disabilities. However, we are aware that a young person with a vision impairment leaving school is unlikely to have a social worker, so another official may be more appropriate for the role. Whilst we don’t think that Qualified Teachers of Children and Young People with Visual Impairment (QTVI) should coordinate the transitions plan, extending their advisory role beyond school leaving age would be valuable. This approach is being considered elsewhere.

We support extension of the plan up to the age of 26 but young people over the age of 18 should be able to opt out of the plan if they no longer feel they require or want the support. All young people should have ownership over their plan, they should be aware of what is in it, when it is to be reviewed and the purpose of the plan. The child or young person should be able to have access to it on request at any time.

### 16. Who do you think should coordinate the transitions plan?

We are not clear whether this question relates to individual transition plans or whether it relates to the overall strategy.

If this question relates to individual plans, we are content that the provisions of the Bill are sufficiently flexible to enable local authorities to appoint someone with appropriate knowledge and skills for the role.

In relation to the overall strategy, having a National Transitions Strategy, and a specified Scottish Government Minister, leading on transitions for disabled children and young people, are vital components of the framework necessary to deliver significant improvements in the outcomes achieved by these children and young people.

## Almost done…

You are about to submit your response. By clicking 'Submit Response' you give us permission to analyse and include your response in our results. After you click Submit, you will no longer be able to go back and change any of your answers.

Please note that you do not need to provide an email address in the box below to complete your submission. Providing your email address is optional to receive a receipt and copy of your response.

When you submit your response, you will be sent a receipt and a link to a PDF copy of your response.

 Please tick this box if you would like to be added to the Committee's mailing list for future inquiries.

End.