

# Design in Social Care Programme

## Birmingham City Council Project Summary

### *Supporting young people as they transition into adult social care*

#### Context

Councils play a key role in supporting young people leaving children's social care and approaching adulthood with accessing care and support to help them live happy and independent lives.

Birmingham City Council and Birmingham's Children's Trust put forward a bid to join the Design in Social Care Programme to support young people approaching 18 years old to transition into adult social care. Birmingham City Council and Children's Trust wanted to understand first hand from young people what was important to them in their lives to ensure that the move into adult services supported this.

#### The challenge

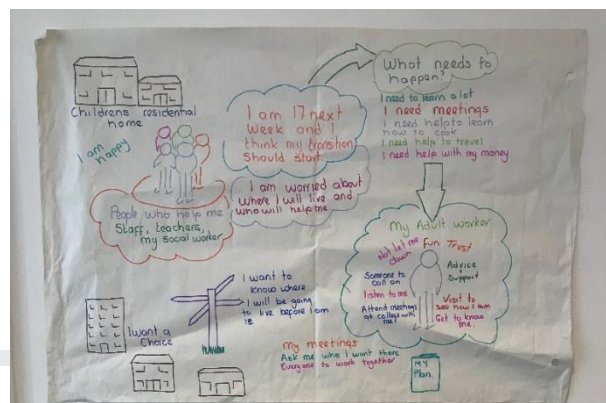
In 2018 the way in which children's services were run in Birmingham changed. Instead of being directly run by the council, Birmingham Children's Trust took responsibility which is owned by, but completely independent from Birmingham City Council.

With the changes to the service and opportunities for more collaborative working across the city, the Design in Social Care Programme provided an opportunity to reimagine how young people transitioning could be supported.

Transitioning into adult services can be a stressful time for young people and their families as they make decisions about their education, employment, finances and housing. The Design in Social Care Programme Team was keen to understand what could be done with young people to support them through this period of change.

#### What they did

The Birmingham team set out to speak to young people who were either preparing for or who had recently transitioned into adult services (16, 17 and 18 years of age). They also spoke with parents and families. The team held individual discussions as well as group workshops to understand what was important to young people and how they could be supported to reach their own goals and aspirations.



As the discussions continued, the team decided to spend more time with young people with special educational needs and focus in depth on their experiences of transitioning and explore opportunities to improve this.

Techniques from the Design in Social Care programme were used in these discussions to capture and understand young people's experiences.

## What they found

One of the key themes that emerged from discussions with young people was around employment. Employment was perceived by young people as a key gateway to achieving other goals and aspirations (e.g. housing) but the way in which young people with SEN were supported to secure paid or unpaid employment needed improvement.

For example, it was recognised that the traditional, written CV was not an easy or clear way for a young person with SEN to demonstrate or articulate their own strengths, experiences or abilities.

The discovery highlighted that a 'one size fits all' approach will not meet the different and individual needs of young people with SEN wishing to secure employment and that there should be a refocus on practical and interactive support.

## Prototyping solutions and next steps

Working with a local school who had expressed an interest in the work, the team prototyped an 'interactive CV' comprising video, voice notes and pictures that show a young person's experiences, skills and interests to prospective employers.

The team recognised the need to develop this not just with young people but also local schools and employers if it was to be successful. It was also keen for the City Council to be the first employer to start using the interactive CV as part of its recruitment.

Although still at early stages of prototyping, the Design in Social Care programme has given Birmingham a range of tools and techniques that they can use in applying service design in in social care.

