

Families explain person-centred planning:

We asked young people and their families to help us to explain person-centred planning to other families. We asked for honest comments about why the planning session was useful (or not), who was there, what happened, and what it was like. Please remember that these planning sessions were each very different from one another – for example not all involved other family members, and not all involved education staff.

Family 1

Through the chance to be involved with this process it has helped my son and us as parents to think of other ways to a better future for him. It gave us all something in black and white that we could all go through to see what was going to be accessible and worthwhile for our son.

Family 2

We found this approach provided much needed focus and by asking family and friends to become involved we were more able to open up and discuss the problem areas (which were largely pushed aside or avoided in the past).

It also creates a greater understanding from family and friends, who typically only know so much about a person's difficulties, and this encourages family and friends to ask more and find out more, which in turn creates a greater engagement from others who may have felt they had nothing to give.

Family 3

Our daughter says she found the session useful because...

It made it clearer about what I want to do in the future.

All of my friends were there and the teachers I like best were there too.

It was better than school meetings – even though it was held in school - I could say what I really wanted, it was much more relaxed and we had Ben and Jerry's ice-cream! After it my history teacher made up weekly assignments for me and my friends in the history group to do at my house every Tuesday. Its fallen away a bit now because of exams and that.

I think someone needs to remind everyone about what was agreed and make sure everyone still remembers to do what they said they were going to do.

From us as parents...

It was a useful session. Two hours was just about the right length, although to us the first part of it seemed to drag a little and we were worried we wouldn't get onto the action points – however that turned out not to be the case, which was great.

The Principle Teacher of Learning Support was there - he is also our daughter's guidance teacher - and he was very keen to use this process with other pupils.

We found it easy to organise in a room in the school after school hours - but that's because we have a good relationship with the school staff anyway and the teachers who came were prepared to stay behind for an extra two hours at the end of a school day. We don't know if that would happen in every school!

Family 4

It allowed us to think outside the box about what was best for our son.

Family 5

Some folk are really scared to 'ask for help' from family and friends... don't want to burden folk... its down to us as parents etc. We found the planning session allowed other family (my sisters) to ask if they could do more to help us! We were surprised and it opened a door and that really helped.

Also the graphic map you are left with is a great record of where you are and where you want to go. We have three now going back six years. They are as important to us as the kids school photos. A mixture of memories, nostalgia and times past.

If you are not sure give it a try, it's a very peculiarly Scottish trait to bury everything and put on a brave face. Why not let that go for a couple of hours and tell everyone what you really feel. It helps... honest!

Family 6

My daughter and I had completely no direction and had reached crisis point. She was not attending school and I had lost my job. Unfortunately my experience of agencies I believed were there to help was very negative. I found the education and social services system biased, negative, aggressive and entirely unprofessional.

'Transforming Transitions' was entirely professional, unbiased and positive. In a comfortable home setting my small family was able to re-group and focus on a way to gather assets and move forward from what was a very dark time. I felt listened to and not misjudged. My daughter does not express herself fully in a group situation but is very attached to her 'mapping' – we still have it and she has enjoyed showing it to my friends.

*'Transforming Transitions' helped us move forward towards a more positive lifestyle and reminded both of us of things we had got or done right and correctly.
[and] We are planning a dog this year to add to the fish and hamster!*

Family 7

It's an informal way of asking the "person" and family/supporters/carers what would make a better life.

Forget what society dictates and decide for yourself what do you want.

A chance for family/carers etc to see what the "person" wishes for themselves, choices and dreams.

Family 8

Our son has learning difficulties + he has problems socially and making friends. The person centred plan had him thinking of what he'd like for his future (some fantastic, some very basic). In attendance were some friends from school, a teacher, his aunt, his cousin + ourselves (Mum, Dad + wee bruv). It was very enlightening to us all and was enjoyable to watch + participate in. The 2 lovely ladies who co-ordinated his "Plan" created a super big graphic plan with colourful writing + drawings. we all had the opportunity to offer to help our lad achieve his goals + some of these have been set in motion already. :-)

Family 9

The process itself is exceptionally powerful. I had thought that it would be too overpowering and be stressful for him – instead he rose to the occasion enjoying all the positive comments and being the centre of attention. The comment that will always remain with me is the one he made on leaving: "mum, I feel so good about myself".

Wow – says it all.