



people know
How
Unlocking Your Ideas

POSITIVE TRANSITIONS

2015-2023



Foreword

Every year, millions of young people around the world start secondary school or equivalent. In 2021 in Scotland, 56,850 young people started secondary school. Therefore, the significance of getting transitions right cannot be overstated. We know from our research that most young people will experience multiple concurrent transitions at this time, in multiple contexts (e.g., school, home, community) and multiple domains (e.g., educational, psychological, social). For most these will be positive but for some they can be challenging; and can be positive and challenging at the same time in different contexts and domains. Further, their multiple transitions will trigger multiple transitions of their significant others (e.g., parents, peers, teachers), and vice versa (Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions Theory, Jindal-Snape, 2016)¹. Therefore, any support offered to a young person will not only have a positive impact on their transitions but also on those connected with them.

This report outlines the work that People Know How's Positive Transitions service does to facilitate positive school transitions. It is heartening to see the positive discourse used in their work, alongside a balanced recognition of the challenges, as there is often a negative discourse in research, practice and policy about primary-secondary transitions, which can influence perceptions of this time and in turn can have an impact on young people's experiences.

Research suggests that negative transition experiences can have long term consequences for young people's wellbeing and educational outcomes. The role that People Know How has played in over 50 schools is very important from this perspective. The statistics provided in their report suggest their reach and impact on the lives of over 3,000 young people. They provide vital support which has an impact in both school and their lives as they navigate other transitions.

A distinct aspect of Positive Transitions is that it is research-informed. Their close working relationships with schools, collaborative approach with young people, and understanding of the importance of family support are some examples of this research-informed good practice.

This visually accessible report, presents primary-secondary transitions research, including the service's own research and learning over the last seven years. This report will not only be of interest to immediate stakeholders, it will be of relevance to all professionals supporting children and young people in schools and community, policy makers and academics like me who are undertaking transitions research.

Professor Divya Jindal-Snape FAcSS

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¹ Jindal-Snape, D. (2016). A-Z of transitions. Palgrave Macmillan.



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Why Positive Transitions?

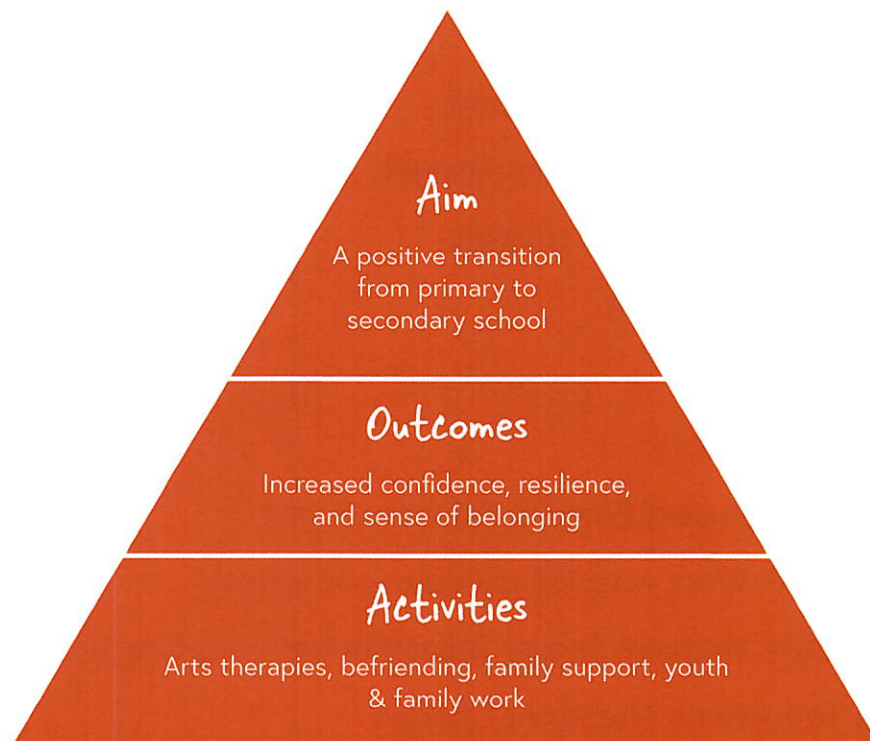
The transition from primary to secondary school has been identified as one of the most important and challenging times for children and young people. Research also suggests that transitions can have a massive impact on children and young people's development and emotional wellbeing.

A negative expectation of transition from primary to secondary school and disengagement in school can have long lasting effects in educational and social development and mental health, and hence transition from school into adulthood.

How the transition from primary to secondary school is handled can significantly impact capacity to cope with change in the short and long term. A positive transition promotes academic wellbeing and emotional stability. A negative transition may put the child/young person in danger of feeling overwhelmed, depressed or anxious, which can affect them into adulthood.

To facilitate a positive transition, it is therefore imperative to understand the challenges that must be addressed, including the following:

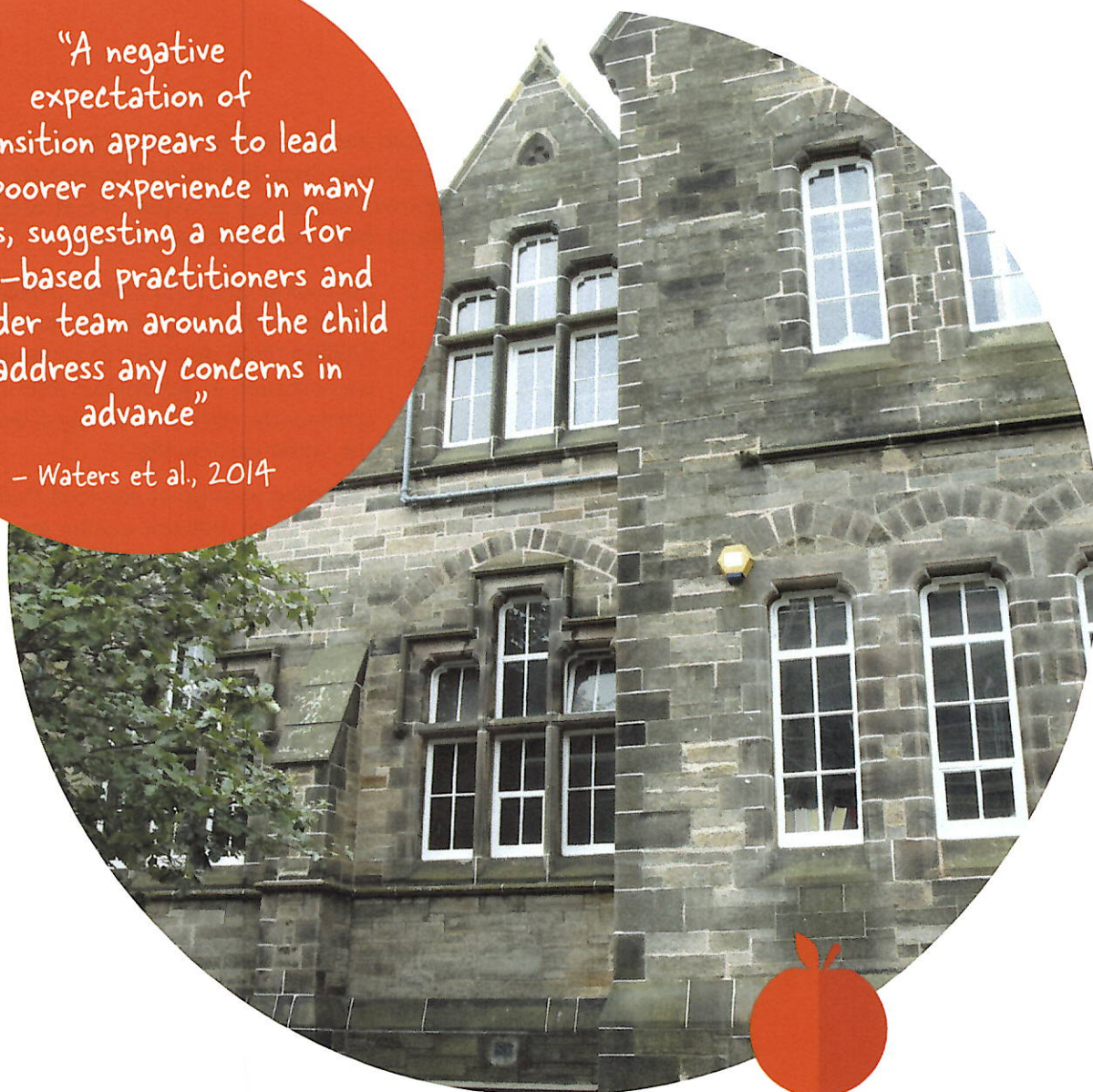
- Concern over the adjustment to studying several, some new and unfamiliar, specialist subjects at once
- Struggles with juggling an increased amount of homework from several classes
- Managing and understanding different expectations, work patterns and teaching styles of multiple teachers
- Lack of continuity between the curriculum in primary to secondary school
- Navigation of a new physical environment and switching classrooms several times a day
- Relationships with new friends, peers and potential older role models
- Coping constructively with heightened pressures and competitive atmospheres



Weavers Triangle 2022/23

"A negative expectation of transition appears to lead to a poorer experience in many cases, suggesting a need for school-based practitioners and the wider team around the child to address any concerns in advance"

– Waters et al., 2014



What we do

Our work with children, young people and families began in 2014 when we consulted over 700 young people about what it's like to live in Edinburgh. The transition to secondary school was one of the biggest challenges young people faced, and the area we chose to focus on first.

Established as Positive Transitions in 2016, our service supports children, young people and their families in the transition from primary and secondary school across Edinburgh and East Lothian. The service is designed to support them

to feel valued and understood, improve their self-esteem and peer relationships, and enable them to fulfil their potential

Working in over 50 schools in Edinburgh and East Lothian, the service continues to grow year on year in response to demand. Since 2015, we've supported over 3,000 young people in Edinburgh (since 2015) and East Lothian (since 2019) evidencing that the need for a positive transition remains highly important. From 2023 we are also working in Midlothian.

What is our approach?

Positive Transitions prides itself on taking a collaborative approach with the child or young person at the centre. This approach comprises evidenced-based, therapeutic early interventions which promote positive mental wellbeing and resilience as a means of overcoming challenges to equity in education and attainment.

Based on the values and principles of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and The Promise, specific challenges are continually addressed, including parental substance use, additional support needs, disability, trauma, and/or poverty.

The service spans a wide range of activities that offer support both on a one-to-one basis and in groups. Each activity focuses on the need to create a safe, fun, and stimulating environment where children and young people can comfortably express their thoughts and feelings, as well as help them develop their confidence in expressing what they need to make their transition positive. All the children and young

people are listened to, not just in decisions about their lives, but about the delivery and improvement of our services. The strategies we use to meet our objectives include:

- Focussing upon the overall wellbeing of the child/young person, not only helping them maintain or increase their participation at school but also in the community with their family, friends and the wider community.
- Providing a range of services that are reflective of relevant quality standards and addressing the potential problems related to a child transitioning from primary to secondary school.
- Applying national standards of transition services between primary and secondary schools by working with schools, and representatives from Local Authorities, the Scottish Government, and Education Scotland.



Where do we work?

Our support is geographically located in local communities. The service began in Edinburgh in 2015, expanding to East Lothian in 2019 and Midlothian in 2023. Based on school clusters, the service intends to maximise the assets of the community and community-based relationships. Developing this cluster approach

helps encourage primary schools that feed the same secondary schools to work more closely together. The quality and consistency of our service ensures our trusted and established presence in schools.

Who do we support?

Liaising closely with the teachers, we identify vulnerable children and young people who would benefit from additional support, many of whom are not engaged with any other service and are otherwise 'hidden'.

Our early interventions are designed to be preventative/mitigatory and can support those who are Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Tier 1, 2 or 3. Almost half of our referrals have experienced parental substance use and/or have been on the mental health waiting list for CAMHS for up to 18 months, and/or are diagnosed with a disability and/or a long-term health condition.

We aim to make our referral process as clear and smooth as possible so that referrers get a timely response to whether support can take place. To be a visible presence, we carry out engagement activities that raise awareness of the services we offer. We welcome self-referrals and referrals from police, GPs, social work services and other third-sector agencies. Participation is entirely voluntary for the child and they are supported to make an informed decision. No child is ever compelled to work with us.

Through ongoing dialogue with schools, our referral system keeps pace with local issues and

identifies every child and young person in need of our support. The referral system identifies those requiring intensive support, and uses a secure and effective monitoring and evaluation process to assess if the child is displaying one or more of the following:

- Disengaging from school
- Below-average attainment levels
- Having difficulty maintaining positive relationships
- Displaying symptoms of trauma/distress
- Disengaging from school/at risk of being excluded
- At the risk of/experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Displaying low self-esteem
- Hiding personal or family issues such as parental substance use
- Struggling with sexual orientation or gender-identity issues
- Experiencing adversity e.g. bereavement, bullying, poverty
- Or simply needing additional support due to a disability/long term health issue such as ADHD or autism

What interventions do we offer?



Arts Therapies

Arts Therapies include art, music and drama therapy. Some children struggle to put how they are feeling into words, and therapy offers them space to learn how to do this. By using art therapy in groups and one-to-one sessions, we've observed positive effects on lowering anxiety and stress, as well as improving self-awareness and self-esteem.

Clinically supervised art therapy, drama therapy and music therapy provide specialised one-to-one support to those children and young people in need of intense intervention due to the complexity of their situation, including those who have experienced trauma or have complex autism spectrum disorder (ASD) presentations. Arts therapies students from Queen Margaret University provide a supportive environment and access to different materials, exercises, and artistic methods, helping the child communicate their emotions and explore the support they need.

"I learnt that art therapy isn't about 'solving issues', the biggest thing is just about being there for somebody and making space for them."

– Art Therapist on placement



Befriending

Our befriending service matches a child, young person, with a volunteer to receive weekly one-on-one support sessions. The matching process is thorough, pairing children and volunteers whom we believe will connect. The sessions are a space for the child and volunteer to chat, play games and explore any common interests.

A befriender provides a child with a consistent level of support, helping them develop relationship-building skills with an adult who is not part of their school or family. Sessions are typically 45 minutes to one hour long and the match can be in place for as long as the child needs. It is a long-term intervention with a minimum of 6 months of commitment, however, matches often stay together for over a year. We are proud to have been awarded a Quality in Befriending Excellence Award for our excellence in this work.





Family Support (social work)



Family Support reviews each individual's wider situation, to help us plan the most appropriate support. This takes a self-directed approach, empowering children, young people and families to make choices about the support they need. Social work students on placement with us consider specific needs and how best to support the child or young person and help them engage with family, school and their community.

The social worker works directly with teachers, families, and other agencies to identify and offer the most suitable and appropriate support aimed to provide families with the knowledge and skills to assist their child or young person in their educational journey. These activities contribute to a culture of learning within the family and can improve the life chances of all those involved. Positive Transitions supervise the students and give them the opportunity to be creative and flexible in their practice whilst tackling challenges the child, young person and family may be facing.

Whatever issues families face, we ensure intensive family support is available, proactive and characterised by the 10 family support principles: Community Based; Responsive and Timely; Work with Family Assets; Empowerment and Agency; Flexible; Holistic and Relational; Therapeutic; Non-Stigmatising; Patient and Persistent; Underpinned by Children's Rights.

Youth & Family Work



Every child, young person and family is assigned a Youth & Family Coordinator from our team to ensure consistency and continuity of service including direct support and provision of sessions based on the experiences and input of the child or young person themselves.

Support is tailored, adapting to the needs of the children, young people and families, based on the initial assessment done with schools, referrers, families, and children.

The family is included as part of the support in which the coordinator listens to any concerns, as well as advocates for the views and needs of the children, young person, and families with other professionals and schools.

"I have ticked off both of my goals for today – having fun and making a new friend!"

– Young person

Group work

Many of our interventions include additional group work, including:



Science Club

As part of a three-year partnership with Science Ceilidh, our Science Club provided interactive group sessions within school time, supporting friendships and building confidence. Most of the activities only required everyday materials, such as water, salt or dish soap! Interventions such as these show children that science is present in their daily lives and not just a mysterious topic hidden in a laboratory.

In 2022, our third year of partnership, we ran three S1 groups, and one S2 group. Many of the children attended the club since they were in P6 or P7, providing consistent support throughout their transition to secondary school. In 2023 we are running groups with Marty the Robot, a fun tool for teaching STEM.

"The session themes change each term...they tend to involve movement, music, art, colour, sound, planets, and the occasional explosion!"

– Becky Innes, Youth & Family Coordinator



Sports Club

Originally trialled as part of our Summer Programme 2022, our goal is to create a sport-centred activity, using sport as a metaphor to provide holistic support.

Active participation in sports and outdoor activities can help children build confidence, make new friends and encourage them to continue to attend the club and school. Being active and playing sports are beneficial for children physically, socially, and mentally.

The Sports Club aims to provide a fun activity agenda each week, including giving the children space for conversations about teamwork, frustrations, and fears of what they are currently experiencing at school, whether that be transitioning from P7 to S1, or already in S1 and finding the whole new environment and curriculum daunting.





All Aboard canal boat

People Know How run the All Aboard canal boat in partnership with Polwarth Parish Church, moored on the Union Canal.

Purchased in 2021, the boat has been used for various trips with children, young people and families, and with groups from the local community.

In 2022, we launched All Aboard Transitions to offer space for groups of children after school to meet, relax, enjoy the journey along the Union Canal, and potentially talk about any worries or concerns. The boat will continue to be used to provide a fun activity for families to have time together, led by befrienders and social workers, and to celebrate being part of the Positive Transitions team.

Summer Programme

The Summer Programme offered continued support for the children, young people and families during the holiday period, allowing the consistency of meeting their Youth & Family Coordinator as they approached secondary school.

Run for the first time in August 2022 over four weeks, referrals came from schools and we discussed potential activities with the children and families themselves. By providing peer support and opportunities for friendships, participants got to know others in their clusters, empowering them to build confidence and self-esteem while learning new skills and having fun. Their ability to meet new situations with curiosity and enthusiasm was a great reminder that new experiences, though sometimes daunting, can lead to great memories. Activities included sports day, art activities, beach day, a visit to Dynamic Earth, and a trip on our All Aboard canal boat.

Read more on our website:

[Summer Days with Positive Transitions](#)

"Abby is quiet and introverted, she's almost always alone in school, drawing. It was lovely to see her running around with Steven, playing tag and laughing."

– Becky Innes, Youth & Family Coordinator



What we have learned

This report looks at what we have achieved since the founding of Positive Transitions and the outcomes of our work. The report also looks at the success of each key activity we've carried out and the benefits they have brought to the children and families we have supported and the

schools we work with. The report is aimed to help us ensure our aim, objectives, and activities remain focused on our stated purposes, but also to share our experience and research with our stakeholders and potential future collaborative partners.

Family support is key

Family members are encouraged to discuss transitions with their child or young person. In doing so, they can support them to have a more 'positive' outlook on the transition. Family are also encouraged to talk about the challenges they are going through (including financial and mental health worries).

Evidence has shown us that support from family members and guardians is integral, including the provision of support to family members and a safe space to openly discuss feelings towards transitions, helping them access resources, and develop skills to support their child.

Families and carers are more likely to engage with us positively when we offer:

- Consistent communication – agreeing the frequency of calls, weekly or fortnightly, at the initial assessment
- Engaging with them when we know things are challenging- not tiptoeing around any issues the family may be going through
- Clear, honest, transparent, and easy communication- avoiding jargon

Interpersonal skills

Helping children and young people develop interpersonal skills encourages them to develop their resilience and coping strategies when moving to secondary school.

Often children in primary school imagine their friends and peers will move to secondary school together. In reality, these groups often get separated. Children go to different secondary schools, are in different tutorial groups and

classes, and new friendships can disrupt the previous pattern of relationships. Making friends is a clear transition-related concern. Through fun activities, we create groups that focus on developing skills needed for building quality peer relations. We know that where children establish friendship groups and positive peer groups by Christmas of S1, they are more likely to continue to succeed and thrive in secondary school.

Relationships with schools

Relationships with schools are key to ensure we have a full understanding of the child, young person, and all the professionals around them.

- Having a strong relationship with a principle contact at each school facilitates communication between families, children and the school itself.
- To ensure relevant referrals are made, schools must understand each service we offer. They can then indicate which intervention will suit a particular child and why. E.g. "Group will be good for them as they need to develop their social skills," or "Support from a social work student because of the parents/carers are open to being supported."

Relationships between school and home

Where there is a positive relationship between school and home, children and young people are more likely to make a positive transition.

- It helps facilitate effective conversations
- It ensures the child or young person continues appropriately supported
- It provides a positive link and trust between the schools, other professionals and the home, helps avoid barriers and tensions

Working with schools

- Building systemic sustainability and trust in the support we provide, will only strengthen and improve the outcomes for children and young people in transition, and ensure that positive transitions becomes part of each schools' strategic plan
- Getting to know the key professional for each child, will ensure consistency and a mutual understanding of the provision and need of support
- Involving administration staff in the process of making referrals, arranging support and booking private meeting spaces will help to build a trusted relationship ongoing.
- Presenting to school staff about our work will be beneficial to all parties, helping schools engage and support our work.
- Often overlooked when it comes to Child Planning Meetings, we reinforce with schools and referrers the importance of our attendance.
- The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is often managed by local authorities who will use all or some of it to purchase authority-wide services that may be services run by the council. Schools have limited scope to spend their PEF on their school alone.

Identifying who needs our support

Children and young people identified as at risk of a poor transition have other factors at play. This may include a range of factors, both inside and outside the home.

- There is a strong correlation between the numbers of children affected by parental substance use and those that struggle to make a positive transition to secondary school. This can make up over 40% of referrals in some schools.
- 52.9% of children supported have additional support for learning needs including ASD, dyslexia, learning disabilities, ADHD.
- 58.9% of children supported have mental health issues, including anxiety, sadness and depression and OCD.

Our practice has adapted and changed

- We put processes into place through which our Youth & Family Coordinators provide continuity for all children, young people, families and schools in their cluster, including those supported by volunteers and placement students. This means that if a unplanned ending has to take place as a result of volunteers or placement students facing other commitments or changes, our coordinators ensure that that young person does not miss out on any support.
- Finding different ways to communicate and engage with children is key. Art, play and sport-based interventions are particularly effective.
- Every school is different. We need to adapt to their values, work ethos, and their way of working. In some schools we need to work with the administration staff, others with the Head Teachers, and others with the class teacher. Different professionals have different degrees of ability to make decisions. We need to work together.
- The initial consultation in 2014 provided the base for what Positive Transitions is today. We have done smaller-scale consultations across the years; however, we need to run another big consultation and make sure we are still covering the same issues around transition. The smaller consultations suggest that, but we need to be sure.
- Every Local Authority is different and we need to adapt our language and way of working with each of them.
- Setting clear outcomes and measuring our impact has been key to further developing our practice.



Interacting with those we support

- After our experience of introducing an online option for one-to-one befriending and support due to the pandemic and school closures, our work now uses the best of both worlds. We embrace both online and face-to-face contact when it comes to engaging with children, young people, families, schools and other professionals.
- Our Youth & Family Coordinators provide one-to-one support as well as group work and work with families.
- Our work was to support P5s onwards, but we are now focusing more on the support of the P7s and S1s.
- We adapted our work to continue supporting children to the end of S2 (our work would usually end by the Easter of S1). We are still supporting S2s, as we feel they will benefit from having consistency,
- We now liaise with other youth organisations, referring the young people for ongoing support post S1, delivering a safe and supportive exit plan for S1/S2's buddying them along to another agency.
- Originally our Family Work consisted of the support provided by social work

students, who had the most direct and continuous relationships with families. Before the pandemic, our work with families was limited as once everything was agreed upon, it would then be set up through the school. Our work supporting families has now expanded, consisting of weekly or fortnightly conversations with families about how their child is doing, and how are they doing. They have reported the benefits of "knowing someone cares about them".

- We continue to review how we recruit and train our volunteer befrienders. The majority of volunteers who sign-up show great empathy to the children and young people as many did not have a great time at school themselves. However, we need to ensure that the volunteers remember the aspect of privacy and information sharing, and also that they can be relied on to attend their scheduled session with the child.

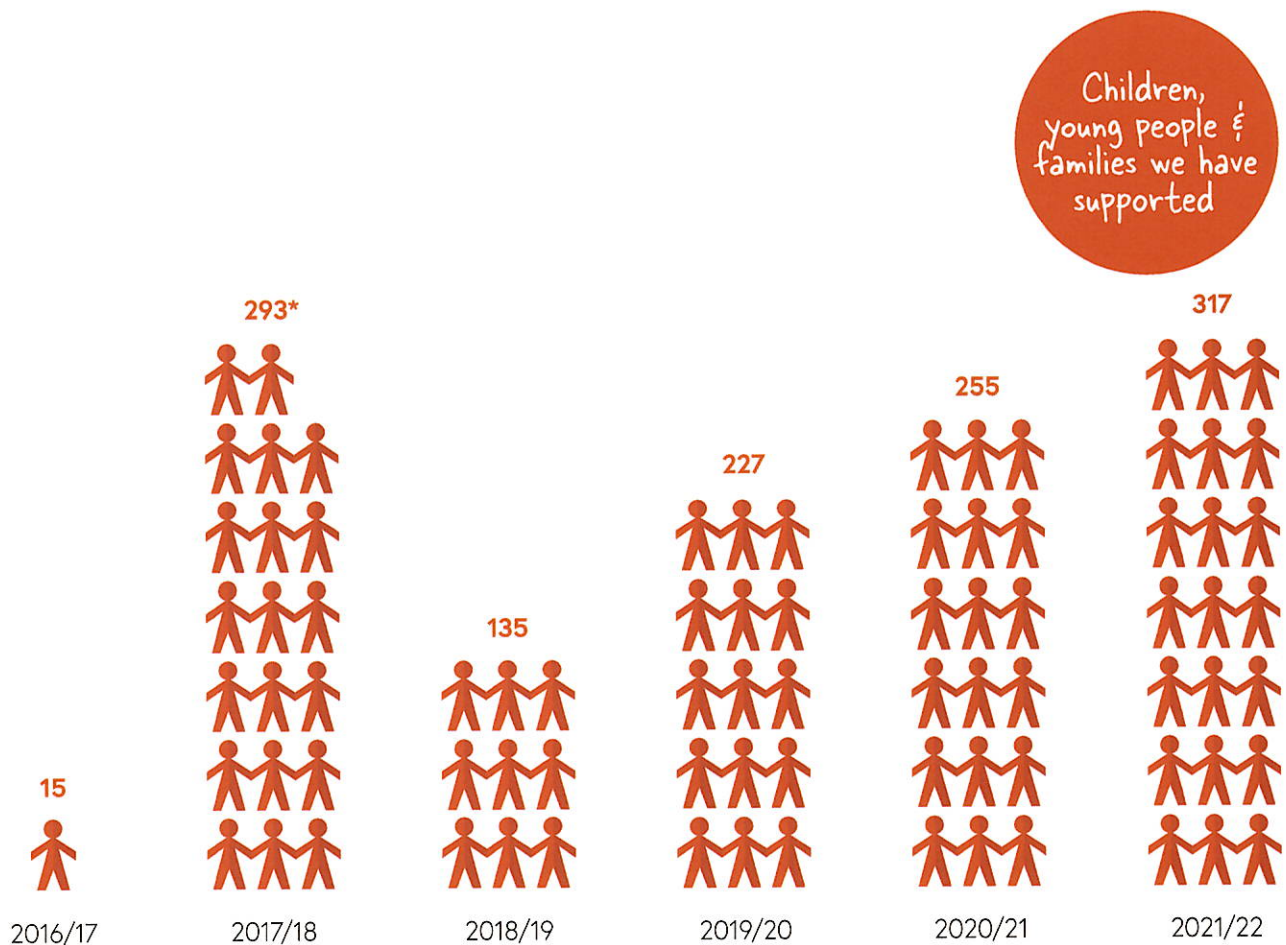
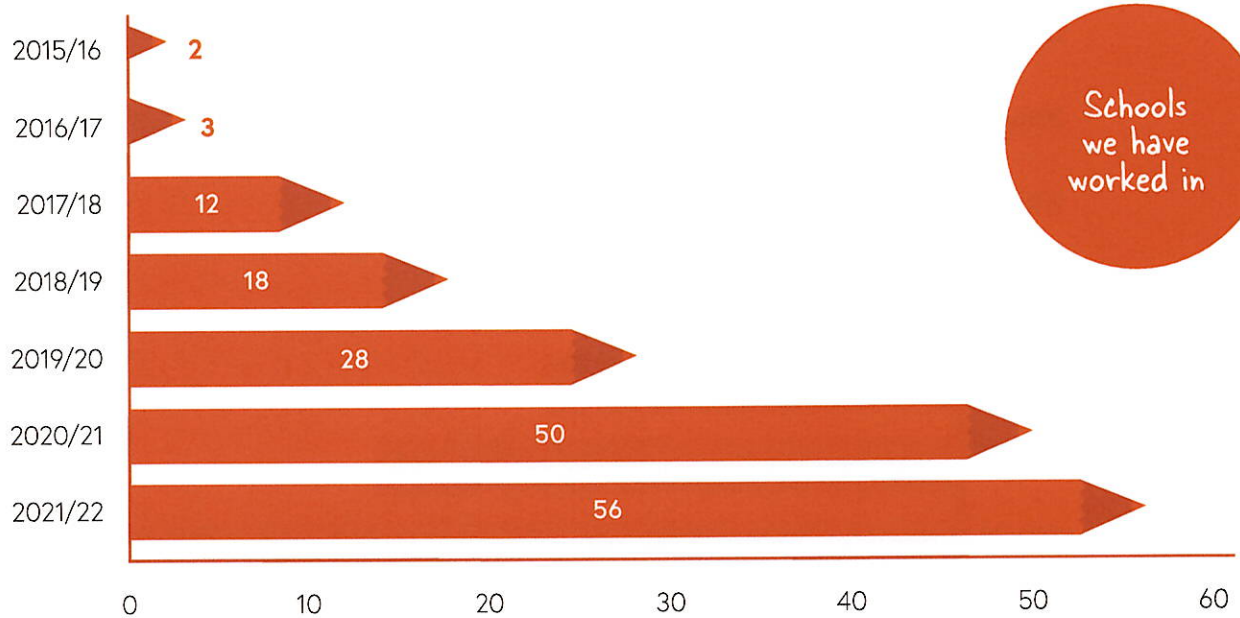


"The largest longitudinal study in Scotland suggested up to a fifth of young people have a negative experience."

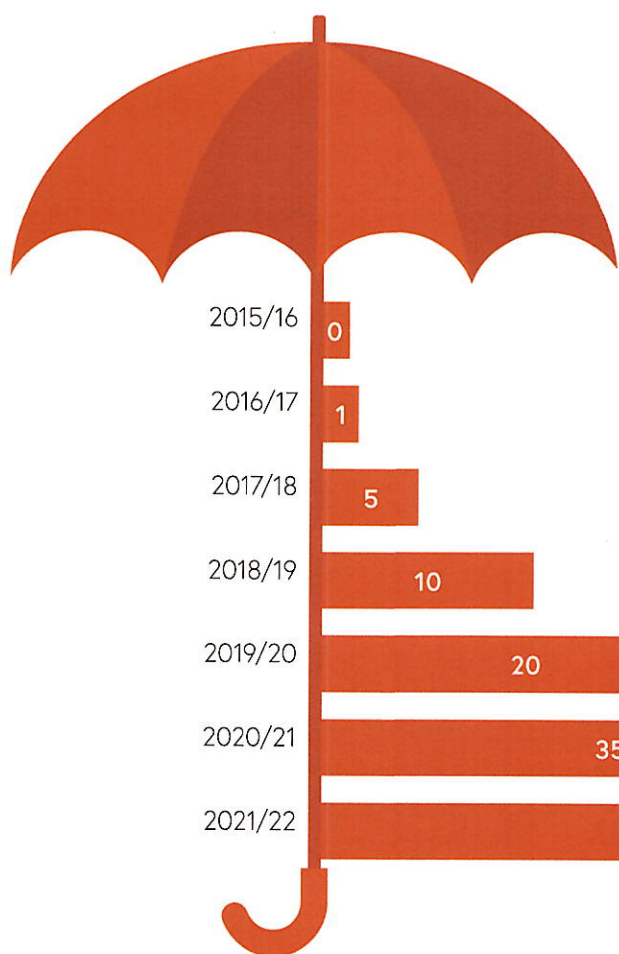
– Gilbert, A., Smith, N., Knudsen, L., Jindal-Snape, D. and Bradshaw, P. (2021)
Transitions from Primary to Secondary School:
Findings from the Growing Up in Scotland
Study Edinburgh: Scottish
Government

Monitoring & evaluation

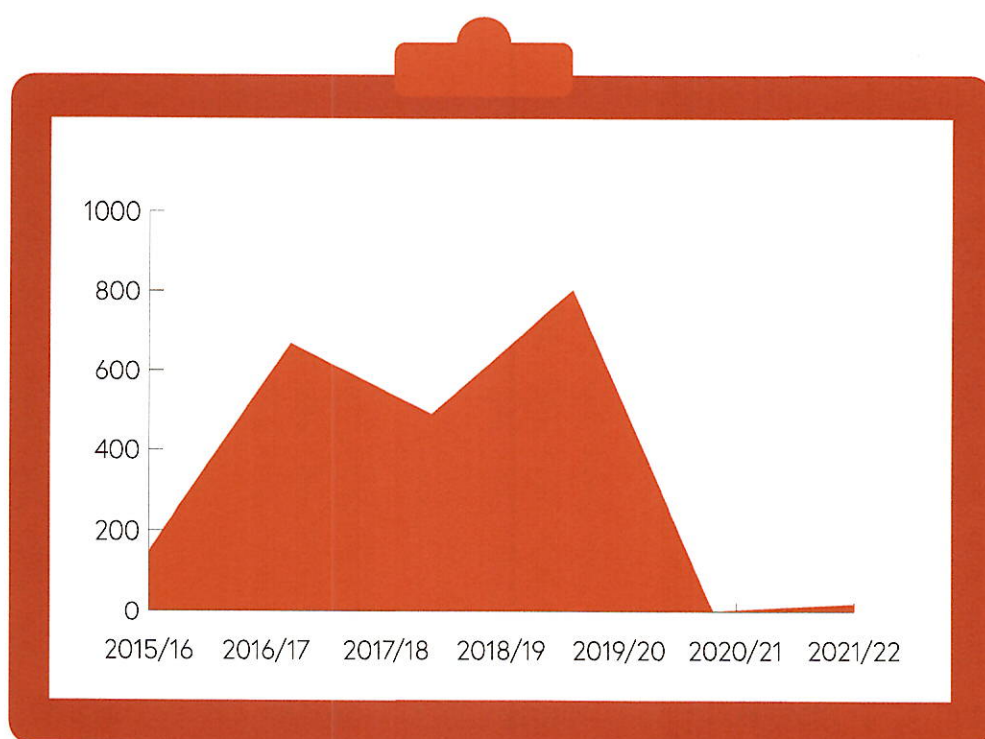
Timeline & development



*including consultations and largely group work

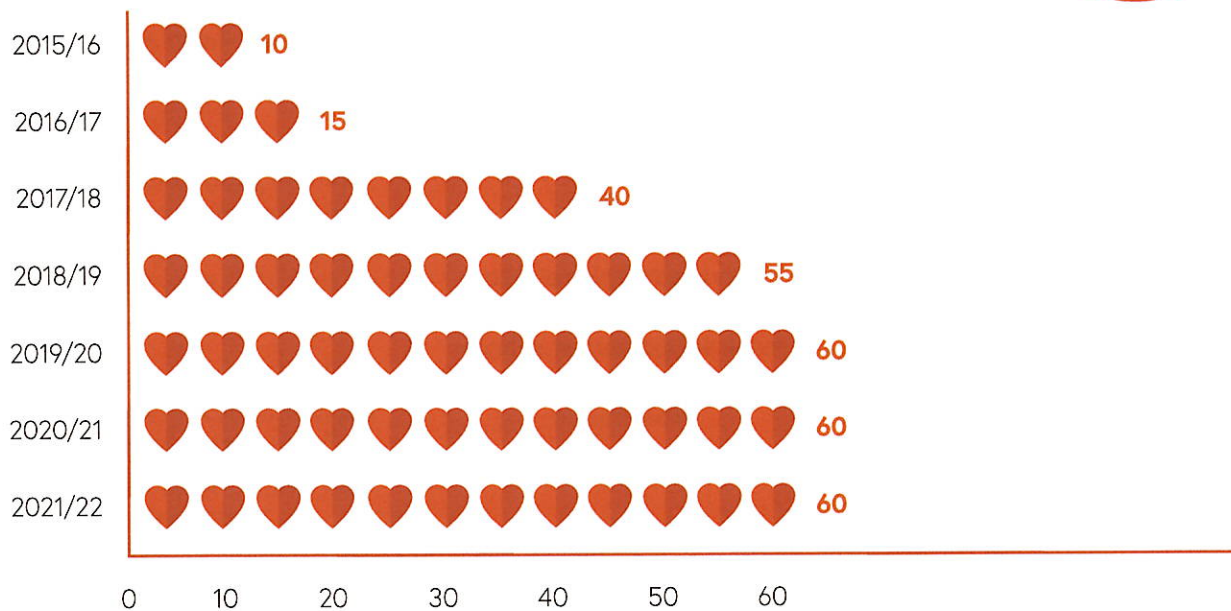


Safeguarding
concerns



Carried out
consultations

VIPs involved



How we evaluate our work

Our Monitoring and Evaluation framework consistently tracks progress, capturing case studies in various formats and gathering 360-degree feedback as this produces more reliable and conclusive evidence. Throughout the process, the child's development and engagement is measured across the outcome indicators. Ongoing feedback allows us to continually evaluate how we develop our support, and our policies and guidance ensures that we are maintaining key principles and maintaining a person/family centred approach.

We employ the following methods to capture evidence:

- **Self-reporting:** data is gathered on a one-to-one basis by assessment with the child
- **Third-party feedback:** we gather evidence from school, families, police, social work and carers via meetings and online surveys
- **Child engagement:** we have designed a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that we meet the child's needs effectively
- **VIPs (Volunteers, Interns, Placement students) feedback:** the volunteers share information as part of support and supervision, and by using an online, secure Befriender Diary, answer specific questions including concerns and plans for the next session with the child. We encourage our VIPs to attend evaluation training sessions and share their ideas on how the service is running.

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
88.3% of the young people improved their wellbeing	76.1% of the young people, improved their wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem	83.3% of the young people improved their wellbeing <i>"Definitely with stuff at home, things have been a lot better"</i>
85.7% of the young people have improved their engagement with learning and feel less stressed about school	63.9% of young people reduced their levels of stress, felt more supported at school and improved attainment and attendance	75% of the young people felt somewhat more comfortable talking about things and 100% of them felt they had a safe space to talk about it <i>"Dad feels Amy is much happier in having support off of [the youth worker] and it got her to speak about her emotions"</i>
69.36% of the young people have increased their resilience	77% of young people increased their resilience, improved relationships with significant adults and increased capacity to use personal resources	75% of support we provided helped young people make or maintain friends
71.1% of the young people's relationships became more positive, helping them to be more engaged in their community	80.35% of the young people felt less isolated and more part of their community, willing to get involved and attend more activities in the community	75% of the young people feel they can do more activities in school and in their community <i>"Paula has joined an academy drama school at the weekends"</i>

Partnership working

Being involved in various strategic groups, such as Locality Operational Groups, including Volunteer Centre East Lothian and EVOC, helps us promote a shared understanding of the specific needs of the children and families we support, and provide a transparent framework that will support both families and frontline staff referring children.

Universities & Colleges: We have strategic partnerships with 10 universities and Edinburgh College to offer placements and internships to young people to assist them in their professional development, including those for whom English is not their native language. Our work with Queen Margaret University is particularly valuable, supporting their professional placement programme for their MSc courses in therapeutic vocations.

Local authorities: Partnering with the City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council and Midlothian Council, we align our service to local policies and plans, including the annual Children's Services Plan for each local authority.

NHS Lothian: as a founding member of the NHS led group 'Every Contact Counts', we align our work on improving service access and outcomes for children and young people affected by mental health issues. In April 2019, we were awarded a contract by NHS Lothian to deliver mental wellbeing support to children in Edinburgh. In November 2019, we were then awarded the contract to deliver support to children across East Lothian. This work has connected us with the School Nursing and CAMHS teams.

Third Sector & Community Groups: We are active members of the EVOC Children, Young People & Families Network, including being a representative on the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee and founding member of the Education & Equity Working Group. We encourage links between young people and their communities by giving them opportunities to engage in local activities. We are also the third sector representative on the Children & Young People Mental Health Strategy Group that will feed into the new Children's Strategic Plan, as well as the Children & Young People Mental Health Strategy Group for East Lothian, and the Third Sector Referral Group.



Community engagement: Our work is asset focussed, which we apply to service delivery and focus on identifying and sharing what individuals and communities have to offer that might enhance wellbeing. We work with school communities to map social, financial, physical, environmental and human assets and strengthen children and young peoples' links to their communities, increase social cohesion and further their sense of community connectedness and belonging.

In-kind support and collaboration: We have partnerships with local business such as Costco and St James' Place to receive donations in kind in the form of art materials to support our Arts Therapies. Collaborating with local community centres aids us to find premises for after school and holiday care.



What we have planned

There's continuing evidence that despite children and young people continuing to struggle in the transitions to secondary school, there's currently no specific government policies in Scotland determining how schools manage transitions, helping children and young people make the best transition possible.

Our Positive Transitions has national significance and reach. In the same way the Scottish Government created tools and guidelines for incorporating the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and GIRFEC, we want to create a National School Transition Network Charter and Toolkit.

2022 to 2023: Project Board & Advisory Board

Strategic Planning for a National School Transition Network (P7 to S1): "Positive transitions for all: Using research to improve how practitioners support children at risk of making a poor transition from primary to secondary school in Scotland"

Following the award of a Collaborative Studentship from the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS), People Know How and the University of Edinburgh has launched a research project aimed to improve multi-agency working around primary to secondary school transitions, starting with two school clusters – Portobello, Edinburgh, and Prestonpans, East Lothian.

Working in partnership with key representatives:

- The Project Board consists of the Head of School, Deputy Heads and Guidance Teachers from each school from the two school clusters, totalling 11 schools
- The Advisory Board brings external professionals, not directly involved in the project delivery, but with key involvement

in children's policies, including representatives from the University of Edinburgh, the University of Dundee, Education Scotland, and the Scottish Government

- Positive Transitions will continue to undertake assessments to identify the needs of children around their transitions and tailor appropriate support

Through working with the Project Board and Advisory Board, we aim to:

- Identify the barriers professionals, families, and children face during the transition years
- Pull different services together including those provided at school and externally via social work and other children's support services
- Enhance the current nurtured transitions and tailor them to the needs of each individual child, particularly for those with additional concerns/worries

"People Know How haven't been part of a group like this before. We know how to work as collaborative partners, and have worked alongside third sector organisations, but we've never had the opportunity to run a group to review how to change a statutory system such as schools."

– Miren Ochoa Sagues
Former Head of Service &
Research

2023 to 2024: Work with 110 children in 11 schools

We are asking each school to:

- Have an initial meeting with us to go over the specifics of the project
 - Identify a representative to help organise support for P7s and S1s to ensure the smooth running of the Positive Transitions service
 - Identify a representative to bring ideas and experiences to the project group that will meet regularly (every 2-3 months). The representative needs to be able to have some decision-making power at the school and carry forward any agreements during the process.
- The transition can be measured in different ways, there will be no one measure to assess how well the child feels on this particular journey, from start to finish. The key questions will be:
- What the child is expecting the difficulties to be in transition
 - What they experience throughout the transition period, starting in P7 and through to S1
 - What input did the child and family have in the support they received?
 - Was the child/family able to express their views, for example not wishing to have Social Work involved, and/or preference for therapy
 - We will then use this knowledge to create a model of practice to improve pupil transitions across Scotland and in turn:
 - Improve school attendance
 - Enhance social and emotional wellbeing
 - Enhance educational attainment

"It is essential that additional support is offered to the right children at the right time. We need be looking at the processes and procedures of how teachers identify the children, and the matching of need at the right time and in the right place e.g. at school, at home or after school/holidays."

– Neil Hume, PhD student:
Research



2023 to 2024: National School Transition Network, Charter & Toolkit

In 2023, we wish to continue to provide and extend our service offering to schools in the Lothians, and engage with relevant partners and Scottish Local Authorities to understand how transition works for them. Our ongoing research and knowledge will be used to develop a charter and toolkit of resources to share across Scotland.

The overall aim is to influence and improve pupil transitions into secondary school across the country. Findings from the University's Research

Project will also enhance theories on school transition, and explore intersecting issues such as class, ethnicity, gender, culture, and disability, to ensure any practice model meets the needs of every child and young person and their family.



"The long-term aim is a change to policy in school transition. Our experience over the past 7 years is finding consistent issues that can be created as a policy for all schools to use throughout Scotland. We're trying to create an unbiased view, hence why we created an Advisory group, aimed to assess the findings over the next year with an unbiased view as members are not working in schools."

— Miren Ochoa Sagues
Former Head of Service & Research

Positive Transitions Theory of Change



Impact

Help build a secure, supportive, and inclusive platform for children and young people during the transition from primary to secondary school, involving family and the school at such a crucial time in their lives as they start to make key life decisions, affecting their current and future wellbeing.

Outcomes

Work with strategic partners to identify the additional support needs of children, young people and families during transition. Evaluate and enhance current tailored support to P6 to S1 pupils, offering Arts Therapies (Art, Music, Drama), Befriending, Youth & Family Work, and Family Support.

Outputs

Support and improve every child and young person's transition across Scotland by creating a bespoke, tailor-made mode of practice, and in turn, improve overall school attendance, and enhance social and emotional wellbeing, and educational attainment, and reduce negative social issues.



Activities

Collaborate with academics, government, and local authorities, and initiate ongoing dialogue with schools to ensure clear communication, continuity, and the development of a sound parent-teacher partnership during planning and preparation for a child's transition.

Inputs

Continue to take referrals from schools, undertake assessments, and deliver appropriate support; work with the University of Edinburgh to identify and share methodology, and coordinate with the Advisory Groups who will oversee and ensure the efficiency of the Strategic Plan for a National School Transition Network and Toolkit.

Preconditions

To achieve these goals and enable positive change through Positive Transitions we need to understand and respond to the requirements of the children, young people and families first, those identified as needing additional support in transitioning from primary to secondary school. Only by using our current and ongoing experience with working with children in P6 onwards, will the service be able to continue to identify the changing needs of the children and the schools in which we work.



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