



Transitions of a Child's Life



Key messages from our VCSE Network Event

18 June 2026 | West Wakefield Methodist Church



Thank you to everyone who joined our Transitions of a Child's Life network event. Professionals from across Wakefield District came together to explore how we can better support children, young people and families through key life transitions. **This summary captures some of the key messages shared by our guest speakers.**



Denise Wheatman
Public Health –
Wakefield Risk &
Resilience Framework

Key messages

- Early experiences shape lifelong health and wellbeing.
- Building protective factors is just as important as reducing risks.
- Resilience develops through trusted relationships and supportive communities.
- Every professional has a role in helping children thrive.
- Working together across services creates better outcomes.



Holly & Tara
The Old Quarry
Adventure Playground

Key messages

- Play provides children with opportunities to build confidence and independence.
- Safe spaces help children develop friendships and emotional resilience.
- Relationships with trusted adults support positive development.
- Every child benefits from feeling they belong within their community.
- Small opportunities can have a lasting impact.



Kenny Stenton
Enabling Youth

Key messages

- Adolescence is a key period for identity, confidence and belonging.
- Positive youth work creates trusted relationships outside school and home.
- Young people benefit from being listened to rather than directed.
- Consistency and patience build engagement over time.
- Communities play a vital role in helping young people navigate change.

“

***Transitions are life journeys,
not simply movement between services.***

– Darren Dooler, Future Selph / S.M.a.S.H Society

”



Lindsey Ball
*Heart of Yorkshire
Education Group*

Key messages

- Alternative education can help young people **re-engage with learning**.
- **Flexible pathways** allow young people to succeed in different ways.
- Preparing for adulthood should include **confidence, independence and life skills**.
- Education should focus on **individual strengths and aspirations**.
- **Strong partnerships** improve progression into employment or further education.



Darren Dooler
*Future Selph /
S.M.a.S.H Society*

Key messages

- Transitions are **life journeys**, not simply movement between services.
- Young people need **consistent relationships** during periods of change.
- Preparation should begin **well before transitions** occur.
- **Trauma-informed and person-centred approaches** improve confidence and resilience.
- **Multi-agency working** creates smoother transitions and reduces young people falling through gaps.
- Supporting **identity, belonging and purpose** is just as important as meeting clinical need.



Charlotte Oates
*Young Lives
Consortium*

Key messages

- Young people's experiences highlighted that transitions between children's and adult services can feel **confusing and inconsistent**.
- Earlier conversations and better preparation can **reduce anxiety**.
- Young people want **clearer information**, better communication and joined-up support.
- The new Mental Health Transitions Task & Finish Group will bring partners together to **improve transition experiences** across Wakefield.
- Young Lives will continue to ensure **young people's voices** shape future improvements.

Overall themes from the event

What we heard



Relationships
matter



Earlier intervention
makes a
difference



Young people need
to feel prepared,
informed and
involved



Community
organisations play
an essential role
alongside statutory
services



Collaboration across
education, health,
statutory services
and the VCSE is key
to smoother
transitions



Supporting resilience,
belonging and
independence should
remain central
throughout childhood
and into adulthood



Want to know more?

If you would like any further information about the Transitions of a Child's Life network event or our work, please get in touch with us.



info@ylc.org.uk



01924 364198



www.younglives.net



Lightwaves Leisure Centre,
Lower York Street,
Wakefield WF1 3LJ

