

Physical and neurological impairment (PNI)

Transition

In preparation for transition to secondary school Specialist Teachers (PNI) need to start planning during year 5. This is imperative to ensure that access to the secondary school of choice is possible and not a barrier to inclusion. While the team is unable to advise parents on their choice of school, they can share their knowledge of access facilities and highlight any difficulties with the school buildings that may arise.

Case study: Early planning for transition of a pupil with PNI to secondary school

At a pupil's review meeting during the summer term of Year 5, it was discussed that both the pupil and parent were very keen for him to attend a **secondary school** that was **out of catchment** and needed some **building adaptations** to make it **fully accessible** for him. The Specialist Teacher (PNI) had knowledge of all the surrounding secondary schools and was aware that the catchment school was already adapted.

Nationally, when the catchment school is accessible and can meet the needs of a pupil, funding for adaptations may not be agreed. In Essex, the local authority strives to continue to improve access facilities in its schools and has Access Funding available to ensure this. In this instance, it was not clear, however, whether or not funding would be given the 'go ahead', so it was agreed that the Specialist Teacher (PNI) would **assess the adaptations required** and **submit a report** to the Access Funding panel.

Actions taken

In order to ensure that all aspects of the pupil's needs were not overlooked, both the Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist were consulted to ensure that every contingency was planned for. It was the role of the Specialist Teacher (PNI) to ensure that health and school information was gathered and presented in a report to the panel, and many visits to the secondary school were undertaken. The secondary school was keen to be open to suggestions for adaptation and understood why the pupil and his parent wanted admission to their school. They had attended an inclusive debate earlier in the year as part of the secondary school's extended reach in the local community programme. While the school already had ramped access, lifts and accessible bathrooms, it did not have the specific, specialist equipment installed that the prospective pupil would need.

A report was submitted to the Access Funding panel, requesting that a surveyor undergo a joint visit to the secondary school with the Specialist Teacher (PNI), Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist. This action was agreed, and two separate visits were made to the school in order to find a bathroom space that could be made into an accessible toilet and changing space for the pupil.

Once the surveyor had submitted projected costs back to the Access Funding panel, it was noted that this was not the catchment school and therefore questions were raised about the need for the identified works to be carried out as the catchment school already had the appropriate adaptations. At this point reference was made to the Specialist Teacher's report, where the wider picture had been explained, and the funding was subsequently agreed.

Impact of the involvement of the Specialist Teacher (PNI)

The timely actions undertaken by the Specialist Teacher, which led to the formulation of an appropriate report for decision-makers, was key to the success of the transition.

The Specialist Teacher's knowledge of the local area and the pupil's range of needs – health and intimate care needs, as well as wider, social community needs - attributed to the agreement of this funding, without which the secondary school of choice would not have been able to improve their facilities and the pupil would have been directed to the catchment school.

The school now has an accessible bathroom that is used on a daily basis by the pupil, who is thoroughly enjoying his time in year 7.

Funding for the works was agreed in the Autumn term of Year 5 and contractors assigned during the Spring term of Year 6. This bathroom was constructed during the school closure period directly preceding the pupil's transition from junior to secondary school. Without this early planning there would have been insufficient time to have had the bathroom ready for secondary transition.



Ceiling track hoist plus height-adjustable changing bench



Clos-o-Mat toilet