

ESSS Outline

Disability, poverty and transitional support

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Introduction

This evidence summary seeks to address the following question relating to transitional support services:

What is the impact of poverty on engagement with transitional support interventions for young people with disabilities?

About the evidence presented below

We searched for academic research and grey literature using a wide range of search terms including: poverty, young adults, young people, family, income, learning disabilities, health inequalities, discrimination, intervention, good practice, employment, children, adults, social inclusion, social networks, quality of life, outcomes. We looked at academic research in the fields of disability, education, social policy and rehabilitation in relevant databases (e.g. [ASSIA](#)). We also used the [Iriss National Social Services Search](#) and [SCIE Social Care Online](#).

The evidence we collected illustrates a complex system with varied factors, such as access to housing, barriers to employment and the additional costs of living with a disability. However, there is more to the picture than what is covered in this Outline. The Social Metrics Commission (2018), for example, highlight the difficulties in measuring poverty, and the heterogeneity of disabled people must also be taken into account (Heslop 2013). While some of the research suggests that recent welfare reforms have left many worse off (Alston 2018, Beatty and Fothergill 2016), it is difficult to know the full impact of these changes.

The research looking at the relationship between poverty and engagement with transitional support interventions for young people with disabilities is also limited. As a result, the evidence in this Outline looks more broadly at the interaction between poverty, disability, and the complexities of the

benefits system, as well as the role of both parents and services to support young people in transition.

Accessing resources

We have provided links to the materials referenced in the summary. Some materials are paywalled, which means they are published in academic journals and are only available with a subscription. Some of these are available through the [The Knowledge Network](#) with an NHS Scotland OpenAthens username. The Knowledge Network offers accounts to everyone who helps provide health and social care in Scotland in conjunction with the NHS and Scottish Local Authorities, including many in the third and independent sectors. [You can register here](#). Where resources are identified as ‘available through document delivery’, these have been provided to the original enquirer and may be requested through NHS Scotland’s [fetch item service](#) (subject to eligibility).

Where possible we identify where evidence is published open access, which means the author has chosen to publish their work in a way that makes it freely available to the public. Some are identified as author repository copies, manuscripts, or other copies, which means the author has made a version of the otherwise paywalled publication available to the public. Other referenced sources are pdfs and websites that are available publicly.

Background

Poverty and disability

Disability and poverty are closely tied, with disability often increasing health care and related costs while simultaneously limiting entry or stay in the labour market ([Phillips et al. 2018](#)). Tinson et al. (2016) state that disabled people are at a higher risk of poverty than many in the UK, for two main reasons:

- Impairments, health conditions and social responses to these conditions often prevent disabled people from working and thus deprive them of income
- Disability often brings with it a series of higher and additional costs that further reduce income

According to a recent report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([2018](#)), there are approximately 6.6 million people in families in poverty that include a disabled adult or child in the UK. This report also found that over the last five years, the poverty rate for disabled adults has risen, whether they live in a working or a workless family. Disabled adults in working-age families are much more likely to be in poverty than those who are not disabled – 39% compared with 18%. Disability has also been linked with an increased risk of destitution, defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([2018](#)) as “going without essentials such as a home, food, heating, lighting, clothing, shoes and basic toiletries”.

In Scotland, disabled young adults have higher poverty rates than the rest of the population and are more likely to be workless than non-disabled adults, even when other factors such as qualification levels are taken into account ([Scottish Government 2017](#)). Tinson et al. (2016) state that disabled people face much worse outcomes in the labour market, despite large proportions who would like to work. For young people in Scotland, the participation rate amongst those identified as disabled (86.3%) lower than that for those not identified as disabled (92.1%), and the main difference in participation was in employment (10.8% versus 19.0%) ([Skills Development Scotland 2018](#)).

UK data from 2014/15 shows that 30% of working-age adults in families where at least one member is disabled were living in households with below 60% of contemporary median income after housing costs, compared with 18% for those living in families with no disabled members ([Equality and Human Rights Commission 2017](#)). For both families with and without a disabled person, the highest risk of poverty is among lone parent families; just over half of those in lone parent families with a disabled person live in

poverty, as do 40% of those in families with no disabled person ([MacInnes et al. 2014](#)).

There is evidence that disabled children are significantly more likely to grow up in poverty than those who are non-disabled ([MacInnes et al. 2014](#)).

According to Read et al. ([2012](#)) financial disadvantage may be a result of higher costs of living with disability, reduced opportunities for adults in the household to undertake paid work, the inadequacy of state benefits to offset this, and barriers to benefit take-up, however they also state that these factors may not offer a full explanation. Despite being well-reported, the reasons for the association between poverty and childhood disability are not yet fully understood ([Read et al. 2012](#)). Emerson et al. ([2010](#)) make the three following suggestions:

- The presence of a child with a disability may increase the chances of a family descending into poverty and reduce the chances of them escaping from poverty
- Growing up in poverty is associated with increased exposure to range of factors, such as poorer nutrition and housing, that may increase the risk for health conditions or impairments
- “Third factors”, such as poor parental health or parental intellectual disability, leading independently to an increased risk of both family poverty and child disability

Heslop ([2013](#)) reports that employment may be a difficult and unreliable route out of poverty for families with a disabled child, with some of the main barriers being inflexible employers, expensive childcare, and worries about losing benefits. Unlocking access to better-paid work, enabling more families to live in low-cost rented homes and strengthening support through the social security system are all strategies which have been shown to reduce poverty (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2018).

Extra costs of disability

While comparisons of the income between disabled and non-disabled people is potentially misleading if it does not take into account the heterogeneity of disabled people and their associated additional costs, it is generally accepted that there are extra costs associated with disability ([Heslop 2013](#)). Findings from the Social Metrics Commission ([2018](#)), for example, show that disabled people face extra costs to do the same things as those without a disability; they incur “inescapable costs that reduce their available resources”. This report suggests that these extra costs are likely to be responsible for the fact that measures of material deprivation are much higher for disabled families than for non-disabled families with the same level of income. Research conducted by MacInnes et al. ([2014](#)) also supports this. They found that by adjusting poverty rates for working-age adults, the extra costs that people with disabilities face adds 2-3 percentage points to the overall working-age adult poverty rate. This results in many disabled families incorrectly appearing to have resources sufficient to lift them above the poverty line. As stated in the report “a disabled person with £100 extra income and £100 extra needs is as poor as someone without a disability”.

In recognition of the extra costs of disability, many disabled families are in receipt of extra-cost disability benefits like Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and/or Attendance Allowance (AA) ([Social Metrics Commission 2018](#)). However, the Disability Benefits Consortium ([2017](#)) found that many disabled people aren’t receiving the right level of financial support under PIP to manage the extra costs they face.

Welfare benefits

Data on post-educational outcomes of young adults show that disabled youth are less likely to find a job and more likely to end up on benefits than their non-disabled counterparts ([Legard et al. 2016](#)). In the UK, the welfare benefit system delivers arbitrary fixed sums to disabled people within broad ranges of assessed care and mobility needs ([Heslop 2013](#)). Despite an intense

policy focus on reforming disability benefit systems over recent decades, improvements in employment for disabled people have often failed to materialise; according to MacInnes et al. (2014), there is limited evidence that disability employment rates are improved by either reducing benefit generosity/tighter eligibility or stepping up activation policies. A recent report from the Equality and Human Rights Commission ([2017](#)) confirms this, stating that social security reforms have had a particularly disproportionate, cumulative impact on rights to independent living and an adequate standard of living for disabled people.

Disabled people may encounter a number of issues in accessing welfare benefits. The Disability Benefits Consortium ([2017](#)) states that:

- Submitting a claim for PIP is extremely difficult and providing supporting evidence is a struggle
- The stress and anxiety of undergoing PIP assessments can make people's conditions worse
- The PIP assessment criteria can prevent people from getting the support they need

Once in receipt of benefit payments, there is also little assurance that these will continue. Increased conditionality, such as the introduction of the benefit cap, has led to greater precarity of income for people relying on the social security system ([Barker et al. 2018](#)), even though research shows that conditionality is widely considered to be counterproductive (Geiger 2018). Benefits are typically included in measures of net incomes, without an offsetting recognition of the increased costs of disabled families that these payments exist to help with ([Social Metrics Commission 2018](#)).

Tinson et al. (2016) report that in recent years, wide-ranging reforms have sought to restructure the way that the social security system supports disabled people in the UK. They discuss adjustments to administrative definitions and eligibility criteria as well as cuts to the amount received by people claiming disability benefits, both directly (for example by freezing or reducing benefit premiums) and indirectly (for example by including families

receiving some types of disability benefits in the benefit cap). In an anonymous letter written to the Guardian in October ([2018](#)), a claimant with a disability writes that as a result of the move from tax credit payments to Universal Credit, “I am in a financial crisis now that I have not previously experienced.” Following a visit to the United Kingdom, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Professor Philip Alston ([2018](#)) criticised the implementation of Universal Credit, stating:

[M]any aspects of the design and rollout of the programme have suggested that the Department for Work and Pensions is more concerned with making economic savings and sending messages about lifestyles than responding to the multiple needs of those living with a disability, job loss, housing insecurity, illness, and the demands of parenting.

Recent analysis estimates that 10% of families with a disability or caring responsibilities would be net winners under Universal Credit, whereas nearly a quarter would be net losers (Tinson et al. 2016). People in families in households where someone receives DLA are also less likely to be in employment than the general population, and the type of employment also differs; people in these households tend to be in part working families rather than full working ones ([MacInnes et al. 2014](#)).

According to MacInnes et al. ([2014](#)), work incentives in the UK benefit system tend towards the strong end of the spectrum, combining an ungenerous and largely means tested out of work benefit with a non-means tested additional costs benefit available whether in or out of work; they state that both of these aspects tend to reduce work disincentives, even without taking account of the notorious difficulty of accessing the out of work benefit. Heslop ([2013](#)) observes that many welfare systems across Europe have yet to offer satisfactory flexibility which allows benefit receipt and employment to be combined in an appropriate way. For example, many cash benefits contain “perverse incentives” which render taking up work unattractive. Beatty and Fothergill ([2016](#)) also highlight that recent reform, such as

changes to work allowances, can make work less financially rewarding, and many in employment may find it difficult to increase their working hours to offset the loss of income.

Impact on transition

For those with limited resources, transition can be a challenging time. Scotland's youth employment strategy acknowledges that young disabled people are much more likely to experience difficult transitions through education and to be unemployed after they leave education (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2017). Research has also found that young people from the most deprived areas are more likely to experience fragmented post-school transitions than those from the least deprived areas: they are less likely to stay on at school, and more likely to experience multiple post-school transitions, to be unemployed when they leave school, or to move into a short-term training programme (Scottish Government 2017).

While one study found that a poor perception of one's financial situation at the time of transition may result in young people setting more goals (Canha and Sim 2016), there is very little evidence examining the relationship between poverty and disabled young people's transitions. There is, however, a small body of research looking at the role of parental support in transition for disabled young people, which suggests that financial resources as well as time and skills are associated with successful moves into employment. MacInnes et al. (2014), for example, state that accessing the few employment opportunities available for disabled young people is often dependent on parents' or carers' arrangements. In Norway, successful transitions are highly influenced by the involvement and facilitation work of both the parents and the transition and adult service systems ([Midjo and Aune 2016](#)). In their study looking at transition for young people with disabilities, Pascall and Hendey ([2004](#)) identified parental support as the key to their ability to become independent. They state:

parents were crucial as carers, in developing confidence and independence, in mediating with professionals and in providing

material help in accessing housing – all over an extended period of transition.

Parental expectations have been linked to students with disabilities' academic achievement in high school, goal persistence in college, and employment outcomes; this is because parents with higher expectations provide their child with opportunities, support, and encouragement to function more independently ([Wehman 2015](#)).

Other studies, such as those conducted by Leonard et al. ([2016](#)), found that the period of transition can result in additional financial strain. Families with a young disabled person raised concerns about access to funding for services as well as the need to provide additional care, and for some the strain persisted after the young person had left school, resulting in poorer health and being worse off financially. While it is not explored in depth in this study, these findings suggest those with already limited financial resources would experience poorer outcomes during the transitional phase.

Evidence

There is limited research looking at the relationship between poverty and engagement with transitional support interventions for young people with disabilities. As a result, the evidence in this Outline looks more broadly at the interaction between poverty, disability, and the complexities of the benefits system, as well as the role of both parents and services in supporting young people in transition. Some of the key themes in the evidence we found are:

- Benefits conditionality has a significant impact on disabled people and may be a barrier to accessing suitable employment
- Young people from deprived areas and disabled young people are more likely to experience difficult transitions
- Successful transitions are associated with parents who have resources such as time, money and skills

Poverty and disability

The section below compiles a wide range of reports and articles looking at the relationship between poverty and disability, in addition to resources about the UK benefits system. The evidence we collected illustrates a complex system with varied factors, such as access to housing, barriers to employment and the additional costs of living with a disability. However, there is more to the picture than what is covered in this Outline. The Social Metrics Commission (2018), for example, highlight the difficulties in measuring poverty, and the heterogeneity of disabled people must also be taken into account (Heslop 2013). While some of the research suggests that recent welfare reforms have left many worse off (Alston 2018, Beatty and Fothergill 2016), it is difficult to know the full impact of these changes.

Alston, P (2018) [Statement on visit to the United Kingdom, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner \(website\)](#)

This statement provides an in-depth criticism of Government policies on welfare benefits in the UK since 2010, with particular emphasis on those who have been impacted the most by these changes. Nearly half of those in poverty, 6.9 million people, are from families in which someone has a disability. People with disabilities are more likely to be in poverty, and are more likely to be unemployed, in insecure employment, or economically inactive. They have also been some of the hardest hit from austerity measures. As a result of changes to benefits and taxes since 2010, some families with disabilities are projected to lose £11,000 on average by 2021/22, more than 30% of their annual net income. People with disabilities repeatedly report undergoing benefits assessments that were superficial and dismissive, and that led to findings that contradicted the advice of their doctor.

Barker, K et al. (2018) [Preventing destitution: policy and practice in the UK](#), Joseph Rowntree Foundation (pdf)

The research for this report explored how the policy and practice of both public and third sector organisations at the local, county and national levels could prevent destitution among UK-born people without complex needs. It involved 63 interviews with frontline professionals and volunteers from 38 public and third sector organisations in six case study areas: Fife, Hartlepool, Kirklees, Lewes, Newham and Swansea. Many interviewees mentioned problems accessing disability benefits, often related to the assessment process not being fit for purpose, as causing destitution among disabled people. Needs-based disability benefits are provided in recognition of the higher living costs associated with having a disability. But the higher rates of deprivation among disabled people across the income distribution and estimates of the average cost of having a disability provide evidence that these benefits are not sufficient to cover the additional costs of disability. It is therefore likely that disabled people who are unable to access disability benefits will face an even bigger shortfall between their income and their living costs, placing them at a high risk of destitution. With half of all people in poverty either disabled themselves or living with someone who is disabled, ensuring that disabled people are able to access sufficient income to meet their essential needs is critical to preventing destitution.

Beatty, C and Fothergill, S (2016) [The impact on Scotland of the new welfare reforms](#), Sheffield Hallam University, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (pdf)

Since the 2015 general election, the Westminster Government has initiated a further round of welfare reform. The new figures in this report shows that by 2020-21 Scottish claimants can expect to lose just over £1bn a year as a result of the post-2015 reforms. This includes financial losses of £190m in the ongoing changeover from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments. Some individuals and households are affected by more than one element of the reform package. It is possible, for example,

that a working-age claimant with health problems or disabilities will find that their ESA is reduced and at the same time they lose out though the changeover from DLA to PIP. They may also lose entitlement Tax Credits if they have children, could be hit by the LHA cap if they live in social housing, and the benefit freeze will affect them too.

Emerson, E et al. (2010) [Poverty transitions among families supporting a child with intellectual disability](#), *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 35(4), pp.224–234 (paywalled)

In this study, authors conducted an analysis of data collected over a 12-month period for families (a) supporting a child with intellectual disability (n = 370), (b) supporting a child with other disability (n = 1,418), and (c) supporting a child with no disability (n = 7,215). When compared to families not supporting a child with disability, families supporting a child with intellectual disability were (a) more likely to be poor, (b) more likely to become poor, (c) less likely to escape from being poor. Half of poverty transitions were associated with identifiable potential trigger events. Entries to and exits from poverty are, in general, primarily influenced by changes in labour-related income and employment status, and secondarily by changes in household composition. There were few differences between families supporting or not supporting a child with disability with regard to either levels of exposure to potential trigger events or to the strength of the association between exposure and poverty transitions.

Equality and Human Rights Commission (2017) [Being disabled in Britain: a journey less equal](#) (pdf)

UK data from 2014/15 shows the percentage of working-age adults in families where at least one member is disabled, and who were living in households with below 60% of contemporary median income after housing costs, was 30% compared with 18% for those living in families with no disabled members. These latest figures show 5.3 million individuals in households with below 60% of contemporary median income after housing costs and living in families where at least one member is disabled.

Disability Benefits Consortium (2017) [Supporting those who need it most? Evaluating Personal Independence Payment \(pdf\)](#)

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a source of financial support designed to help disabled people and those with long-term conditions manage the extra costs of their condition. It was introduced in 2013 to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with a view to “focus support on those with the greatest need”. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has commissioned two independent reviews into the implementation of PIP over the last five years. However, there has never been a detailed examination of how effectively PIP is working overall and, crucially, whether it is meeting its policy objectives. With no further reviews to come, this report is the first detailed opportunity to evaluate PIP as a whole. It’s clear that extra-cost benefits can make a huge difference to the lives of disabled people and those with long-term conditions. However, there are significant problems with how PIP works and is operating. These problems are increasing stress and anxiety among claimants and are often preventing people from getting the support they need.

Geiger, BB (2018) [A better WCA is possible: disability assessment, public opinion, Demos \(pdf\)](#)

This report is based on evidence from a 4 year research project that aims to set out how the current Work Capability Assessment (WCA) could be improved. As well as deciding on the amount of money that people get, the WCA also decides the conditionality that people are subject to. Conditionality and sanctioning may have zero or even negative impacts on work-related outcomes. There is also widespread anecdotal evidence that conditionality and sanctions can lead to anxiety and broader ill health.

Heslop, P (2013) [Disabled people and their relationship with poverty. Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK, Methods Series 23 \(pdf\)](#)

This scoping review has explores the existing UK literature about disabled people’s relationship with poverty. It presents an overview of methodological

complexities in relation to measuring ‘disability’ and measuring poverty in relation to disabled people. It reviews the literature about disabled people’s relationship to, and experiences of poverty, and provides a brief overview of initiatives to address the financial and other support needs of disabled people.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2018) [UK poverty data](#) (pdf)

Disabled adults in working-age families are much more likely to be in poverty than those who are not disabled – 39% compared with 18%. This rate has fluctuated over the years and is 4 percentage points higher than 20 years ago. There are variations in poverty rates for disabled and non-disabled adults depending on whether they live in working or non-working households. Over the last five years, the poverty rate for disabled adults has risen, whether they live in a working or a workless family. For disabled adults in working families, the poverty rate rose from 18% to 21% between 2011/12 and 2016/17. The poverty rate for disabled adults in non-working families is very high at 67%, and it also rose very slightly over that period.

MacInnes, T et al. (2014) [Disability, long term conditions and poverty: a report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) (pdf)

Poverty among disabled people is consistently underestimated. This study uses two different adjustments, each finding at least a ‘missing million’ of people in poverty in households with a disabled person. Making society less disabling will reduce poverty among disabled people. Possible ways of doing this include improving affordability and accessibility of transport and housing, developing standards for consumer devices, stopping legal discrimination, better use of technology, and making markets for assistive technologies work more effectively. Disabled people are less likely to be working and more likely to be low paid. There are four main ways that this could be tackled:

- The benefits system: simply removing people from benefits cannot be seen as a sign of success. Rather, changes are needed so that the

system doesn't stop people from being able to work; including flexible, portable benefits are needed that allow people to move to areas where there are more (and more suitable) jobs

- Specialist programmes can help people return-to-work when they include personalisation rather than sharp targets. Intensive in-work support with employer subsidies can make a difference.
- Early intervention can help, including better workplace practices and responsive health systems, as well as a healthy psychosocial work environment
- Finally, employers are critical – many disabled people simply face limited opportunities. There are some good managers, yet a common perception that employing disabled people involves extra costs, and a limit to 'reasonable' adjustments. Stronger actions may therefore be necessary, including regulation and incentives

Finally, disabled people stressed that work is not always the solution; that all the policies above should resist the temptation to simplify the diversity of disability; and that it may be necessary to change the current public debate. The idea that 'work is the best route out of poverty' clearly cannot apply to all disabled people, and reducing the aim of poverty reduction to simply improved access to employment would be counterproductive.

Read, J et al. (2012) [Disabled children and their families: a decade of policy change](#), *Children & Society*, 26(3), pp.223–233 (paywalled)

Focusing mainly on the United Kingdom, this article reviews a decade of national and international policy and legal changes in relation to disabled children and their families. It discusses attempts to transform the ways that disabled children are perceived and the rights accorded to them. The UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons, specific UK policy initiatives and debates on universal and specialist provisions are outlined. Consideration is given to whether these initiatives have contributed to equality of opportunity for disabled children. The association between

poverty, deprivation and child disability is identified as a major challenge for social policy.

Scottish Government (2017) [The life chances of young people in Scotland: an evidence review for the First Minister's Independent advisor on Poverty and Inequality \(pdf\)](#)

This report looks at life chances of young people in Scotland across the following broad topics: poverty, wealth and financial capability; housing circumstances; employment and labour market outcomes; education and training; and health and wellbeing.

Compared with all young adults, those who are disabled are more likely to be unemployed. Disabled adults also experience pay gaps compared to those without disabilities. Research finds that, even when other factors such as qualification levels are taken into account, disabled adults are more likely to be workless than non-disabled adults. Pupils with additional support needs have lower educational attainment levels than those without additional support needs. Disabled young people have a substantially lower rate of participation in education, training or employment than those who are not disabled. And research finds that disabled young people are more likely to be offered a more limited range of education and training opportunities than other young people, often with inaccurate assumptions made about capabilities.

Skills Development Scotland (2018) [Annual participation measure for 16-19 year olds in Scotland 2018 \(pdf\)](#)

This report marks the fourth release of data on the participation of 16-19 year olds at a national and local authority level. It contains analysis of the 2018 outcomes and, where possible, compares these to 2017 and 2016, including:

- Participation by status and age
- Participation by equality characteristics including gender, ethnicity and disability
- Participation by geography including local authority and SIMD

Shahtahmasebi, S et al. (2011) [Child disability and the dynamics of family poverty, hardship and financial strain: evidence from the UK](#), *Journal of Social Policy*, 40(4), pp.653–673 (paywalled)

Disabled children are significantly more likely to grow up in poverty than their non-disabled peers. We used longitudinal data from Waves 3–7 (2001–2005) of the UK Families and Children Study to explore the relationship between the presence of a disabled child in the family and poverty transitions. When compared to other families, families supporting a disabled child are more likely to be exposed to persistent or recurrent poverty, less likely to escape from an episode of poverty and more likely to descend into poverty. However, statistically controlling for the effects of salient family characteristics either attenuates, eliminates or reverses these associations. That is, when compared to other families with similar levels of personal and social resources, families supporting a disabled child are no more likely to escape from or descend into poverty than other families. Results are discussed in relation to the need for social policy to invest in strengthening the broader capabilities of families of disabled children.

Social Metrics Commission (2018) [A new measure of poverty for the UK: Final Report](#) (pdf)

Compared to previous measures, the Commission's new measure makes significant changes to our understanding of who is in poverty. In particular it:

- Better identifies people in poverty in families that include a disabled adult or child
- Better identifies people in poverty in working-age families with children
- Shows that fewer people in pension-age families are in poverty

This is because the measure takes account of both the way in which the costs of childcare and disability affect people's ability to make ends meet, and how those with significant liquid assets are able to use them to meet their current needs. The measure also includes a more comprehensive picture of how far

people's housing needs are being met, particularly in relation to homelessness and overcrowding. The Commission's measurement framework also provides detailed insights into poverty depth and persistence and the wider factors that can impact on the lives of people in poverty.

Tinson, A et al. (2016) [Disability and poverty: why disability must be at the centre of poverty reduction](#), New Policy Institute and Joseph Rowntree Foundation (pdf)

Reducing poverty among disabled people has to be at the heart of any attempts to reduce poverty overall in the United Kingdom (UK). This is because, first, disabled people have higher poverty rates than the rest of the population – poverty rates that are understated by the official statistics. Second, disabled people make up 28% of people in poverty, and a further 20% of people in poverty live in a household with a disabled person. In other words, almost half of people in poverty in the UK are in a household with a disabled person or are disabled themselves.

Both reducing costs and increasing resources must be part of a strategy to reduce poverty for disabled people. Evidence from this report suggests the particular role of housing costs, with high poverty rates for disabled renters. Disabled people also face multiple disadvantages in the labour market, such as lower levels of qualifications, but also higher rates of low pay than non-disabled people even with the same qualifications. Public policy must also consider how best to involve disabled people in guiding the decisions that affect them.

Transitional support

Research is mixed about the efficacy of formal transitional support programmes for young people with disabilities, with some studies below showing a positive impact ([Hanson et al. 2017](#)), while other findings show negative outcomes ([Legard et al. 2016](#)). There are very few studies on how poverty impacts engagement with these programmes. While this is not an exhaustive list of, based on the articles we reviewed, more research may be necessary to better understand what works for groups from varied socioeconomic backgrounds.

Parental expectations and support is identified in some studies as being a key factor during the transition stage ([Wehem 2015](#)), although some studies emphasise the need for balance between protection and encouragement ([Pascall and Hendey 2004](#)). Access to resources such as time and money can have a positive influence on outcomes for some families ([Pascall and Hendey 2004](#)), but those without resources to spare may experience strain on both their finances and their wellbeing ([Leonard et al. 2016](#)). Research looking at the relationship between poverty and parental support for young people with disabilities in transition is also limited.

Canha, N and Sim, C (2016) [Direct and indirect pathways to QoL in the transition to adulthood in youth and young adults with disabilities](#), *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 44, pp.149–162 (paywalled)

The aim of this study was to understand how the characteristics of self-determination (i.e., choice, problem-solving, goal setting) and factors associated with resilience (i.e., support and self-efficacy) relate to each other, including the relationship these variables have on quality-of-life (QoL) for individuals with disabilities. Data were collected from 195 youth and young adults with disabilities. Results indicated self-efficacy as a critical skill, showing positive associations with behavior of choice and QoL. In addition, social support emerged as an important factor in the development of self-determination skills. The findings also indicated that a poor perception

of one's financial situation may possibly lead to set more employment goals and identify more steps needed to take to achieve this goal.

De Marco A and Berzin SC (2008) [The influence of family economic status on home-leaving patterns during emerging adulthood](#), *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 89(2), pp.208–218 (paywalled)

Demographic shifts have lengthened the transition to adulthood and altered home-leaving patterns. Though all emerging adults are affected, little research has examined the experience of poor youths in this context. Using The National Survey of Families and Households, this study examined age of home leaving, repeated home leaving, and exit destination (N = 1,517). Poverty was related to these patterns. Young adults who experienced childhood poverty or public assistance were less likely to leave for school; those who experienced poverty were less likely to ever leave or experience repeated home leaving; and those with a public assistance history were more likely to leave early. These emerging adults may require assistance to transition out of the home and transition to school.

Hanson et al. (2017) [Transition programmes for young adults with SEND: what works?](#) The Careers and Enterprise Company (pdf)

Transition programmes for young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are designed to make a successful move from school to further/higher education, training, employment or self-employment. Traditionally learners with SEND have demonstrated poor outcomes. Transition programmes provide opportunities to improve these outcomes by allowing young people to learn about themselves, the skills that are needed for life and the world of work. The evidence suggests that some of the elements of these programmes, particularly work experience, supported internships/employment, employee preparation programmes, self-determination training and family involvement are well evidenced by a series of research studies and by multiple literature reviews which demonstrate positive outcomes for participants. Other elements, for example

interagency practices, are less well evidenced but can still be described as potentially effective. Existing studies have observed impacts associated with transition programmes across personal attributes (personal effectiveness, career readiness, employability skills and social capital) as well as personal outcomes in education and employment.

Legard, S et al. (2016) [Is transition support a hurdle to getting a job?](#), *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 18(1), pp.17-31 (open access)

In this article, the authors investigate the claims of the hurdle theory of transition support. This theory predicts a negative relationship between transition support and employment outcomes. Existing literature primarily explains this by stereotypic perceptions of disability and career opportunities among service providers, one-size-fits-all support programmes not tailored to individual preconditions, needs and desires and late and insufficient delivery of services. The authors use a cross-sectional sample of 245 young disabled Norwegian adults to examine the impact of various types of transition support on employment. They found that that transition support in the form of LMP participation is negatively associated with employment outcomes, even when we introduce significant control variables such as educational level, type of impairment/illness, everyday limitations and sickness during transition.

Leonard, H et al. (2016) [Transition to adulthood for young people with intellectual disability: the experiences of their families](#), *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 25(12), pp.1369–1381 (paywalled)

This mixed-methods study utilised information from two cohorts: young people with Down syndrome in Western Australia (n = 190) and young people with intellectual disability (of any cause) in Queensland, Australia (n = 150). The parent-report questionnaires administered in both states comprised two parts: part 1 collected information about the individual with intellectual disability including information on health, functioning and service needs, and about specific transition related issues; and part 2 collected information

about the health and well-being of their family. The three most helpful strategies indicated by parents that assisted with transition planning related to:

- Provision of more information about financial assistance
- School transition programme
- Building informal community-based supports

A number of themes emerged from the qualitative data which included parents' views and concerns about the capacity of their young adult to adapt and change to life in adulthood, their difficulty navigating services and programs, issues and challenges around their young person building connectedness, strain on family wellbeing and finances and worry about the longer term future.

Midjo, T and Aune, KE (2018) [Identity constructions and transition to adulthood for young people with mild intellectual disabilities](#), *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, 22(1), pp. 33-48 (paywalled)

This article explores the self-constructions of young adults with mild intellectual disabilities in talk about their everyday living and how parents and professionals construct young adults with disabilities in talk about their involvement in transition processes. The analysis is related to an interpretive tradition and conducted based on individual interviews with four young adults with mild intellectual disability, five parents of young adults with mild intellectual disabilities and five professionals in the adult service system. The findings show that the young adults define themselves as actors in their own lives, while the parents recognize young adults with mild intellectual disabilities as both actors with resources and actors in need of assistance. Professionals in the adult service system, however, appear to rely on an identity perspective that might hamper young adults' agency positioning and opportunities to define themselves and influence their future lives.

Pascall, G and Hendey, N (2004) [Disability and transition to adulthood: the politics of parenting](#), *Critical Social Policy*, 24(2), pp.165-186 (paywalled)

This research interviewed a group of 31 young adults in receipt of disability living allowance, who had jobs and independent households, and smaller comparative groups, who had one or neither of these. The authors explored disabled people's own accounts of adulthood and what had facilitated their achievement of jobs and independent living. Respondents' own accounts of "exceptional" parents were a key factor in their accomplishments, including factors such as:

- Parental encouragement, which combined protection with fostering independence
- Parental expectations about abilities, education, jobs and independent living
- Relatively privileged parents in educational and economic terms

They also found that the closeness of family relationships could hinder independent living.

Phillips, BN et al. (2018) [The influence of social capital and social role on starting wage for people with and without disabilities](#), *Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin*, 62(1), pp.43-52 (paywalled)

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of social capital and social role on the earnings of individuals with and without disabilities. For both, people with and without disabilities, social capital and social role contributed to increased earning, providing support that both constructs may be important factors to address during the hiring process. The study findings have particular applicability to vocational rehabilitation given in increased importance of the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act in the United States and its emphasis on building networks and leveraging resources to maximize employment outcomes.

Wehman, P et al. (2015) [Predictors of successful transition from school to employment for youth with disabilities](#), *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 25(2), pp.323–334 (paywalled)

This study examined an array of modifiable and non-modifiable variables that predict post-high school employment of youth with disabilities, and found positive parental expectations for post-high school employment significantly predicts employment.

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