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The role of the transition nurse: the gap between guidance and reality

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Title – The Role of the Transition Nurse - The Gap between Guidance and Reality

Background – There are 40,000 young people with complex health needs in the UK (Care Quality Commission, 2014). As these children reach adulthood, the need for them to transfer to adult services is crucial to ensure their wellbeing is supported. However, this is a long process that involves many multidisciplinary members. Therefore, communication and fluidity between everyone can become disjointed if not supported by a central character. The Transition Nurse (TN) is a fundamental pillar in the transition process, yet literature surrounding this role varies in comparison to the overarching guidelines.

Purpose – To raise awareness among health care practitioners of the gaps between guidance and reality in practice.

Methods – To conduct an integrative literature review to gather the recurring themes explaining what fundamental roles a TN has. Then compare findings to the guidelines to understand the requirements and gaps of a TN's role.

By using Pubmed, CINAHL, and Medline, 5 key papers were obtained. Guidelines were acquired from National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE, 2016).

Results – Three gaps crucial to the role of the TN were noted to be lacking in literature in comparison to the guidelines. These were:

1. Handing over to a named adult service staff member
2. GP support
3. Reviewing transition plan due to noncompliance within adult services

Conclusions – To address these gaps, it is advised that:

1. Awareness is raised amongst adult services about the need for effective transfer of young people from child to adult services.
2. Contact with the GP should be made directly when the TN receives a child for transition and direct contact numbers exchanged.
3. Further research is needed into effectively reducing noncompliance within adult services.

Significance – To help challenge current thinking around transitioning and improving outcomes for CYP in our care.