



## **The Way Forward ...**

# **Empowering a Disabled Grandchild's Transition into the Workforce**

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Workbridge

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# Overview of Workbridge

# Workbridge Profile

Workbridge is an Employment Agency:

- We have over 90 Employment Consultants in 23 locations throughout New Zealand.
- Our key role is to get jobs for disabled people and to administer Support Funds on behalf of the Ministry of Social Development.



# Workbridge Profile

Workbridge

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- Workbridge arranges around 3,500 - 4000 jobs each year.
- We assist a broad range of small, medium and large employers.
- Over the last 10 years Workbridge has secured around 40,000 jobs for people with a disability, injury or illness and from the Deaf community.

# The Way Forward for Workbridge

1. Assist jobseekers to develop their independent employment skills.
2. Building a relationship with employers, rather than just focusing on the transaction of getting a job.
3. Workplace education to support workplaces to become disability confident to support our jobseekers.
4. Being a Facilitator rather than the Disability Expert, so workplaces become more confident to support our jobseekers and disabled people can show their potential at work.

This will lead to more jobs.



# Planning for the Future

# Wayne Francis Charitable Trust - Stocktake of Transition of Disabled Students in Canterbury

To obtain feedback from various stakeholders about:

1. What disabled students need to help them prepare for life when they leave school.
2. Options for making this the best possible experience for these students and families.



# Key Findings

“The experience of a young disabled person preparing for adult life is often one of a struggle with systems that seem only to lead to dependence and few choices.

Families often consider the transition from school to adult life as a time of risk when the need to protect and care contradict the feelings of wanting their loved one to be independent and free to experiment.”  
(Dobson and Jay 2000)



# Key Findings

1. Many themes were consistent across focus groups.
2. Some students were eager to leave school and saw this as a real opportunity to get a job and live independently, while many caregivers feared transition.

One parent described transition as “falling off a cliff”.

3. Most students wanted inclusive community based options such as open employment, while most caregivers and school/agency staff wanted more day services, social and life skills programmes.
4. Little emphasis was placed on the development of academic skills.
5. Much of the focus group feedback reflected a review of national and international transition literature.

# Disabled Student's Feedback

1. Most wanted jobs in open employment to give them a 'valued role'.
2. Many also wanted to live independently and to do other things - travel overseas, have income, buy a house, have friends, get married, children.
3. There were some who wanted to do further study to get more skills.
4. Some were eager to leave school, while other students had real concerns.
5. Work experience was popular with many of the students.

# The caregivers needed the following to enhance their transition experience

1. More support to coordinate transition services.
2. More information about transition options.
3. More programmes that develop life and social skills.

# Best Practice Framework for Transition of Disabled Students

1. Transition planning starts to occur no later than the age of 14 years.
2. This is part of a specific transition planning process that aims to develop academic potential as well as functional transition skills.
3. This process is driven by the student/whanau and the student is actively engaged in determining/implementing their future goals.
4. Partnerships between the school and community supports are developed at least 2 years before the young person leaves school.
5. The transition programme is integrated within the structure of general education rather than as a separate and parallel programme.
6. The process identifies and overcomes barriers to the disabled student's learning and support.
7. The students/whanau are offered information and support that opens the door to a wider range of inclusive community based options.
8. A clear distinction is made between the transition needs of the young person and those of their family.
9. Functional transition skills are in the curriculum and practised at home.
10. Those at school after 18 years of age receive services in adult settings.
11. The outcomes of the transition planning process are regularly evaluated.

# Conclusions About Transition

1. Most disabled people would love to have a job.
2. Planning for the future is a process, not an event – start early, develop skills, have a transition plan, etc.
3. A successful transition from school to work is a planned and coordinated journey that begins in early life.
4. Positive expectations and attitudes extend what people can achieve.
5. Social contact and support from other students at school promotes the successful participation of disabled students.
6. There needs to be more focus on developing the academic potential and functional skills of young disabled people.
7. Some disabled people need tools to help them develop confidence and interpersonal skills that are transferable to employment.
8. Disabled people need qualification pathways and work experience linked to their future career aspirations.
9. A person's goals are more likely to be achieved if we work together.