

Institution: University of Dundee		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 23 Education		
Title of case study: Changing policy and practice through <i>re</i> -conceptualisation and theorisation of transitions		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008-present		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Divya Jindal-Snape Elizabeth Hannah Dianne Cantali Lisi Gordon Charlotte Rees	Professor of Education Senior Lecturer Lecturer / Senior Lecturer Senior Lecturer Professor	April 1998 to present January 2003 to present January 2014 to present August 2019 to present Feb 2010-Sept 2015
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013 - ongoing		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact

Transitions research conducted at the University of Dundee is informing legislation, organisational policy and practice, and the professional development of education and social care professionals. Insights from this work have impacted upon the practices of NGOs, charities and professionals nationally and internationally, leading to changes in service provision across a range of settings, including schools, hospices and refugee communities. This research has provided the evidence base for the re-conceptualisation and theorisation of transitions leading to a shift in the understanding of transitions as ongoing, complex, dynamic, multiple and multi-dimensional processes.

2. Underpinning research

The programme of transitions research was established in 2006. The area of transitions research had been relatively under-theorised and lacked conceptual nuance, with researchers reliant on older theories developed in other domains. The work of Professor Jindal-Snape and colleagues has been instrumental in building a more sophisticated understanding of the complexity of transitions experienced by individuals across time and in a variety of contexts, as described through its theorisation: Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions (MMT) Theory. MMT Theory emphasises that an individual (e.g. a young adult with a life-limiting health condition) experiences multiple transitions at the same time (e.g. developmental, relationship), in multiple domains (e.g. social, academic) and multiple contexts (e.g. home, university). These multiple transitions interact with each other and can trigger transitions for significant others, such as families or professionals, who similarly will be experiencing their own transitions that will then have an impact on that young adult's transitions [R1].

In contrast with other transitions research, which typically addresses a single significant educational or life transition with data collection focused at or around the point of 'change' [R2], this programme of research adopted a longitudinal research design with multiple data collection points [R3, R4, R5], across different educational stages [R3, R4] and different types of life transitions [R1, R5, R6]. The resulting insights have highlighted the connections between these transitions, leading to transfer of learning from one type of transition or educational stage to another and providing a more holistic account of multiple transitions. Importantly, this has provided evidence that has shifted established practice around the provision of support directly before and after the point of change or move, to take account of the unique transition

experiences and processes of adaptation that take place outside these immediate time frames [R1, R3, R4, R5]. The findings emphasise the non-linear and dynamic nature of transitions as psychological, educational and social *adaptation* to change rather than the basic common-sense conceptualisation of 'transition as change' [R1, R3]. These findings have also enabled the transfer of learning for professionals and policy makers working at different educational stages [R2, R3, R4] and with different types of transitions [R1, R5]. Critically, the findings have highlighted the gaps in transitions support for those who do not follow the 'normative' transitions pathways, such as those moving from school to adult services rather than to university [R1].

The research is distinctive in that participants (rather than researchers) determine when to submit data, for instance through longitudinal audio diaries [R4, R5], and which of their significant others to collect data from [R1]. In this way, multiple viewpoints provide a holistic account of transitions that includes the perspectives of others affected by, or involved in, transitions [R1, R3]. The research has highlighted that the transitions experiences of significant others are often not considered, leading to their support needs being overlooked, despite expectations of their continued support to others [R1, R3]. Unusually for this area, the work is based on systematic literature reviews to identify the knowledge and methodology strengths and gaps prior to starting a study [R2, R6].

Further, the research emphasises the complexity of transitions, demonstrating that an individual can have both positive and negative transition experiences, sometimes simultaneously, and that these might be experienced differently in different domains and contexts that an individual inhabits [R3, R4, R5]. This more balanced view of transitions is shifting the prevailing mainly negative discourse about transitions as disruptive and challenging [R3] and enabling a reframing of conversation to reduce unnecessary and detrimental anxiety about transitions.

First disseminated in 2012, MMT Theory has since been adopted for use in a range of contexts and domains, informing both policy and practice.

3. References to the research

[R1] Jindal-Snape, D, Johnston, B, Pringle, J, Kelly, T, Scott, R, Gold, L & Dempsey, R (2019), 'Multiple and Multidimensional life transitions in the context of life-limiting health conditions: Longitudinal study focussing on perspectives of Young Adults, Families and Professionals', *BMC Palliative Care*, vol. 18, 30, pp. 1-12. DOI: [10.1186/s12904-019-0414-9](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12904-019-0414-9)

[R2] Jindal-Snape, D, Hannah, EFS, Cantali, D, Barlow, W & MacGillivray, S (2020), 'Systematic literature review of primary-secondary transitions: International research', *Review of Education*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 526-566. DOI: [10.1002/rev3.3197](https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3197)

[R3] Jindal-Snape, D & Cantali, D (2019), 'A four-stage longitudinal study exploring pupils' experiences, preparation and support systems during primary-secondary school transitions', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 45, no. 6, pp. 1255-1278. DOI: [10.1002/berj.3561](https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3561)

[R4] Glazzard, J, Jindal-Snape, D & Stones, SO (2020), 'Transitions into and through higher education: The lived experiences of students who identify as LGBTQ+', *Frontiers in Education: Educational Psychology*, vol. 5, 81, pp. 1-15. DOI: [10.3389/feduc.2020.00081](https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2020.00081)

[R5] Gordon, L, Jindal-Snape, D, Morrison, J, Muldoon, J, Needham, G, Siebert, S & Rees, C (2017), 'Multiple and multi-dimensional transitions from trainee to trained doctor: A qualitative longitudinal study in the UK', *BMJ Open*, vol. 7, no. 11, e018583. DOI: [10.1136/bmjopen-2017-018583](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2017-018583)

[R6] Johnston, B, Jindal-Snape, D & Pringle, J (2016), 'Life transitions of adolescents and young adults with life-limiting conditions', *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*, vol. 22, no. 12, pp. 608-617. DOI: [10.12968/ijpn.2016.22.12.608](https://doi.org/10.12968/ijpn.2016.22.12.608)

Quality of underpinning research:

All papers have been peer reviewed.

Funding:

- (i) Children's Hospices Across Scotland (**R1, R6; Jindal-Snape** co-PI & Johnston co-PI, now at Glasgow, GBP 26,516, 2013-2014);
- (ii) Scottish Government (**R2; Jindal-Snape, Cantali, Hannah**, GBP 10,000, 2019);
- (iii) Learning and Teaching Scotland (**R3** study design; **Jindal-Snape** PI, GBP 32,484, 2010-2011);
- (iv) Scottish Medical Education Research Consortium (**R5; Jindal-Snape** co-PI & **Rees** co-PI, **Gordon** CI, GBP 55,185, 2015-2017).

4. Details of the impact

This programme of research has informed the consultation process and parliamentary debates around prospective national legislation. The findings have informed organisational policy development and frameworks for good practices at national level and have impacted upon national and international practices of educational and social care professionals across a range of contexts.

Informing national legislation

There is currently no statutory requirement in Scotland for the provision of ongoing and supported transition plans for disabled young people as they move to adulthood. This lack of ongoing support can consequently deliver poor outcomes for those experiencing challenging transitions, estimated in 2018 by the Scottish Government to be as many as 1 in 10 Scottish young people with long-term or life limiting conditions, or up to 5000 disabled school leavers every year **[E1]**. This research formed the basis of proposed new legislation aimed at addressing this need by improving outcomes for this group.

Following a Scottish Parliament Information Centre briefing in March 2019 on transitions to adult services, in which Jindal-Snape's definition of transitions and research were cited **[E2]**, she was invited to present to MSPs and civil servants at a Scottish Parliament Breakfast meeting (24th April 2019). Subsequently, a draft proposal for a bill was lodged on 9th October 2019 that would require Scottish Ministers "*to introduce, and to implement, a National Transitions Strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people*" **[E1]**.

The proposed bill, the consultation process and explanatory notes all draw directly on Jindal-Snape's research **[E3]**. The influence of the research is notable, in that it has prompted a shift towards the provision of support as an *ongoing* statutory requirement. The bill received cross party support from 53 Scottish Ministers and is in stage one of the Scottish Parliament's bill stage timeline (delayed due to COVID). According to Inclusion Scotland, one of the proposing organisations, "*by providing a simple, understandable definition you have assisted us in making a case for change to MSPs in the Scottish Parliament. Your research has also provided valuable insight into the young disabled people's experience of transitions*" **[E4]**.

Providing a national framework for good transitions practice

The research has informed the Scottish Transitions Forum's 'Principles of Good Transitions'. The forum is part of The Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland and represents over 900 members in Scotland including charities and NGOs. MMT Theory now forms the basis of the forum's 'Principles of Good Transitions' ensuring for the first time, that the needs of carers and professionals are considered alongside children and young people experiencing transitions.

The Principles provide a national framework for member organisations, with the intention of enhancing the transition experiences of young people moving to adulthood. They have been endorsed by the Scottish Minister for Children and 50 organisations across Scotland, including Children's Health Scotland and the National Autistic Society. According to ARC Scotland, this

research “has been fundamental in helping us explain the multivariant nature of transitions across multiple professional disciplines... to express how transitions is complex yet simple to conceptualise... (their) research has been fundamental in creating a framework for change co-produced by professionals... to ensure the practical work we are carrying out is based in the evidence and experience of people in Scotland” [E5].

Changing organisational policy and service provision

Individual organisations have responded directly to the research by changing policies and introducing new services as a result of the recommendations. Children’s Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS) work with children and young people at the end of life. Based on recommendations from the research, CHAS implemented a Transitions Policy “*which states that all young people over 14 years of age will be offered support from a dedicated Transition Worker, to ensure their successful move from CHAS to age-appropriate services and supports*” [E6] and established a Transitions Service.

Since its establishment in 2015, the service has appointed a Transitions Manager and two Transition Support Workers. Together, these new posts have supported over 145 young adults with complex life limiting health conditions in their transitions to adult services. The transitions of their families and professionals have similarly been supported, with professionals also receiving relevant CPD training. The Associate Nursing Director ascribes these changes directly to the research: “*All of the above is as a result of recommendations from the research*” [E6].

Informing professional development nationally and internationally

The impact of the research has led to professional development of those working in the UK and internationally through the work of schools, charities and NGOs.

The research focusing on primary-secondary transitions has been adopted into professional development and CPD provision across the UK. In Northern Ireland, the CPD training was accessed by all schools between 2015-2017 (resources remain accessible). The CPD lead for NI schools said, “*your research has fed into my thinking, and I have quoted your work in meetings as we develop materials and strategies for use with teachers and Principals*” [E7]. In a large English secondary school, MMT Theory fed into professional development, leading to the provision of support to over 300 children, their families and schoolteachers from 25 feeder primary schools. According to the school transitions lead, “*MMT theory has... supported me to offer resources and guidance for parents, primary schools and primary teachers as well as the children themselves*” [E8].

In 2011-12 Jindal-Snape was funded via a Knowledge Transfer Partnership to work with the charity ‘For the love of a child’ (FLOC) to create ‘The Listening Stone Programme’ (LSP), a bespoke training programme for professionals (teachers, social workers) supporting children aged 5-10 with adverse childhood experiences. Informed by the research, the programme has been used by FLOC to train project workers working in challenging contexts (war zones, areas of conflict and areas of severe poverty) [E9, E10]. In 2019, a partnership between FLOC and S.P. Srinivasan Educational Society (an NGO in Pondicherry, India) led to the training of 10 social workers and the programme has been used with 40 children living in poverty; according to the director of the project, professionals, children and families have reported benefits of LSP (evaluation delayed due to COVID-19) [E10].

Middle East Revive and Thrive (MERATH), worked with FLOC to train three project workers in 2018-19. In the first year, MERATH worked with 67 Syrian refugee children and families as part of FLOC’s ‘Sam’s House project’ in Rayak (Lebanon). Individual evaluations of children who had attended a minimum 6 months of the year-long project (including 10 weeks of LSP) found that 85% of children showed improved signs of psychosocial wellbeing and 87% of parents reported improved psychosocial wellbeing of their children [E9]. According to the director of the project and lead author of the programme:

after the first 6 months of the children attending Sam's house programme which included 10 weeks of The Listening Stone Programme... their demeanours completely changed and there was a significant improvement in their emotional mental health and well-being. They're a lot less fearful... This has had a huge impact on the women and the community around them... we trained Syrian women to run the project, so it's empowering them... because their children are happier, so they're happier, so the community's happier. So, it's having a huge impact on the community [E10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[E1] *Proposed Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions)(Scotland) Bill*. Consultation by Johann Lamont MSP. Lodged: 9 October 2019 (see p.6 for citation) [PDF Available]

[E2] Publication, Scottish Parliament. (2019). *Transitions of young people with service and care needs between child and adult services in Scotland*, SB 19-15, 29 March 2019 (see pp. 4, 5, 9 for citations). Available at: <https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/2019/3/29/Transitions-of-young-people-with-service-and-care-needs-between-child-and-adult-services-in-Scotland/SB%2019-15.pdf> [Accessed 11 March 2021]

[E3] SP Bill 83-EN *Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill* as introduced in the Scottish Parliament Session 5 (September 2020); Explanatory Notes (see p.3 for citation). Available at: <https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/disabled-children-and-young-people-transitions-to-adulthood-scotland-bill/introduced/explanatory-notes-disabled-children-and-young-people-transitions-to-adulthood-scotland-bill.pdf> [Accessed 11 March 2021]

[E4] Testimonial letter – Senior Policy Advisor, Inclusion Scotland

[E5] Testimonial letter – Policy and Development Worker, ARC Scotland

[E6] Testimonial letter – Associate Nurse Director-Care, Children's Hospices Across Scotland

[E7] Testimonial email – Advisory Teacher Literacy/Lead CPD Education Authority, Northern Ireland and newsletter KS2-KS3 CPD Transition Project (p.3)

[E8] Testimonial letter – Head of Year 7/Transition lead, Norton College, England

[E9] Little Friendly Space – Sam's House Interim Report (MERATH-LSEAD), November 2018-October 2019

[E10] Testimonial transcript and email correspondence – Director, For the Love of a Child, Sam's House and Listening Stones Programme