

Chapter 3 Enable all children and young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives: transition to adulthood

This chapter highlights the interdependence of key outcomes such as health and wellbeing, the ability to learn and achieve, and being employed, draws out some of the wider actions to address them. Reducing inequalities requires a sustained commitment to children and young people throughout the years of education.

Adolescence is not only a key transition point between childhood and adulthood, it is a distinct developmental stage in its own right, characterised by dramatic physical and neurological changes and emotional development. Many adolescents are healthy, but a significant proportion face a range of problems that have implications for their health, now and in the future, for this generation and the next – such as obesity, smoking, alcohol and other substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and mental health problems.

Good health for children and young people is crucial, because it enables them to make the best of their opportunities in education and in developing healthy lifestyles. It promotes health and wellbeing in adulthood and an ability to contribute fully to wider society. Parental and educational support of aspiration and study in order to obtain qualifications and good jobs are essential to break down the inter-generational cycle of poverty, deprivation and unemployment that affects many people in disadvantaged groups and areas.

Improving wellbeing for young people requires a commitment to maximising opportunities for educational attainment, and the development of both life skills and employment skills supported by nurturing, resilient families and communities. The Marmot Review captured this with the following priorities:

- *Reduction of the social gradient in skills and qualifications*
- *Ensuring that schools, families and communities work in partnership to reduce the gradient in health, wellbeing and resilience of children and young people*
- *Improvement in the access to and use of quality lifelong learning across the social gradient*

This chapter of the JSNA discusses key influences and strategies to improve wellbeing in the school and transition years, enabling young people to realise their aspirations and to become independent, capable adults.