

LAUREN'S TRANSITION STORY

My name is Lauren and I am now in my early-20s. I had several heart surgeries and procedures when I was very young. I spent the first 18 years of my life attending a children's hospital where I saw the same faces over and over. I felt very comfortable in this hospital as I knew everyone. The doctors and nurses always spoke to my parents about my condition and treatment and we knew that we could contact the liaison nurse if we had an emergency.

While I talked with my health care team and my parents about the transition, all the arrangements were made between the hospitals and we were just told where I would be going. At my last visit to the children's hospital I said goodbye to everyone, my next appointment was going to be with the adult hospital - that was the transition!

Looking back now I can see that I was not as prepared for the transition as I should have been. One of the big differences in the adult clinic is that the doctors and nurses talk to me rather than my parents. At my first visit I was still in the mind frame of the children's hospital where the parents do everything and I found the first visit a bit scary. I wanted to go in to see the nurse by myself, which was a big step for me, because I wanted to be treated like an adult. I didn't understand everything she was telling me and I should have asked her to take it a little slower with me but I didn't. I took my Mum in with me to see the doctor as I was meeting someone that I had never met before and I was a little nervous about that. My Mum was keen to come too as it was really difficult for my parents to let go and allow me to be responsible for my healthcare. They have always been involved but now I have the responsibility of taking care of my medication, filling my prescription and making appointments and they encourage and support me.

I have had other visits with the adult services but I went in prepared with a list of questions. I saw the nurse and doctor alone and I made sure that I understood everything that was being explained to me. I was much more relaxed, I trust the team and it felt like a completely different experience. I know that transition is not a once-off switch to the adult clinic. It's a process that involves meeting and getting to know the team over time and I am OK with that as I am more confident and I know what I need to do.