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Models of Support for People with Learning Disabilities Post-Secondary School

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This paper provides examples of models of support for individuals with learning disabilities and Special Education Needs (SEN) who have left the education system.

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Key Points

- The UK the USA, Canada and the Scandinavian nations have moved to largely providing support for people with learning disabilities (LD) in their own communities and are amongst the most advanced nations in their approach to support;

- As such this paper will discuss Scotland, Sweden, Canada and the USA's systems of support for people with learning disabilities who have passed through secondary education;

Scotland

- It is believed that around 120,000 people in Scotland have some form of learning disability;

- Scotland has enshrined the concept of personal choice in selecting services with the Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013;

- In June 2013, the Scottish Government published a new strategy for people with learning disabilities, "The Keys to Life". This updated the previous strategy, with 50 recommendations in total falling under nine subject areas;

- A key driver of support for people with learning disabilities is the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD);

- The SCLD provides a range of services, including training, research and consultancy;

- It also operates a number of projects such as 'Changing Support, Changing Lives' which is intended to drive forward self-directed support;

- Scotland also provides Local Area Co-ordinators, who are specialised workers tasked with helping people navigate the support system. They also signpost support of note, and help plan and promote independent living;

Sweden

- In Sweden, the central government establishes guidelines and policies for support for people with disabilities. Government agencies are then responsible for specific aspects of these policies, such as education and employment;

- Some roles are further disseminated, with municipalities responsible for education and social services;

- In 2011 the Swedish Government launched its "Strategy on Disability Policy". The strategy makes it clear that all areas of government policy play a role in the lives of people with disabilities, with the strategy identifying ten priority fields;

- The Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Co-ordination (Handisam) is a government agency tasked with accelerating the implementation of Swedish national disability policy;

- It coordinates disability policy and supports authorities, organisations, companies, municipalities and county councils in creating greater accessibility;

- Handisam also works on a number of projects and assignments from government and other organisations;

- For pupils with severe learning disabilities municipalities provide support via programmes (known as särskola) operated through the Gymnasia that offer theoretical studies and practical training;

- Särvux is the adult education programme for people with learning disabilities. It is provided at both basic and upper secondary level and has the same curriculum as municipal adult education;

- In 2010/11 215 municipalities provided Särvux courses (there are 290 municipalities in total in Sweden);

- Samhall is a government sponsored agency that is tasked with the creation of stimulating jobs for people with disabilities (including intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities and repetitive strain injuries);

- Samhall employs approximately 22,000 people in 250 locations. Of these 19,000 have disabilities;

Canada

- A large degree of the responsibility for supporting people with learning disabilities is devolved to Canadian Provinces. One of the most successful provinces in providing support to people with learning disabilities is Ontario;

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that gives all individuals equal opportunities to learn;

- The University of Guelph introduced its own version of ULD, the Universal Instructional Design (UID) project in 2002;

- Activities under the project included purpose built websites for courses, such as for a Clinical Nutrition class, with distinctive graphics, course notes, databases, conferencing and up-to-date timetables and Videotaping of additional "e-lectures";

- An evaluation of the project found it to have encouraging results with positive impact on the learning environment and increased student performance;

- Developmental Services Ontario was developed to *help adults with developmental disabilities find services and supports in their community;*

- There are nine DSO agencies across Ontario, helping people with learning disabilities access support in the community;

- In Ontario funding for employment services for people with learning disabilities has been moved to an outcome based system with service providers funded based on the extent to which they find jobs for clients. The Iris foundation found that: *Evidence to date suggests that more people with disabilities are finding jobs under the new system than under the previous funding model.*

USA

- The USA has enshrined protections and support for people with learning disabilities in legislation;

- In addition, a number of organisations and government bodies work to support people with learning disabilities including the Office of Disability Employment Policy and the National Centre for Learning Disabilities;

- In the USA, specific legislation has been made in order to ensure transition services are available to those that need them. IDEA transition planning services must begin no later than the first Individualised Education Program (effectively at age 16) and must be updated annually;

- The USA has implemented a number of projects and programmes to support the system of transition. One such programme is the Youth Transition Demonstration project (YTD);

- Services provided include: Individualized work-based experiences, youth empowerment and family supports;

- Participants on the course showed increased earnings and employment, with marginalised workers moved into employment. Further long term impacts were expected as participants on the project moved from a school setting into employment;

- On a federal level the USA provides a number of supports for adults with LD including Life Skills Programmes and the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities;

- In the USA supported employment has been a central part of support for people with learning disabilities since the early 1980s. Indeed between 1987 and 1990 1,400 SE programmes had been authorised in twenty-seven states;

- A major strategy in regards to employment for people with learning disabilities is Employment First which supports people with learning disabilities into employment; and

- Employment First promotes Integrated Employment (IE), whereby people with disabilities (including those with learning disabilities) are employed in typical workplace settings.

Contents

1   Introduction

This paper has been requested by the Committee of Employment and Learning as part of its inquiry into post Special Educational Need provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities (LD).

Mansell and Beadle-Brown (2009)[1] identified that there were three types of countries in their approach to people with LD. The most advanced group which includes the UK the USA, Canada and the Scandinavian nations has moved to largely providing support for people with LD in their own communities, moving away from the institutionalised, medical models previously used.

For other countries, people with LD were largely supported by their families so issues such as institutionalisation were never raised. Services to support people with LD are relatively underdeveloped.

The final group of countries still maintain a system of institutionalisation with the question of how to replace this system still a matter of debate. As found by Mansell and Beadle-Brown:

> *Many central and eastern European countries provide institutions of very poor quality and currently have proposals to renovate, upgrade and extend them using international funds instead of replacing them with services to support people in the community.*

As a result of this evidence, this paper will discuss four countries' approaches to support for people with learning disabilities. These countries have been selected as examples of the most advanced countries in providing support for people with LD. Please note, this paper provides an overview of the systems in place and brief examples of the support available. It is not possible to provide a comprehensive discussion of the systems in place due to the scale of support. For example, in the USA there is support provided at Federal, State and Local level.

The countries discussed are Scotland, Sweden, Canada and the United States of America (USA).

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[1] Mansell, J and Beadle-Brown, J, October 2009, Cost-effectiveness of community living for people with intellectual disabilities: an international perspective, http://www.nda.ie/website/nda/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/C60FC2E1F2A530068025768E003F108E/$File/prof_jim_mansell_proceedings.htm

2   Scotland

It is believed that around 120,000 people in Scotland have some form of learning disability.[2] In order to tackle the barriers and issues for people with learning disability, the Scottish Government instituted a series of strategies.

The following section will discuss recent legislative changes and government strategies in regards to support for people with learning disabilities.

2.1   Legislation

Scotland has enshrined the concept of personal choice in selecting services with the Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013. The Act gives people a range of options on how their social care needs are delivered:[3]

- Direct payment;
- The person directs the available support;
- The local authority arranges the support; or
- A mix of the above.

Individuals are therefore able to choose how much control they want over the support they receive. They can work with professionals to develop their support plan and make joint decisions about the support to be commissioned. Depending on the circumstances, the individual will also act as the purchasers of the services, employing staff.[4]

The Act also adds duties and powers such as a power to authorities to support unpaid carers and a duty to ensure individuals receive information needed to make an informed choice.

2.2   Strategies

Beginning in 2000 the Scottish Government published "The same as you?" a ten year strategy designed to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities. It made 29 recommendations which were…:[5]

> …underpinned by principles recognising the individuality and worth of every person with a learning disability in Scotland; their right to be included and to contribute, their right to have a voice, their right to support, their right to live the life of their own choosing.

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[2] The Scottish Government, June 2013, Learning Disabilities Strategy, http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2013/06/learningdisabilities13062013

[3] The Scottish Government, My Support, My Choice: The Self-directed Support Bill, http://www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk/downloads/1332173326-214069%20The%20Self-Directed%20Support%20Bill%20-%20My%20Support%20My%20Choice%20leaflet%20proof%201.pdf

[4] The Scottish Government, 2013, The Keys to Life, http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/1123

[5] Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability, 2010, The same as you?: Evidence scoping exercise, http://www.scld.org.uk/training-consultancy/research/say-evaluation/same-you-research-team-reports

The programme proved highly successful with a scoping study in 2010 finding that there was evidence of a shift in the balance of care, with greater local area co-ordination and considerable development in the legislative framework, creating greater protection for people with learning disabilities, and enabling them to live independent lives.

A scoping study examined the impact of the programme and found that it had led to successful outcomes in a number of ways, including:[6]

- The education of people with learning disabilities is taken more seriously, with more people going to college;
- Those in work benefit economically and socially, with supported employment shown to be cheaper and more beneficial than day services; and
- People have access to a more varied and meaningful range of day opportunities that involved them in the community.

However, some issues still remained including:[7]

- Transition from school is still an issue, as is learning, skills and moving into work;
- Only a minority of people with LD are in paid work; and
- Bullying and harassment is still a serious concern for people with LD.

In June 2013, the Scottish Government published a new strategy for people with learning disabilities, "The Keys to Life".[8] This updated the previous strategy, with 50 recommendations in total falling under nine subject areas.

For the purposes of this paper, recommendations on education and employment will be discussed in further detail.

Education, transitions, further and higher education and employment are all found under the "Break the Stereotypes" area and made thirteen recommendations, including:

- **Education:**
  - As part of transition planning, education authorities must consider whether young people with additional support needs require extra help with their plans. If they do, planning must begin a year before transition occurs; and
  - Education authorities must exchange information with other agencies to inform their plans to support the young person.
- **Transitions:**
  - by 2014 local authorities, further and higher education providers, Skills Development Scotland and the Transitions Forum work in partnership within the GIRFEC assessment and planning framework to provide earlier, smoother and

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[6] Ibid

[7] Ibid

[8] The Scottish Government, June 2013, The Keys to Life, http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00424389.pdf

clearer transition pathways (to include accessible information on their options, right to benefits and Self Directed support) for all children with learning disabilities to enable them to plan and prepare for the transition from school to leavers destination; and

- For people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, moving from child to adult services has been described by Scottish careers as 'the black hole of transition', with research showing that whilst in school, people with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) have their needs met, once they transition to adult services there is marked reduction in access to services. The Doran review recommends that this transition phase should be properly coordinated and that there should be independent advice and support for families where a son or daughter with PMLD is going through transition.

- **Further or Higher Education:**

  - Young adults with learning disabilities should be given the opportunity to use further and higher education to learn skills that relate to social skill development, daily life skills and continuing education; and

  - That by the end of 2014 the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD) in partnership with Colleges Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) consider how people with learning disabilities access educational activities and training at college and other learning environments.

- **Employment:**

  - The Scottish Government states that it should focus on helping disabled people enter mainstream employment wherever possible but recognises the valuable role supported employment can play both in gaining mainstream employment and for those who feel unable to progress; and

  - The strategy recommends that: by 2018 the Learning Disability Implementation Group works with local authorities, NHS Boards and Third Sector organisations to develop a range of supported employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and that those organisations should lead by example by employing more people with learning disabilities.

- **Volunteering:**

  - Not all people with learning disabilities will be in a position to work but will take part in volunteering. Volunteering offers the opportunity to develop skills for the workplace; however, it may also be acting as a substitute for paid work where people with learning disabilities are either not accessing a paid job or the number of paid hours people can work are constrained by the welfare benefit system; and

  - The strategy recommends that: local authorities and SCLD work in partnership with Volunteer Scotland and other relevant organisations to increase the opportunity for people with learning disabilities to volunteer within their community to develop work skills.

2.3   Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability

A key driver of this support is the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability.

Consisting of twelve different partner organisations (including Capability Scotland, Enable Scotland and the University of Dundee), the SCLD is a Centre of Excellence established following "The Same As You?" review.

Its mission is:[9]

> *to work in partnership with people with learning disabilities of all ages and family carers to challenge discrimination and to develop and share good practice*

The SCLD provides a range of services, including:[10]

- **Training:** The SCLD provides a number of short open courses covering areas such as communication, disability awareness and employment;

- **Research:** The SCLD carries out its own research including an evaluation of "The same as you?" the previous Scottish Strategy for people with learning disability;

- **Consultancy:** SCLD offers a comprehensive consultancy service to all types of organisations from local authorities, voluntary organisations and private sector businesses. Where possible, SCLD work with co-consultants who have learning disabilities or who are family carers.

SCLD also works on a large number of projects including:[11]

- **Employment:** Work in employment includes promoting supported employment and projects such as "Young Scotland's Got Talent";

- **Changing Support, Changing Lives:** A project involving five partner organisations intended to drive forward self-directed support. It intends to:
    - Increase understanding and knowledge of Self-Directed Support;
    - Increase innovation and diversity in what is available for people directing their own support;
    - Develop more flexible ways of supporting people;
    - Develop different ways of working with people who access support;
    - Increase capacity to respond flexibly and implement cultural and organisational change; and
    - Develop more effective commissioning.

- **Citizen Leadership:** project to institute a change of relationship between people who use services and people who provide them. In this new relationship people as citizens take on shared responsibility for making sure services meet their needs;

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[9] SCLD, Mission and Values, http://www.scld.org.uk/about-scld/mission-and-values
[10] SCLD, What We Offer, http://www.scld.org.uk/training-consultancy
[11] SCLD, SCLD Projects, http://www.scld.org.uk/scld-projects

- **Working with Parents:** The 'Working with Parents' project is part of a wider UK initiative that SCLD have undertaken with a number of partners to make available examples of good practice, accessible information, research findings, policy documents and future events.

The SCLD has also been specified in legislation to produce Official Statistics on people with learning disabilities.[12]

Statistics provided include figures on:

- Adults with learning disabilities known to Scottish local authorities;
- Employment;
- Local area co-ordination; and
- Further education.

2.4   Local Area Co-ordinators

Introduced via the "Same as You?" strategy, Local Area Co-ordinators (LACs) are…:

> *…a specialist worker dedicated to working with a small number of people using services in one area (to) help people and their families through the current maze of systems.*

By 2013 there were over 80 LACs in twenty local authority areas. Of these, around 75% were employed by the local authority and the remaining by voluntary sector providers.[13]

The core areas of work LACs focus on include:[14]

- Information;
- Signposting and guiding;
- Developing relationships; and
- Planning, empowerment and promoting independent living.

There are also differences in spending across local authorities (LAs) with one LA spending seven times as much as the lowest for every person in the total population. A review in 2007 found that the organisational arrangements also varied. For example, some provided services only for adults, whilst others worked on a 'cradle to the grave' basis.

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[12] SCLD, Statistics Release: Adults with learning disabilities known to Scottish local authorities 2012, http://www.scld.org.uk/sites/default/files/bw_statistics_on_adults_with_learning_disabilities_known_to_local_authorities_2012_080813.pdf

[13] Community Care, April 2012, Local area co-ordinators: the story from Scotland

[14] The Scottish Government, June 2013, The Keys to Life, http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00424389.pdf

In most cases, people could access the LACs directly, although in a small number of LAs, people had to go through the social work allocations system or a similar 'vetting' procedure.[15]

In 2010 SCLD published a benchmarked framework for LACs with ten principles to be adopted as part of their day to day practice. A further recommendation in the latest strategy for people with learning disability recommended a review and agreement by June 2014 on the scale of the further expansion of LACs.

3 Sweden

In Sweden, the central government establishes guidelines and policies for support for people with disabilities. Government agencies are then responsible for specific aspects of these policies, such as education and employment:[16]

> *Their task is to accelerate the pace of development in their particular sectors and ensure compliance with policy.*

Some roles are further disseminated, with municipalities responsible for education and social services. They are also responsible for public support and services such as:

- Provision of personal assistance;
- Representatives for people with mental disabilities; and
- Special transport services.

The Government provides grants to municipalities in order to deliver these services.

3.1 Sweden Disability Strategy

In 2011 the Swedish Government launched its "Strategy on Disability Policy". The policy is based upon the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The strategy makes it clear that all areas of government policy play a role in the lives of people with disabilities, with the strategy identifying ten priority fields.

Of these, two are of note to this paper:[17]

- **Labour Market Policy:** The main tenet of Government policy for the labour market is that everyone's competence and willingness to work must be utilised. Persons with disabilities must be able to participate in working life according to their capacity and circumstances. In order to facilitate this, the government has identified two policy targets for 2011-2016:

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[15] Scottish Executive, 2007, Evaluation of the Implementation of Local Area Co-ordination in Scotland,

[16] Sweden, Disability Policy, http://sweden.se/society/swedens-disability-policy/

[17] Handisam, The Strategy, http://www.handisam.se/english/Swedish-disability-policy/The-strategy/

- The employment participation rate of persons with disabilities entailing reduced working capacity is to be raised; and

- Matching between jobseekers with disabilities entailing reduced work capacity and job vacancies must be efficient.

- **Education Policy:** The strategy identifies the important role education plays in improving an individual's future prospects and participation in society. Three policy targets have been identified:

  - Every child, pupil and adult student shall be enabled to develop their knowledge as far as possible;

  - In compliance with the elucidatory provisions of the Planning and Building Act and the Education Act, monitoring of accessibility for pupils with disabilities in preschool and in schools of all kinds shall be improved; and

  - Knowledge concerning functional impairments and ways of tailoring instruction to the needs of each individual child, pupil or adult student shall be improved.

3.2 Implementation

The Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Co-ordination (Handisam) is a government agency tasked with accelerating the implementation of Swedish national disability policy.[18] It coordinates disability policy and supports authorities, organisations, companies, municipalities and county councils in creating greater accessibility.[19]

Handisam has three main tasks:

- To promote a strategic implementation of disability policy;

- To provide the Government with relevant facts; and

- To support accessibility.

Handisam also monitors the implementation of disability policy (as per the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

Some of the work Handisam conducts includes:[20]

- Support and coordinate the authorities which have a particular responsibility for implementing disability policy;

- Analyse problems in the field and assess the measures needed to deal with them;

- Support local government's accessibility work through developing and securing methods for monitoring; and

- Monitoring and reporting on international developments in the field.

Handisam also works on a number of projects and assignments from both government and other organisations. Projects include:[21]

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[18] Handisam, About Handisam, http://www.handisam.se/english/Welcome-to-Handisam/About-Handisam/

[19] Handisam, Together we are making Sweden more accessible, http://www.handisam.se/Filer/BroschyrHandisam_eng.pdf

[20] Handisam, What are we working for, www.handisam.se/Om-Handisam/Vad-Handisam-gor/Vad-Handisam-gor/

- **Earnings conference:** Each year, Handisam must conduct an earnings conference as part of the 2011 – 2016 disability strategy. It brings together key actors involved in the policy to monitor progress;

- **Brain icon:** This is an ongoing campaign to promote respect for people with learning disabilities and mental illness; and

- **Children own:** Handisam has been commissioned by the government to gather the views and experiences of children and young people with disabilities. The assignment includes investigating and compiling what children and young people with disabilities think about the government support they receive, including what input they have in decision making and how the support could be improved.

3.3   Education

Under the Swedish Education Act all children and young people have equal access to education regardless of gender, ethnicity, place of residence or social/economic factors. The Act is the basis of education from pre-school to upper-secondary.[22]

Most Swedish schools are public and run by municipalities, although there are some private schools.

School is compulsory in Sweden from ages seven to sixteen, although municipalities have a duty to organise pre-school activities from the age of five.

A point of note is the design of the National Curriculum in that:[23]

> *all compulsory education will be organised in such a way that individual solutions are possible for all pupils. This is a way of strengthening the pupils' influence and personal responsibility, but also a way of taking into account all pupils' needs and individuality.*

Upper-Secondary Schools (Gymnasia)

Upper-secondary schools are roughly equivalent to further education colleges in the UK, with students aged 15/16 sitting exams for entry. Those who fail to meet the entry requirements (at least passes in Swedish, English and Mathematics) study educational programmes tailored to their needs.[24]

Upper secondary schools are not compulsory but are attended by nearly all pupils. For pupils with severe learning disabilities municipalities provide support via programmes

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[21] Handisam, Our Projects and Assignments, www.handisam.se/Om-Handisam/Vad-Handisam-gor/Vara-projekt-och-aktiviteter/

[22] SPSM, The Swedish Education, System, http://www.spsm.se/sv/Om-webbplatsen/English/The-Swedish-Education-System/

[23] European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Complete National Overview – Sweden, https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/sweden/national-overview/complete-national-overview

[24] Sweden, Free Education from age 6 to 19, http://sweden.se/collection/from-preschool-to-university-in-sweden/article/free-education-from-age-6-to-19/

(known as särskola) operated through the Gymnasia that offer theoretical studies and practical training.[25]

A reform of upper secondary school education for young people with learning disabilities is currently under way, with the intention to:[26]

> …*better prepare the pupils for working life and to give them a solid foundation for their personal development and active participation in society.*

Part of these reforms involve national and individual programmes. There are nine national programmes with their own goals, all agreed at a national level. As part of the national programme, pupils spend at least 22 weeks in the workplace, with the tasks undertaken on site intended to bolster classroom based learning.[27]

For pupils with learning disabilities, Upper Secondary School is a four-year educational programme for young people aged 16-20 who have LD or an acquired brain injury. In 2012 approximately 9,000 pupils attended upper secondary for individuals with learning disabilities.

Gymnasia can receive additional support through the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, which provides special pedagogical support services to authorities, services and schools. The overall aim of this service is to develop local resource centres in order to provide support at a local level.

3.4 Särvux

Särvux is the adult education programme for people with learning disabilities. It is provided at both basic and upper secondary level and has the same curriculum as municipal adult education.

It is intended to:[28]

> *provide skills in individual subjects and skills equivalent to those acquired at compulsory and upper secondary education schools for pupils with learning disabilities and vocational education and training.*

Participants must be aged 20 years old or older and have a learning disability or acquired brain injury.

Särvux courses are available at three levels:

■ Basic Särvux corresponding to training school;

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[25] Ibid

[26] European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Euronews Issue 22, https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Euronews22-ENword.pdf

[27] Ibid

[28] Government Offices of Sweden, Special Education for Adults, http://www.government.se/sb/d/6997/a/67939

- Basic Särvux corresponding to compulsory school; and

- Secondary Särvux corresponding to secondary special school national programmes.

Courses are free and cover a wide variety of areas. For example Goteborg offers courses in history, natural sciences and vocational courses such as health and social care. Guidance counsellors and teachers are available to provide support, with participants developing their own study plan detailing their goals, needs and prior knowledge.[29]

An important aspect of the programme is that 15% of all teaching time must be in the workplace, providing practical experience for participants.[30]

It is also possible for people to undertake apprenticeships, with work based learning.

In 2010/11 215 municipalities provided Särvux courses (there are 290 municipalities in total in Sweden).

3.5   Employment

Samhall is a government sponsored agency that is tasked with the creation of stimulating jobs for people with disabilities (including intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities and repetitive strain injuries).

When it was first formed in 1980, Samhall (then Samhällsföretag) operated 370 sheltered employment workshops. The company was restructured in 1992 into a corporate group with Samhall AB the state-owned parent company.[31]

Over time, an increasing share of Samhall's operations shifted from sheltered employment to contract work and manned solutions.

It matches people who have a 'functional impairment' with appropriate assignments. Samhall operates under a new model with three phases:[32]

- Assessment:

- Temporary rehabilitating employment; and

- Long term employment in the main stream employment market.

Samhall employs approximately 22,000 people in 250 locations. Of these 19,000 have disabilities, with a 1,000 other employees. An interesting aspect of Samhall's approach is that it operates with mixed groups of employees with various working capacities, skills and ages. In this way:[33]

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[29] Goteborgs Stade, Schools, programs http://goteborg.se/wps/wcm/connect/b85750ae-7765-4864-a0cc-4d37fd62bf0e/Sarvuxkatalogen_webb.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

[30] CEDEFOP, Lifelong learning in Sweden,

[31] Samhall, Annual and Sustainability Report 2012, http://www.samhall.se/Global/financial/2012/Samh_%c3%85HR12_ENG.pdf

[32] Workability Europe, Samhall, http://www.workability-europe.org/our-members/107-sweden

[33] Samhall, Annual and Sustainability Report 2012, http://www.samhall.se/Global/financial/2012/Samh_%c3%85HR12_ENG.pdf

…employees in the groups complement each other and can manage a complete undertaking together. In this way, Samhall also stands for diversity. Within the company, different groups with various conditions and backgrounds are mixed and combined together. It combats lock-in effects and stand-alone solutions.

Samhall offers employment in five areas:[34]

- Cleaning and laundry;
- Warehousing and logistics;
- Workplace and property services;
- Elderly services; and
- Manufacturing.

Samhall operates these businesses as a sub-contractor.

Samhall, as a state owned company, has a number of targets, including:[35]

- **Number of employees:** Samhall must employee a minimum number of employees with functional impairment, expressed in hours worked (24.4 million). In 2012 Samhall achieved 24.6 million hours;
- **Transitions:** each year a certain proportion (6%) of permanent employees should leave Samhall for a position with another employer. Samhall must provide the possibility of re-employment to employees making a transition to work with another employer, valid for 12 months. In 2012 Samhall achieved 5.2% transition rate;
- **Recruitment from prioritised groups:** a certain minimum proportion (40%) of new recruits should come from prioritised groups in accordance with the definition established by the Public Employment Service and Samhall (people with mental impairments, people with intellectual or neurological impairments and people with multiple impairments which cause reduced working capacity and job seekers in the occupational phase). In 2012 Samhall achieved 43% recruitment within this group.

4   Canada

Canada operates a federalised system of Government, with a national government and legislature and smaller state legislatures and parliaments. A large number of powers are devolved to the Provincial legislatures. For example, in Canada there is no national education ministry, rather public elementary and secondary education are the sole responsibility of the provincial government. As a result, a large degree of the

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[34] Ibid
[35] Ibid

responsibility for supporting people with learning disabilities is devolved to Canadian Provinces.[36]

One of the most successful provinces in providing support to people with learning disabilities is Ontario. The support system in place and examples of projects will be discussed in more detail below.

Ontario is Canada's most populous province, with over 12.8 million inhabitants (out of 33.2 million in total). A study by the Iris Institute identified a prevalence rate of LD of 0.6% in Ontario.[37]

4.1 Education

Prior to the 1980s, Ontario schools were under no obligation to provide special education programmes to pupils with SEN. However, following the passing of "An Act to Amend the Education Act" in 1980, all schools were obligated to provide this support.

The Act (or "Bill 82" as it is more commonly known) established several requirements, including: [38]

- Early and ongoing identification and assessment of learning abilities and needs of students;
- the involvement of parents or guardians of exceptional pupils in assessment, identification, and placement processes; and
- Every district school board and authority must appoint a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). SEACs are standing committeeS which provide input on the particular needs of each associations exceptionality groups[39], identify areas in which there are gaps in service and advise the board on how special education programmes and services need to be improved.

In 1986 the Ministry for Education established the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE). The MACSE advises the Minister of Education on the establishment and provision of special education programmes and services for students with special needs.[40]

In particular, the Council:

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[36] Ontario Ministry of Education, Zegarac, G 2008, Special Education in Ontario: Closing the gap as an overarching goal: changing special education practices and outcomes, http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/research/speced_aera_csse.pdf

[37] Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society, Employment of People with Developmental Disabilities in Canada, http://irisinstitute.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/six-key-elements-for-an-inclusive-labour-market.pdf

[38] Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, SEAC Circulars, http://www.ldao.ca/about/public-policy-advocacy/seac-circulars/

[39] An 'exceptionality Group' refers to pupils or students who have been found to have exceptional needs. There are twelve categories including learning disabilities (approximately 43% of exceptional students in Ontario), gifted (13%) and autism (4%).

[40] Ontario, Ministry of Education, Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education, http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/abcs/acse/acse_eng.html

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- Responds to proposals or positions of the Ministry of Education or other ministries, as submitted to the Council from time to time; and

- Identifies concerns in the delivery of special education programs and services for students with special needs and provides information, advice, and recommendations for ministry consideration.

4.2 Higher Education: Universal Design for Learning at the University of Guelph, Ontario

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that gives all individuals equal opportunities to learn.

As stated by the National Centre on Universal Design for Learning:[41]

> *UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.*

UDL operates around three main principles:[42]

- **Provide multiple means of representation:** Everyone learns in different ways and as a result have different ways of approaching content. Barriers arise in this especially for those with learning disabilities. As such, UDL provides learners with a variety of options in how to approach learning materials allowing individuals to select the method which best suits them;

- **Provide multiple means of action and expression:**   Learners differ in the ways that they can navigate a learning environment and express what they know for example, some people may have difficulties with speaking or writing. Again, providing flexible options will allow greater participation and learning opportunities; and

- **Provide multiple means of engagement:**   Learners differ in the ways in which they can be engaged or motivated to learn. There are a variety of sources that can influence individual variation in affect including neurology, culture and personal relevance. Multiple options for engagement with individuals can encourage interest and sustains effort and persistence.

The University of Guelph introduced its own version of ULD, the Universal Instructional Design (UID) project in 2002. Initially funding for the project covered nine courses at the University. The courses selected were either subject to a redesign based on the principles of ULD or enhanced.

UID at the University of Guelph was based on seven principles, including:

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[41] National Centre on Universal Design for Learning, What is UDL?, http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl

[42] National Centre on Universal Design for Learning , the three principles of ULD, http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl/3principles

- Be straightforward and consistent;

- Provide flexibility in use, participation and presentation;

- Be explicitly presented and readily perceived; and

- Provide a supportive learning environment.

Activities under the project included:

- Purpose built websites for courses, such as for a Clinical Nutrition class, with distinctive graphics, course notes, databases, conferencing and up-to-date timetables;

- Videotaping of additional "e-lectures";

- Software packages made more relevant through the tailoring of activities and the creation of simulations; and

- Course notes carefully constructed per style guide to ensure navigation, bookmarks in pdf format, and ease-of-use with software.

An evaluation of the project was carried out in 2004 and found that:

> *…the results of the UID project were very encouraging. Level of UID implementation increased over the course of the project, and student academic self-efficacy and positive affect were significantly higher the greater the level of UID implementation. Similarly, negative affect was significantly lower the greater the level of UID implementation, as reported by students.*

The evaluation went on to find that:

- The implementation of UID characteristics has had a positive impact on the learning environment;

- The more UID principles were applied to the course, the greater the students' confidence in their own ability to succeed; and

- Professors also reported increased student performance and satisfaction.

4.3   Developmental Services, Ontario

In the last ten years, Ontario has instituted large scale change in its support for people with learning disabilities (also referred to as "Developmental Disabilities" in Ontario).

The system was changed as:[43]

> *It lacked consistent infrastructure and planning. People applied for and were assessed for services in different ways across the province. This led to people's needs, funding and priorities being determined inconsistently.*

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[43] Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Improving Ontario's developmental services system, http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/developmental/improving/index.aspx

In 2004 the government announced changes to the system and since then has:

- Closed the province's three remaining institutions. Ontario's system is now completely community-based.

- Introduced new legislation which lays the foundation for a more modern system.

- Created Developmental Services Ontario. It is the single point of access for adult developmental services in the province.

- Developed clear eligibility criteria for accessing services. These are standard throughout Ontario and make eligibility decisions consistent.

- Created a standard application and assessment process that ensures people's needs are assessed consistently across the province.

- Put province-wide quality assurance measures in place. These are rules that help agencies and Developmental Services Ontario provide high quality services and supports and meet set standards.

- Introduced Passport and direct funding to allow individuals to better transition from school into their communities with more control over the supports they need.

As mentioned above, Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) was created as part of this process.

Its main goal is to:

> *help adults with developmental disabilities find services and supports in their community.*

There are nine DSO agencies across Ontario, helping people with learning disabilities access support in the community.

The DSO provides a number of services including:[44]

- Residential services and supports: The Government of Ontario funds community agencies that offer people with developmental disabilities places to live;

- Community participation supports and Passport:

- Caregiver respite;

- Person-directed planning;

- Adult protection service workers;

- Specialised supports; and

- Direct funding.

Of these, Community Participation and the Passport programme are most of note to this paper.

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[44] Developmental Services Ontario, Developmental Services in Ontario, http://www.dsontario.ca/Overview

- Community Participation Supports (CPS) are available to people with learning disabilities if they want to become more involved in their community. The supports available include:[45]

  - **Developing self-help skills:** getting help with things like learning to brush teeth, get dressed, ride the bus and go shopping in order to become more independent;

  - **Continuing to learn after high school:** taking a course, volunteering, using public libraries or participating in activities at a community centre;

  - **Volunteering or preparing for a job:** practising work-related tasks or skills to succeed at work or as a volunteer.

- Passport is funding available to people with learning disabilities to support this community participation. People can use this funding to choose their own activities and pay for them directly. This is intended to help them develop independence, encourage learning and personal development and build social, emotional and community participation skills.

In order to track the impact of the changes to the system for people with learning disabilities, a research programme was established. The Multidimensional Assessment of Providers and Systems (MAPS) informs the assessment of services and supports for adults with learning disabilities in Ontario.

It provides an interdisciplinary team of researchers and works with people with learning disabilities, their families, service providers and other stakeholders.

In Ontario funding for employment services for people with learning disabilities has been moved to an outcome based system with service providers funded based on the extent to which they find jobs for clients. The Iris foundation found that:[46]

> *Evidence to date suggests that more people with disabilities are finding jobs under the new system than under the previous funding model.*

5   USA

The USA has enshrined protections and support for people with learning disabilities in legislation. There are three main pieces of legislation of note:[47]

- **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** This is the main federal programme authorising state and local aid for special education and related services for children with disabilities, including students with LD;

- **Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504:** Improves access to accommodations for students and adults with LD in school and the workplace;

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[45] Developmental Services Ontario, Community Participation Supports and Passport, http://www.dsontario.ca/community-participation-supports

[46] Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society, Towards an Understanding of Effective Practices in Employment Programs for People with Disabilities in Canada, http://irisinstitute.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/employment-program-best-practices_iris.pdf

[47] National Centre for Learning Disabilities, Learn the Law, http://www.ncld.org/disability-advocacy/learn-ld-laws

- **No Child Left Behind:** Challenges states and school districts to increase efforts to improve student academic achievement. Its accountability provisions focus attention on low-performing groups of students, intending to close the achievement gap.

A number of organisations and government bodies work to support people with learning disabilities. These include:

- **The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP):**[48] Established in 2001, the ODEP's mission is to develop and influence policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The ODEP identifies and disseminates information on effective practices, policy strategies and provides technical assistance to government agencies to promote the adoption and implementation of practices that will impact positively on the employment of people with disabilities (including those with learning disabilities);
- **National Centre for Learning Disabilities (NCLD):** Founded in 1977 the NCLD provides leadership, public awareness and grants to support research and innovative practices in learning disabilities;
- **Disability.Gov:**[49] Disability.gov is a USA government website for information about disability-related programs, services, policies, laws and regulations. The site links to resources from many different federal government agencies, as well as state and local governments and non-profit organisations.

These organisations provide a number of supports, including in the transition phase from education to employment.

5.1 Transitions

In the USA, specific legislation has been made in order to ensure transition services are available to those that need them. IDEA transition planning services must begin no later than the first Individualised Education Program (effectively at age 16) and must be updated annually.[50]

There is some scope for planning to begin earlier than this but this is at the discretion of the IEP team (the student, parents, educators and other professionals as appropriate). This often happens for most students with learning disabilities.

Under IDEA 2004, state and local education agencies must:

- Provide transition services for every child with a disability;
- Develop a 'coordinated set of activities' for students with disabilities. These activities must be focused on achieving individualised post school employment or vocational training and community living goals for each student;

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[48] United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, About ODEP, http://www.dol.gov/odep/about/
[49] Disability.Gov, About Us – What Does Disability.gov Do?, https://www.disability.gov/what-does-disability-gov-do/
[50] McDonnell, J and Hardman, M, 2010, Successful Transition Programs

- Coordinate transition activities with community service agencies to make needed services more readily available to graduates; and

- Consider individual needs, strengths, preferences and interests.

Schools must also take an active role in preparing students with learning disabilities for life outside of the classroom.

The USA has implemented a number of projects and programmes to support the system of transition. One such programme is the Youth Transition Demonstration project (YTD).

The Youth Transition Demonstration project, run by the US Social Security Administration (SSA) was developed to provide support to young people aged 14 – 25 with disabilities in finding employment and accessing other services.

It is intended to empower young people and their families:[51]

> *to be more proactive in their approach to the transition from youth to adulthood and by creating integrated co-ordination systems.*

Services provided include:[52]

- Individualized work-based experiences;

- Youth empowerment;

- Family supports;

- System linkages;

- Social and health services; and

- Benefits counselling.

Six US states participated in the programme which commenced in 2003 and was completed in March 2012.

Participants on the course showed increased earnings and employment, with marginalised workers moved into employment. Further long term impacts where expected as participants on the project moved from a school setting into employment.[53]

5.2 Supports for Adults with LD

On a federal level the USA provides a number of supports for Adults with LD. These include:

- **Life Skills Programmes:** Life skills programmes are post-secondary training programmes for people with learning disability in need of additional support to

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[51] OECD, 2011, Education and Training Policy: Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Tertiary Education and Employment

[52] Social Security Administration, Youth Transition Demonstration, http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/youth.htm

[53] Social Security Administration, Hemmeter, J, January 2012, Earnings and disability program participation of Youth Transition Demonstration participants after 24 Months, http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/documents/YTD%20Final.pdf

encourage independent living. Provided in a residential setting, life skills programmes offer training in:

- Life skills;
- Workplace literacy;
- Social skills development;
- Vocational and career exploration and training;
- Time management; and
- Banking and budgeting.

- **Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD):** The AIDD is a division of the US Department of Health and Human Services. It provides financial and leadership support to organisations in each State to ensure people with learning disabilities and their families can participate and contribute fully in all aspects of community life. It oversees four grant programmes and provides funding for a number of projects of national significance including:[54]

  - **National Network of University Centres for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research & Service (UCEDDs):** There are 68 UCEDDs in the USA which provide a variety of services including early intervention, supported employment and support for post-secondary education opportunities;

  - **State Protection & Advocacy Systems:** work at the state level to protect individuals with developmental disabilities by empowering them and advocating on their behalf. There are 57 P&As in the United States and its territories, and each is independent of service-providing agencies within their states; and

  - **The President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID):** promotes policies and initiatives that support independence and lifelong inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in their respective communities. The Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities provides oversight and support for PCPID.

5.3   Supported and Integrated Employment

In the USA supported employment has been a central part of support for people with learning disabilities since the early 1980s. Indeed between 1987 and 1990 1,400 SE programmes had been authorised in twenty-seven states.[55]

Supported employment is defined in legislation and supported by federal and state funding. Indeed, under USA law:[56]

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[54] Administration for Community Living, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) – Programs, http://www.acl.gov/Programs/AIDD/index.aspx

[55] Beyers, S and Robinson, C, June 2009, A Review of the Research Literature on Supported Employment, http://www.researchonline.org.uk/sds/search/download.do%3Bjsessionid=9CDC74BFF86CE150803D04C9331AB05F?ref=B12586

[56] Atherton, H and Crickmore, D, Learning Disabilities: Toward Inclusion – Chpt 26 Ridley, J and Hunter, S, Employment

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*Providers are required to target individuals with severe disabilities who
require ongoing support in order to perform their work and jobs must be for
a minimum of 20 hours per week. No such stipulation exists in the UK and
European versions of supported employment.*

A major strategy in regards employment for people with learning disabilities is
Employment First which supports people with learning disabilities into employment.

Under Employment First community based, integrated employment is used by
employment services to meet the needs of young people and adults with disabilities.[57]

Employment First promotes Integrated Employment (IE), whereby people with
disabilities (including those with learning disabilities) are employed in typical workplace
settings. The policy behind IE operates on the principle that programmes and services
should presume that all people can work and that work outcomes are expected.[58]

Across the USA, Community Employment Agencies (CEA) act to assist job seekers
with disabilities to find IE opportunities.[59]

CEAs can provide a number of supports including customised employment which is:[60]

*a process for individualizing the employment relationship between a job
seeker or an employee and an employer in ways that meet the needs of
both. It is based on a match between the unique strengths, needs, and
interests of the job candidate with a disability, and the identified business
needs of the employer or the self-employment business chosen by the
candidate.*

Individuals develop an employment plan with the CEA based on their own goals,
strengths and interests and are then matched to jobs which may suit their needs. The
prospective employer will then help develop an individualised job role for the employee
that meets both the needs of the applicant and of the business. Participation for an
employer is always voluntary.

6   Conclusion

The countries discussed in this paper all have well developed support systems in place
for people with learning disabilities who wish to continue their education or enter
training or employment.

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[57] United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, Employment First,
http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/EmploymentFirst.htm

[58] United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, Integrated Employment Toolkit,
http://www.dol.gov/odep/ietoolkit/index_video.htm

[59] United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, Integrated Employment Toolkit,
http://www.dol.gov/odep/ietoolkit/communityEmploymentAgencies.htm

[60] Office of Disability Employment Practice, Customized Employment Q&A,
http://www.dol.gov/odep/ietoolkit/communityEmploymentAgencies.htm

A wide variety of support systems have been identified including helping people into employment, identifying the needs and interests of people with learning disabilities to ensure they find training and employment they have an interest in, and ensuring there is an effective transition from school to a post-secondary setting.