

# Committee for Employment and Learning Visit Report

Manchester 11 & 12 March 2015

## **Background**

At its meeting on the 22 October 2015 the Committee for Employment and Learning was briefed by Ms Katherine Corey, Deputy Head of Seashell College, Manchester as part of its Inquiry into Post School Special Educational Need Provision in Northern Ireland. During the briefing Ms Corey provided a comparison with the post SEN provision in England and extended an invitation to the Committee to visit the Seashell Trust.

At its meeting on 14 January 2015 the Committee agreed to visit Seashell Trust and a number of other organisations in the Manchester area which were identified by the Assembly Research and Information Service as potential models of good practise for post 19 SEN provision.

The additional organisations that the Committee agreed to visit were PossAbilities, Pure Innovations and Manchester College.

An additional meeting was arranged with the Lord Mayor of Manchester as the programme delivered by Pure Innovations was located at Manchester City Hall.

## **Attendees**

The following Committee Members attended:

Mr Robin Swann MLA, Chairperson  
Mr Tom Buchanan MLA, Deputy Chairperson  
Mr David Hilditch MLA  
Mr Fra McCann MLA

Mrs Cathie White - Clerk to the Committee for Employment and Learning  
Mr Jonathan Lawless – Assistant Clerk to the Committee for Employment and Learning

## **Seashell Trust**

### **Seashell Representatives**

Mark Geraghty	Chief Executive
Bernie White	Director of Education
Jane Woodward	Director of Education
Katherine Corey	Deputy Head of College
Katherine Watson	Transitions co-ordinator
Carol Honeini	Manager adapted supported internship
Anne-Marie Okotie	Director of Care
Debbie Gittins	Registered manager Adult Care

### **Background**

The Seashell Trust began as a school opened in 1837 for deaf children. In 1972, as local authorities in England expanded their own services to include deaf children, the Trust opened a special unit for children with complex needs. The Seashell Trust provides extensive support to children and young people enrolled in the school and College and only caters for children that are most challenged and is based on a 100 acre site on the outskirts of Stockport.

The Trust is the home to Royal School Manchester, a non-maintained special school, and the Royal College Manchester, an independent Specialist Further Education College. The school and college are residential and cater for students from the age of 2 to 25 and each child and young person at the Royal School have an individual programme based on a personal curriculum, tailored to their specific needs.

The Royal College provides education and skills support for young people aged 19 - 25 who have severe and complex difficulties including autistic spectrum disorder and multisensory impairment.

### **Meeting**

On arrival at Seashell the Committee Members had an informal discussion with Mark Geraghty, Bernie White and Katherine Corey regarding the comparison in provision in Northern Ireland and England. The College has 71 students aged 19-25 and there are 47 students in the school aged 14-19, from over 40 local authorities in Great Britain. The Trust has over 150 staff and is the largest employer in the Stockport area. The Trust has an out turn of over £13 Million a year.

The Trust employs a job coach who supports over 40% of leavers into supported employment and provides support for up to 6 months after leaving. The Trust has developed relationships with local companies, in particular Manchester City FC and Sodexo who provide financial support and also provide work placements for students. Sodexo in particular provide work placements across the 40 local authorities from which the students come from, enabling them to live closer to or at home.

Seashell Trust is currently in the middle of a new build programme which includes the development of 17 state of the art 4 bedroom houses which will be available for residential students and short breaks. The new homes will enable those who live on site the opportunity to develop their independence skills and to learn skills that will be with them for life.

A number of issues were discussed.

- The current legislation (Children and Families Act) is driving the schools and has been in place for 6 months now and the impact of the changes are starting to be seen.

For people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) it gives greater emphasis to the voice of the student and family in terms of the choice of educational establishment. They are involved more actively in assessment, their views sought and collated in Education Health Care Plans (EHCP), this is a change from the previous statementing process that largely reflected the views of professionals.

The new legislation builds plans around outcomes and looks to identify resources to help the student achieve outcomes.

Outcomes need to be reviewed annually and therefore the plans will be reviewed regularly. Previously too many students had statements that were out of date, with goals and support that no longer matched the needs of the young person.

A major change in the new legislation is that the provision might come from more than one service.

Schools are now expected to be more proactive in terms of preparing the student for the future. Although this can be assumed to have been the way education is structured- there is now an explicit expectation that the outcomes will focus on the long term goals for young people along the following pathways- progression to work, independence, community participation and

health and wellbeing and that these will be applied appropriately at each key stage. Hand in hand with this is the emphasis on raising expectations.

Schools, local authorities and services are expected to coproduce services with families and young people. Previously they may have consulted with families as stakeholders about a plan/strategy, now they are expected to involve parents from the start so that the plans are devised together.

- Further Education Colleges do not provide the highest quality of courses and it is more comparable to a day care service.
- The need for early interventions is crucial as the earlier it happens the better the outcomes are. The gap between diagnosis and intervention needs to be minimised. In general this refers to high quality support in early years having a beneficial effect on the outcomes of young people in terms of their independence and achievements.

The principle can be applied at all stages of intervention. Prompt identification and support to meet needs with a focus on increasing independence is as appropriate for Post 16 as it is for early years.

The Baker Tilly report details the social return on investment for children with special educational needs and supports the principle of investing in young people to enable them to achieve their aspirations, become more independent and maintain their health and wellbeing, which in turn reduces the overall need for support across a person's lifetime.

The moving from statements and Learning Difficulty Assessment to EHCP's enables special educational provision to meet the special educational needs of the child and young person, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care. *(The Education, Health and Care (EHC) also called person centred planning; is about increasing choice and control. This new process focuses on what is important for children and young people – what they and you want to achieve now and in the future.)*

- The provision of personal budgets has now put families in control of what provision their child receives. *(A personal budget is an amount of money that can be used to arrange and pay for some of the support agreed in the child or young person's Education, Health and Care plan. The amount that is allocated depends on the needs and outcomes identified in the plan and can alter as they change. Personal budgets give children, young people and families more flexibility, choice and control over the way that support is delivered and enables them to be in charge of how the money for support is spent to meet the outcomes outlined in an EHC plan.)*

The Committee was given a tour of the facilities and met with students at the School

### **Manchester City Council**

The Committee met with the Lord Mayor of Manchester Councillor, Susan Cooley and representatives from Pure Innovations . The Lord Mayor has a background in working with young people with learning difficulties and discussed the terms of reference for the Committee's Inquiry and what it hoped to achieve from the visit.

### **Pure Innovations**

#### **Pure Innovations Representatives**

Louise Parrott-Bates	Chief Executive - Pure Innovations
Rachel Jones	Business Development Manager – Pure Innovations
Chris John	Corporate Services Manager – Pure Innovations
Leah Coyle	Senior Employment Officer – Pure Innovations
Jodie Booth	Supported Internship Tutor – The Manchester College
Julie Hicklin	Lead for Statutory Area – Manchester City Council
Caley Holt	HR Service Delivery Officer – Manchester City Council

#### **Background**

Pure Innovations supports people with disabilities and disadvantaged groups to get into work and access community and leisure activities. The Committee was particularly interested in the supported internship.

The Supported Internship is an employment based course, which gives learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities the opportunity to develop employability skills in a real work place. In 2009 an employment strategy “Valuing Employment Now” (VEN) was introduced to explore what works to help people with moderate to severe learning disabilities realise their aspirations to paid employment.

One of the initiatives that resulted from VEN was the Project called Search Pilot. Pilot Search is a highly structured supported internship model which originated in America in the mid 1990's. Students with learning difficulties gain real transferable work skills through a series of three extended work placements based with a large host employer. The aim of the project is to secure and retain paid employment for

interns, or to ensure that they leave the scheme ready for work and better placed to secure employment.

## **Meeting**

The Committee members met with the programme staff and discussed the terms of reference for the inquiry.

Following the discussion the Committee visited the Pure Innovations classroom situated in Manchester City Hall. Members had the opportunity to carry out some interactive activities with interns and met the current cohort. The intern's job roles were very varied from working in the council offices, the Manchester Football Museum, Manchester City Hospital and the council. The interns demonstrated some of the tasks that they carried out on a daily basis.

In 2010 the Manchester College, Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Pure Innovations secured a place as a pilot site for the first year. Due to the success of the pilot programme and the evolution of new sites and similar models across the country, 'Supported Internships' are now a well established pathway to work for young people with learning difficulties. Over the next 2 years Pure Innovations hopes to increase provision to a greater range of learners and increase access to a greater range of jobs.

Interns accepted onto the year-long programme spend 4 days each week on site undertaking placements, combined with daily classroom sessions. Throughout the year each intern has the chance to complete up to 3 work rotations. During this time, they work alongside and learn from their colleagues and managers. Additional support through class based sessions, progress monitoring, job coaching and pastoral support is provided by the team.

The ultimate goal of the programme is paid employment, and interns may be offered employment at any time during the year. The time spent on the project will prepare interns for future work. If they are unsuccessful in securing employment as a result of the internship, staff continue to work with the interns to apply for suitable jobs with other employers. The support from the staff continues to be provided through the transition into paid employment and beyond.

## **PossAbilities**

### **PossAbilities Representatives**

Rachel Law	Chief Executive
Colette Crookes	Operations Director
Malcom McClean	Business Manager
Karen Kenny	Employment Manager
Marilyn Smith	Finance Director
Natalie Kearns	Activity Co-ordinator
Gary France	Team Leader
Amy Davies	Unit Manager

## **Background**

PossAbilities is a social enterprise co-owned by staff and service users that delivers innovative, integrated and person centred services to people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health issues and other needs.

PossAbilities provides a number of services, in particular, day services, supported living, respite services, dementia services, shared lives, supported employment and community outreach.

## **Meeting**

The Members visited Victoria House and Cherwell Day Centres and the following issues were discussed.

PossAbilities day service, which is provided to over 200 people by 230 staff, aims to significantly improve the quality of life for people with learning disabilities, vulnerable adults, young people and their families and aims to provide a range of flexible service options which meet people's individual needs and are outcome focused with a view to maximising independence. They provide active citizenship and community connections ensuring people have access to valued opportunities such as gaining employment, inclusion in the local community, accessing leisure and learning opportunities and engaging in meaningful activities. They achieve this through a series of projects, namely, Cherwell Farm, Dale Gardening Project, Allotment and Fresh and Fruity. All projects are outcome focused and aim to get people work ready.

PossAbilities also provide respite services at their Harelands House facility. This is focused on young people over the age of 19. The facility has a wide range of specialist services, including emergency respite, short breaks, supported holidays, female only provision and specialist one to one support is also provided to meet individual needs.

PossAbilities provide a supported living and outreach service in a number of locations across the Rochdale Borough. Support packages are provided after an initial

assessment and tailored to individual needs to develop the skills necessary to improve and maintain independence including budgeting, cleaning and cooking. Services users are enabled to manage their own tenancies within the community rather than in a residential care setting which has a positive impact on their quality of life and the community as a whole. The outreach service is in place to aid service users who may face a crisis.

PossAbilities provide a supported lodgings service which supports adults with mild/moderate learning disabilities and vulnerable young people aged 16 plus.

PossAbilities and Rochdale Employment Development Service provide a supported employment service for adults aged between 18 and 65 with a learning disability, a diagnosed mental health condition and/or a physical or sensory impairment. It works with those people who do not fit into any one particular service and without that support would not be able to secure employment, which may include people on the Autism Spectrum, Asperger's Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder or severe Dyslexia.

PossAbilities shared lives programme supports people with severe learning disabilities aged 19 plus. It offers both short term and long term placements and can also be used for day support, as home from hospital care and a stepping stone to securing their own tenancy.

## **Manchester College**

### **Manchester College representatives**

Ian Holburn            Deputy CEO and Finance Director  
Clare Wharton        Head of Supported Learning

### **Background**

The Manchester College offers specialist courses for young people (aged 16-25) with learning difficulties. The learners develop their independence and work skills in a supportive, friendly environment. They can learn and build their confidence at their own pace.

### **Meeting**

Manchester College provide a numbers of courses for young people with learning difficulties from the ages 16-25 years who would be more able and there are 135 users taking part in full time bespoke programmes, offering a course for school



leavers, 16-18 years of age, with moderate learning difficulties for preparation for Independence and work.

Manchester College provide Supported Employment Traineeships with projects in Manchester City Council and Manchester Hospital for young people with moderate learning difficulties which has been in operation for 5 years and the college would like to increase capacity on this programme and aims to do so by getting more local companies involved. The ultimate aim is to integrate these young people into mainstream education programmes in the college.

Manchester College also provide a Steps for Independence Course for young people with Severe Learning Difficulties, over 19 years of age.

Manchester College bids for funding from local authorities which is responsible for funding of education and is also responsible for checking and updating healthcare plans which are now a statutory requirement following the SEND Bill.