

# **Committee for Employment and Learning**

**Inquiry into post Special Educational Need (SEN) Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland.**

## **Young People with Learning Disabilities Event**

**South Eastern Regional College, Bangor, 4 June 2015**

### **Main themes and issues coming from the event**

#### **1. Further Education**

- When asked about careers advice, respondents stated that they had not received any.
- Participants were in a range of Further Education courses.
- All participants wanted, ultimately, to have a job and were hoping to work towards that.
- For some, the jobs they wanted to get were not linked to the training and education courses they were participating in.

#### **2. Community and Leisure Facilities**

- Participants were very interested in their social activities.
- Some only had access to leisure and social activities.
- Some had access to specific evening clubs where they met friends and were supervised.
- They all found the cost of social activities such as the cinema etc. prohibitive.

#### **3. Transport**

- Participants said that family and staff provide most of their transport needs but some did indicate that they were independent travelers on public transport.
- Sometimes there are not enough staff to help with transport and there is an over reliance on family.
- One participant stated that he previously used taxis quite a bit to travel. Occasionally still uses them when staff are unavailable to provide transport. The organisation (Praxis) covers the cost.

#### **4. Day Care**

- Participants stated that the support they receive is good. All participants said that over the working week they were in a variety of different placements at different locations, for different periods of time and with periods at home.

#### **5. Transitions**

- One participant stated that he had not been aware that he was moving from one support provider to another. He was sad when he moved as he did not know the new place and he was coming from somewhere he was familiar with. He went on to state that he now enjoys it.
- In terms of involvement in transition phases, one participant stated that staff helped him get to where he wanted to be.
- A participant stated he was given a number of options when it came to transition, with his parents involved in the conversation and as a result he got to go to his preferred option.
- One participant stated that he was not given an option.

#### **6. Additional Information**

The support workers who accompanied the participants provided some additional information:

- The Praxis Workskills Project has lost funding for its work placement programmes (which provided courses to prepare for work).
- Residential units and people living at home have difficulty accessing information regarding transition periods. There needs to be a method to provide more information that can be accessed via home and home like environments.
- There are issues regarding the shift from child to adult services, especially in regards social workers – on transition, social workers are changed – one young person at the event had three different social workers in two years.
- Skills loss is a problem – once they leave the school environment people with Learning Disabilities can lose skills they've learned unless they are reinforced or used regularly.
- When asked about the benefit of increasing the age of SEN provision, the workers stated that it may be useful, but the whole transitions process needs to be started earlier to better prepare people with Learning Disabilities for the change.