

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 Western Regional College, Enniskillen, 21 May 2015

Main themes and issues coming from the event

1. Further Education

- Special Education schools are excellent in Fermanagh area however, there is a lot of fear around what happens Post 18.
- Individual's in the group mainly stayed in school until age of 19.
- There were apprehensions around leaving friends although they looked forward to new opportunities.
- Lack of course choices either Gardening or College.
- Feeling that there was no choice after school.
- Important to parents that they can have this break during the day while child is safe and enjoying themselves- big emphasis placed on this rather than what the individual wants.
- If not enough numbers for a course then it doesn't go ahead.
- Transport to college / placement is an issue.
- Sometimes have to travel to a different college to do the course you want.
- Access to other programmes not dedicated to learning disability, not the same level of support. Concerns over safety, 1:1 support, more isolating for young person, concerning for parents and individuals felt worried as their parents are worried.
- Individuals were happy during classes and felt supported.
- More choice needed for when course finishes including placements.

2. Increased Opportunities to Work

- Lack of support and no advice or guidance given.
- People are volunteers and no one in the group had paid employment or felt that this would be a realistic aspiration.
- There was an emphasis on respite for parents rather than meaningful opportunities for individuals.

- There was very little contact with Social Workers.
- One individual advised that she would love to have a placement/ job in a beauty salon but no one has asked her before.
- Rural Lift have changed payment (2 days at normal rate & 2 days at double rate). This has major implications for many people in rural areas.
- Employers have a lack of knowledge of Learning Disabilities – employers need support.
- Age prevents getting on further courses.
- Lots of competition for any jobs advertised. Never get interviews so lose interest.
- Want to work but transport an issue – overcrowded buses.
- Falls on parent to take individuals to their activities.
- Very early mornings – late evenings because of transport.
- Not many opportunities – when Grant Aid stops there is no opportunity for full time work.

3. Community & Leisure Facilities

- Individuals enjoyed getting out and participating in leisure activities such as swimming or attending concerts, watch football.
- Transportation is a big issue as unable to get to activities.
- Society's views on disability impacting family decisions on where to go, activities to avail of.
- It is an opportunity to meet friends.
- Leisure facilities are expensive.
- Rely on transport from parent – can't go if parents are not available to transport.
- Sometimes go to cinema if transport is available.

4. Day Care / Day Opportunities

- An individual has work placement for 6 weeks on Thursday afternoon in college. It is a volunteer role supporting new starts in the course she completed the previous year.
Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in college and Thursday and Friday in day care.
- In the summer when college is closed everyone is offered an extra day at day care.
- The day care programme is more relaxed and flexible and there are more trips in the summer.

- More is needed about opportunities available to young people.
- Transportation is a big issue especially for people living in rural areas. Fermanagh Community Transport – issues re: funding £5 per day approx. used to be £3. Have to get up early to get the bus. Parents bring if there is no bus.