



28 March 2014

Committee Clerk
Room 375
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Post 19 SEN Consultation

Please find enclosed our organisations submission on the above consultation.

Yours faithfully

 Linda Wray
Residential Services Manager
On behalf of PCI Advisory Group on Learning Disability

Encs.

Board of Social Witness, Assembly Buildings, Fisherwick Place, Belfast BT1 6DW
Tel: 028 9041 7234 Fax: 028 9041 7303
Email: bsw@presbyterianireland.org

WS/LW/family/disability/letterPost19SEN/280314



BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Presbyterian Board of Social Witness (BSW) is the social care agency for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI).

The Advisory Group on Learning Disability have responsibility for the oversight of projects managed by the BSW; lobbying on behalf of people with a learning disability and for raising the profile within the PCI regarding all aspects of learning disability.

The BSW currently manages the following projects for people with a learning disability:

Aaron House, Dundonald – a 16 bed residential care facility for adults with a profound learning disability, 14 beds are permanent and 2 are for providing respite.

Aaron House Day Care facility for up to 9 people with a profound learning disability who live in the community with the families.

Willow Brook, Coleraine – a supported living scheme for 9 tenants with a learning disability. It consists of 3x1 person bungalows and 2x3 person bungalows.

All these projects are registered with the RQIA.

We also advise ministers and congregations on the integration of people with a learning disability into congregational life including the provision of special needs youth groups etc.

SUBMISSION

1. There is a lack of choice and opportunities for those with a learning disability on leaving full-time schooling. People are not able to get 5 day a week placements and there are only places for people with complex medical problems/profound learning disability or serious behavioural problems.
2. There are also issues with transport which leads to shorter times at the adult centre or families transporting them to work placements which can intrude on their own employment.

Parents are having to find employment placements for sons/daughters and they are often on an ad-hoc basis.

3. There is an expectation that the young adults will go to college but there is often no follow through re: college work.

There are major concerns regarding the transfer from children to adult services – change of social workers and staff in the adult centre who don't know the individual or their family. Families have built up trust with school staff and that is then lost.

Individuals are often placed in inappropriate job placements by a Job Coach and then they fail.

The lack of "Contract Work" in Adult Centres has been detrimental to developing work training skills for the young person with a learning disability.

4. There is evidence of good practice for Post 19 people through Cafes/Catering and Horticultural projects but again placements are not 5 day placements have parents leave work or reduce working hours to look after son/daughter.
5. Practices and provision varies throughout geographical regions. With the integration of children with SEN into the normal school; MLD schools is now an SLD school.

People often don't know about projects/services available.

Five day a week placements are required.

Additional funding is required to cope with the numbers leaving special school each year – funding for both supported employment and in Adult Centres.

The young person with a learning disability can often be socially isolated in a work placement. They do not make "friends" with work colleagues to socialise with.