

Getting a job, getting a life and getting it right

**Six ways to support young
disabled people into work**

By Nicola Gitsham, Helen Sanderson and Linda Jordan
with Jaimee Lewis and Freya El Baz



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About the writing of this book

Linda Jordan and Nicola Gitsham were joint programme managers for the cross-government Getting a Life (GAL) programme, which ran from April 2008 to March 2011. This book has been written in their personal capacity and not as Department of Health employees. Helen Sanderson and HSA worked with Linda and Nicola on the GAL programme. Jaimee is a communication advisor and co-author with Helen on *A Practical Guide to Delivering Personalisation: Person-centred Practice in Health and Social Care*¹. Freya is a freelance writer who helped edit material for this book.

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About the Getting a Life programme

GAL was a three year, cross-government programme commissioned in 2008 as part of the Valuing People Now strategy. It aimed to drive the change needed so more young disabled people could access paid work on leaving education. Twelve areas across England worked with 30 young people aged between 14 and 25, alongside their families and partners, to demonstrate the steps needed to help more achieve fulfilling and independent lives. Each area created employment pathways, based on evidence from research and the experiences of the young people and their families involved in the project. These pathways have resulted in better value for money for councils, improved outcomes and better experiences for young people and their families.

Importantly, many of the approaches that were developed through the work of the Valuing People Now and GAL could be applied to other groups of disabled people far removed from the labour

market, such as people with serious mental health conditions (7.9%² of whom are in work) or those with autism (the National Autistic Society found that only 15% are in full-time paid work).

About Helen Sanderson Associates (HSA)

HSA is an international development and training team, passionate about using person-centred practices to achieve social change. Helen Sanderson was the Department of Health's expert advisor on person-centred approaches and has authored the government guidance for the Putting People First programme called Personalisation through Person-Centred Planning.

HSA developed person-centred transition reviews, which were rolled out in England by the Valuing People Support Team and were a key part of the GAL Programme. Helen developed the Working Together for Change Process which was used in GAL to listen to the experiences of young people and families to inform change.

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Introduction - starting with a vision of what is possible

Ben, 36, has spent most of his life in specialist services. He attended a special school from the age of four, moved to an independent specialist college at 18 and then into residential care at 20. Ben has a severe learning disability and epilepsy. He finds it difficult to communicate and presents some behaviour that others find challenging.

In 2007, Ben moved into a single occupancy bungalow as part of a programme that enabled people to move from residential care to their own tenanted accommodation. Through person-centred planning, Ben demonstrated his happiness with his new living environment and began to show a keen interest in finding paid work.

The people working with Ben started to think about how they could re-structure his support package to help him gain paid employment. The staff had a good knowledge of Ben's skills and preferences; he preferred working on a one-to-one basis, avoiding crowds, and liked to work outside on tasks involving lots of physical activity.

The employment service approached employers and found three who were willing to 'job-carve' in order to create employment for Ben. Support staff who already knew Ben well, helped induct him into each job.

Ben has now been in paid employment since July 2010. His first job was three hours a week. He then started his second job, working three hours a week throughout August, and in September, began working a 10 hour week. He is working as a gardener and his tasks include mowing, weeding, planting and digging. He earns above the minimum wage, and Linkage is now working with Ben to sort out his finances with his new earned income and his benefit entitlement.

For Ben, the impact on his life of moving into his bungalow and into work has been incredibly significant. As a result of the changes to his life, his challenging behaviour has reduced

in frequency, his epilepsy appears more controlled and his relationship with others has improved. He appears happier, more relaxed, more able and willing to communicate and more in charge of his life.

Rex G. Richardson, Director of Care Services for Linkage says:

“Ben’s success has led to a general reappraisal of the expectations we hold for all the people for whom we provide services. Opportunities in employment can be found for persons with the most complex difficulties. We are delighted for Ben in having a job, and proud of our relationship with his employers.”

Ben’s sister says: **“The progress he has made has been quite remarkable. Moving into his one bedroom bungalow has built his self-esteem beyond recognition. Now he has moved into paid employment with support from the staff. You can see how proud he is of this achievement and a spin off is that his challenging behaviour has reduced. I believe he is much happier and fulfilled.”**



Ben is in the minority. Currently, just 6.4% of adults with learning disabilities in England receiving social care support are reported to be in paid employment³. Because so few people with learning disabilities are in work, positive images of people with learning disabilities working in ordinary community workplaces are few and far between.

Now consider Richard's story

Richard, a young man with autism, went to a special school and stayed there from sixth form until he was 19. He had a personal budget in his last year at school. He pooled it with some of his friends and together they used their funds to gain confidence in the local community and make friends.

Richard's mum thought personal budgets were great and were helping him to gain his independence, make friends and be part of his local community. Richard's Mum has high aspirations for what Richard can achieve with his life. She believes that he has many skills and attributes to offer employers. So when it came to the time for Richard to prepare to leave his special school, they visited the local college to see how they could help. Richard's mum was disappointed to learn that the only course they would offer him was a life skills course. Richard and his mum believed this would simply repeat the things he had been doing at sixth form college and not result in a paid job.

Undeterred, she spoke to other parents and learnt that there was a vocational residential college several counties away. Richard's mum desperately wants him to leave college and get a job. Ideally Richard and his mum would have liked him to be able to learn vocational skills and be supported into employment in his local area. This would have helped him build on friendships and the links he was making within his community.

Richard's experience is more common. Very few young disabled people leave school with a job. Current figures suggest that only 6.4%⁴ of people with learning disabilities who receive social care assistance services are in employment. Compare that to an employment rate of 77% amongst the able-bodied population and 46% amongst disabled people.⁵

Having paid work is a crucial part of leading a fulfilling life and contributing to society. Evidence from work-related programmes like Valuing People Now's Getting A Life (GAL) programme and Jobs First suggest that when people with learning disabilities and families see their peers in employment they want, and begin to aspire, to do the same. Similar messages are coming from elsewhere. The 2011 Sayce Review states that work is positive for health and well-being, core to independent living and that there should be more support in helping disabled people work in any role, in any sector:

“Again and again disabled people – especially young disabled people – said they wanted the same chance of getting the full range of roles in the economy as everyone else, in every sector from hairdressing to engineering, from apprenticeships to work experience, from self-employment to mutuals and co-operatives, from employee to director.”⁶

The Government's SEN consultation Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability sets out an aspiration that by 2015, disabled young people will have access to better quality vocational and work-related learning options and good opportunities and support to get and keep a job⁷. But what does it take to help young people with severe learning disabilities actually get a job?

Through our work with young disabled people, their families, adults' and childrens' services, education authorities, health services and employment agencies across England, we have learnt it is essential to start planning early, to expect more and to aim high so everyone understands the benefits of paid employment.

Drawing on evidence-based research and extensive experience of the government's Valuing People Now strategy, the GAL programme and in developing person-centred transition plans and reviews, we will use this book to show that more young disabled people can get jobs if we:

- 1 **Expect more and aim higher.** Young disabled people, their families and everyone who works with them, including employers, need to know it is positive and possible to get a job. Everyone must know what it takes to get jobs for people furthest away from the employment market. This can be done by showing positive images and sharing evidence-based practice that will increase awareness about the benefits of employment for young people, families, local authorities and wider society.⁸
- 2 **Embed person-centred transition reviews and plans within schools and colleges.** Young people need support to make decisions about life and getting a job. From Year 9, ensure that each individual has a person-centred transition review and plan with a specific focus on employment. Person-centred reviews in Years 9, 10 and 11 need to build into a support plan that includes a focus on employment.
- 3 **Develop a personalised curriculum and provide meaningful work experience for young people with learning disabilities.** Ensure there is an employment focus throughout school and college that supports work aspirations. Research shows that work experience is essential for raising aspirations and expectations of young people with learning disabilities.⁹ Supported employment agencies need to be available to help young people plan for employment and support successful work experience in community based settings.
- 4 **Invest in personal and individual budgets for young people.** Ensure that personal budgets can be used alongside other funding streams, such as education or employment support. Getting a job should be the first focus, so flexibility in using the budgets on services like job coaching and supported employment is important. Agencies need to plan early on how they will bring these funding streams together, so young people with learning disabilities can get a job and a life.
- 5 **Develop the market to offer a wide range of post-16 options that lead to equal life outcomes, including employment.** These options should help young people to have more choice and control over their lives, get jobs, achieve independent living and community inclusion rather than simply follow traditional routes of college courses and day centres. Good

local options should be developed that increase outcomes and reduce costs to the system. Supported employment and job coaching needs to be available to all young people furthest away from the employment market.

- 6 Work Together for Change: Learn together about what works and what gets in the way.** Keep asking young people and families what is working and not working about the system to get young people into work, and act on what you find. Co-develop with families and young people.

“Getting a job, getting a life and getting it right: Six ways to support young disabled people into work” will provide the evidence needed on how to do it for everyone concerned about young people getting into paid work. In section one we will look at barriers to employment that currently exist and the important reasons why getting a job means getting a life. In section two, we will set out in more detail our top six ways for getting young disabled people into work and how they can make a difference to the outcomes they experience. We’ll also look at the impact this can have on local authorities, employers and wider society.

We hope this book will inspire and motivate the agencies that support young disabled people and their families that it is positive and possible to get – and keep – a job. Above all else, we must commit to increasing the expectations of everyone involved that this is the case. Only then can we ensure more young disabled people go on to lead fulfilling and independent lives.

**All these people
have paid jobs**

**AND HE WANTS ONE
WHEN HE GROWS UP**

www.aspirationsforlife.org
*Raising work aspirations for children
and young people with learning disabilities*

Photography by Richard Lamplough and Dawn Ruth
Illustration and design by Richard Lamplough.

Section One **How getting a job means getting a life**

“If real disability equality is to be achieved, work needs no longer to be seen as optional for most people with severe learning disabilities. The default must be that everyone will have the chance to get a job. But there should be choice about what work people do, just as for non-disabled people.”

Valuing Employment Now, Department of Health, 2009

In this section we'll talk about some of the barriers young disabled people have experienced when it comes to finding employment, and why we think it's essential the important work in this area continues in the post Valuing People Now era.

Chapter 1

The barriers: what has stopped young disabled people from getting a job?

Matthew's story

Matthew, 21, attended a special school since he was two, going through to residential college where he finished in July 2010. He has aspired to working in an office since he was 18, when he first started to develop a person-centred plan. Despite these aspirations, his work experience at school was within the school's grounds and not linked to his career goals.

At college, Matthew's planning did not include clear actions to develop his career, although he did two

work experience placements in the college offices at the request of his family. During college holidays, Matthew's family arranged for him to do some extra work experience supported by the local supported employment service. In his second year at college, Matthew asked if he could get a Saturday job, and a few months before he left, he got an unpaid Saturday job in a nearby cinema.

When he left school Matthew moved into a new house close to where his family were living, with a housemate he chose. He now uses his personal budget to employ support workers and is enjoying doing the things he wants with his spare time.

From doing unpaid work experience in McDonald's (a job he did not originally want), and from using his individual budget to pay for PA support, Matthew is now taking part in Project Search, which he is enjoying. He would like to get a paid job after that.

Matthew and his family say "If we knew then what we know now, the following would have happened":

- He would have done work experience while he was still at school to help him think about work earlier.
- His career plan would have set out clear actions about how he would be supported into work.
- He would have left school after two years in the sixth form with his individual budget in place so that he could employ a job coach to get him a job.

The cost of Matthew's education from the age of 18 to 21 (a total of three years), was £30k for Year 1

and £43k for Years 2 and 3. In addition, he has had a personal budget of £5k a year. If Matthew had had a personal budget, he could have employed a job coach and would almost certainly be in paid employment now.



Why are there so few young people leaving school without a job?

Experience from the GAL programme and other recent research findings reveal a number of barriers to young disabled people finding work upon leaving school.

The current emphasis on giving disabled people more choice and control, through the personalisation agenda, has not been enough to ensure the improved life outcomes that can be gained through employment. Greater emphasis on helping young people to find somewhere to live, rather than somewhere to work; alongside a culture across services and amongst families of low aspirations and low expectations, have led to these barriers standing in the way of young disabled people leading truly independent lives.

In this chapter we will explore some of the barriers including:

- 1 Why personalisation has not led to enough job outcomes.
- 2 How other choices about lifestyle can limit employment opportunities.
- 3 The lack of an employment focus in person-centred transition planning.
- 4 The culture of low expectations and low aspirations that lead to a presumption that employment is neither positive nor possible for people with learning disabilities.
- 5 People don't know what works or what helps people to get a job.
- 6 Education is not focused on getting a job and a life for people who have learning disabilities.
- 7 There is a lack of coordination and employment expertise to get a job.
- 8 Families and young people are treated as recipients, not partners.

1 Personalisation has not led to enough job outcomes

Matthew's story shows that even when a young person has had a positive experience of person-centred transition planning and personal budgets, finding a job and a career can often be overlooked.

Recent research supports the key messages that Matthew's experience highlights. The first evaluation of individual budgets pilot, which ran from 2006–2008¹⁰ indicated that few people were using individual budgets for employment support, and that many sites were experiencing difficulties in aligning different funding streams with social care to achieve jobs.

The In Control Third Phase Report¹¹ describes evaluations of personal budgets using the Personalisation Outcomes Evaluation Tool (POET). The report particularly focuses on how the majority of people reported increased satisfaction levels and improved life outcomes in a number of areas except for employment. This

finding was reinforced in a recent paper published as part of the Putting People First programme: Personal Budgets – Checking the Results,¹² that cites an example of one local authority that, despite a strong reputation for implementing personalisation, was still unable to increase employment outcomes for young people:

“In general the picture looked positive, with most people reporting that personal budgets had made a positive impact on their lives. But the process also threw up challenges, such as the relatively very low impact self-directed support was having on younger people’s ability to enter or retain paid employment.”

Given these evaluations, it seems unlikely that person-centred transition planning or personalisation alone will increase the number of people with learning disabilities in full-time employment.

2 Other choices about lifestyle can limit opportunities for employment

Choices about lifestyle are inextricably linked to employment, and decisions need to be made with an awareness of the impact they may have on the various aspects of our lives. For example, where you decide to live can have a big impact (both positive and negative) on your employment prospects. You are more likely to be successful in finding employment if you choose housing you can afford, in an area that has good transport links and where there are informal supports such as friends or community members who are willing to support your transition into work.

Conversely, some housing options such as residential care can make it difficult for people to move into paid employment, and be better off in work. People living in residential care homes who have paid jobs may have to pay towards their care, although local authorities can waive charges – but this is at their discretion.

Evidence from the GAL programme suggests that local authorities place greater emphasis during transition on where someone is going to live than on the job they will do, which means that

housing decisions are not made with the aim of supporting or improving the person's employment opportunities. Decisions about employment are often secondary to those made about housing, which has left many local agencies trying to undo earlier decisions about housing, in order to increase the person's employment opportunities.

About Jobs First

The Jobs First project is part of the work done on employment by the Valuing People Now team, alongside the GAL programme. It shows how people with a moderate or severe learning disability can use their social care personal budget alongside other funding streams such as education budgets, Access to Work, and in some instances, Work Choice, to buy support in order to get and keep a job.

The individuals taking part in Jobs First begin with an employment-focused review, which considers how they are currently spending their days and how they could change this to prioritise employment. This approach frees up funding from other activities to spend on employment support. Alongside additional funding streams such as Access to Work, individuals can access sufficient funding to be supported into sustained work.

Seven demonstration sites are working with 20 individuals each to set up this approach, and have agreed that support plans for the individuals involved in the project will not be approved unless they prioritise employment goals.

Three of these sites are co-located with the GAL programme¹³ to look in-depth at personalisation in transition. Four sites are co-located with Right to

Control,¹⁴ a project led by the Office for Disability Issues that gives people in seven test areas a legal right to the support they receive from six different sources and decide how best to use the funding to meet their needs.¹⁵

The Valuing People Now demonstration sites have confirmed that the overall majority of current service models do not lead to jobs and fulfilling lives for people with learning disabilities.¹⁶ This, in addition to the shrinking of local authority budgets, creates an urgent need to make changes to local commissioning to ensure all funding streams are used and focused on what works.

3 Lack of an employment focus in person-centred transition planning

For most young people, the period we describe as transition (from 14 to 25 years old) is an exciting time. Young people start to have more choice and control over their lives, make new friends, try out new experiences, and think about what they want to do with their lives, including jobs and careers. Most young people will start work or begin a course that can help them achieve the career they want, and move out of home and begin to develop adult relationships. The transition period is also one of change in the lives of parents and families, who start to have more time to themselves and are able to think about what the future and increased freedom can offer them.

These opportunities are rarely replicated for young people with learning disabilities and their families. Services tend to refer to transition as a period when young people move from children's to adult services. Young people with learning disabilities and their families tell us that there are a lot of meetings and talks between professionals during this time but that nothing really concrete materialises.

As Laura's story suggests, transition can be a stressful and confusing time for families.

Laura's story

“When I was at school I never thought about the future. Like most young people I never really worried about what would happen after I left school. I do remember lots of meetings, but if I am honest, looking back now, I don't think they really helped. Why? Because nothing ever happened.

At one meeting they suggested working in Asda but that was all that happened...no work experience, no filling in job application forms. It was a lot of hot air. The next step in the system's master plan for me was college; no one asked me or told me what course I would be doing – they kept that a secret. No career planning for me; I was just killing time till I was moved onto the next step in the system's master plan. After 3 years I said no more I want out, so I left.”

The Centre for Welfare Reform's Personalised Transition paper¹⁷ suggests a number of reasons for this, stating that families face a number of specific problems:

- They have to end a relationship with three different children's services (health, social care and school) and begin a totally new relationship with three corresponding adult services – continuity is rare and hard to achieve.
- Meaningful advice about funding and support after school is difficult to provide. Any entitlements are obscure and only become clear long after the young person has left school and entered the next stage of life. This makes planning next to impossible.
- In order to facilitate joint planning and greater continuity, a series of bureaucratic steps are put in place to ensure that all the different professionals talk to each other and prepare for the 'transition', but this has the effect of crowding out the voices of the young person and their families, and obstructs the overall aim and philosophy at the core of person-centred care.

All of this takes place in a culture of low expectations and aspirations for young people with learning disabilities in terms of citizenship and life chances. Few transition plans are outcome-focused and they tend to look to the next course or direct destination rather than considering what an individual actually wants to do with their life. The following quotes are from parents' experiences of what can often be a distressing time:

“All through my child’s life it has been about problems and things she can’t do and I thought that all of the services were supposed to be there to be helpful. At transition it finally dawned on me that everything has been about her not leading an ordinary life and I wonder what all of the specialist services are actually for. I want her to have a job, a boyfriend and a good social life and eventually to live in her own place.” Carol

“I had never dared think about work for my son. When we were asked about his future at school reviews it was always about whether he was staying at school another year or moving on to college. It was felt that he wasn’t mature enough for work experience.” Adarsh

The paper *Aiming High for Disabled Children*,¹⁸ highlighted the need to improve and coordinate services for young disabled people in transition to adult life. The National Transition Support programme was set up to raise standards of transition in all local areas.

Published by the Department of Health in 2008, the paper *Transition: Moving on Well*,¹⁹ provided a ‘good practice’ guidance on transition, and offered strategies for improving the process. Many local areas have multi-agency transition groups that develop and oversee local strategies and attempt to make sense of the journey.

However, although there has been progress,²⁰ we are a long way from people with learning disabilities leaving school or college and experiencing equal life chances – particularly in respect of employment, housing, health and friendship and community.

Our experience in the GAL programme and in our work on developing person-centred transition plans and reviews, has shown that employment can be overlooked when young people are planning for their lives as adults, even where person-centred transition planning and personal budgets are in place. Planning needs to start early if young people are to move into paid employment when they leave school or college.

We know that employment can have a positive impact on other areas of life, so it is important that when young people need to make decisions about their lives, they are encouraged to do so within the context of employment, and how this relates to decisions about housing and leisure time.

4 Low expectations and lack of aspirations lead to the presumption that employment is neither positive nor possible for people with learning disabilities

Sam's story

Sam is really good at photography. He has just won an award for some of his photographs. His brother works in the photography industry and Sam would like to do the same. Sam's mum knew that getting a job could be more difficult for Sam than for his brother, but felt that there must be roles he could play in the industry. Sam was looking forward to talking about this at his transition review, aged 15, but was shocked by the response he received to his ideas. Sam's mum says:

“I felt excited about going to Sam's transition review as I was looking forward to planning his future with

him. However I found the whole experience very upsetting. When I raised the idea of finding a job that Sam could do with his interests and skills in photography, I was told we needed to be “realistic”. The Connexions worker said that Sam might be able to do that as a hobby but not as a job. They offered Sam a place at the further education college doing life skills. I felt very frustrated, as these are things he has done in school. Surely there is something he can do in this line of business?”

One of the biggest challenges facing young people and their families is the culture of low expectations and aspirations that paid employment is positive and possible for people with learning disabilities. These negative assumptions are widespread and can be held by people with learning disabilities, families, people who work with them, commissioners and society as a whole. There is also a distinct lack of understanding about what type of support is needed to help people with learning disabilities enter paid employment. Culturally, there is a lack of awareness of what works and this results in money being invested in projects and courses that further alienate disabled people from employment. A radical cultural shift is required if society is to benefit from the many skills and attributes people with learning disabilities can bring to businesses and communities.

Low expectations begin at birth with the way that families are informed that their child has a learning disability. A Fair Start: A Personalised Pathway for disabled children and their families²¹ sets out how approaches to disabled families and their children are “rooted within a culture encouraging dependency”, which disempowers families and places the control with the professionals:

“At the point of their child’s diagnosis parents are told they are not on their own as there are services there to help them. They are generally told they will have to meet restrictive and opaque eligibility criteria to access those services... It can be hard

for parents to negotiate their way through each day and any offer of support feels like a life-line. Of course many continue to ask for traditional services – it is often the only help they have been offered. And when the demands of family life become too much again, they feel they need more of the same because it is all they have known.”

Ofsted's review of SEN and Disability reiterates this view, setting out how families consulted in the review felt that 'an adversarial approach' was often established, forcing them to argue for formal recognition of a child's needs in order to get the resources or support they needed.²²

This focus on what a child cannot do rather than on what they can do in order to get support, reduces expectations and leads to confusion when later, supported employment services start to focus on a young person's skills and abilities for work.

During the course of the GAL programme, professionals often reported that families were reluctant to allow their sons or daughters to work. However, although some families thought that employment was neither positive nor possible – due to previous negative experiences – and had anxieties about welfare benefits and the safety of their son or daughter, many families did have high aspirations. GAL research found that employment-related goals had begun to feature more commonly in people's person-centred reviews.²³

Throughout the course of the GAL leadership programmes, many young people talked about their hopes and dreams for the future and the kinds of jobs they would love to do. The families also said that they really wanted their sons and daughters to have good lives, but told us that they had no idea that employment was possible or that they would be able to get the kind of support that would enable it to happen.

One mum of a young person involved in GAL said:

“I want the same for my Jack as I want for my other 2 boys; to get a job, have friends, get a girlfriend and

settle down – I just have no faith that the services can help me.”

Another factor limiting people’s aspirations is that many do not believe that people with learning disabilities will be better off in work or that employers are willing to employ them. An article published by the Valuing People Now employment team in the Tizard Learning Disability Review,²⁴ sets out how these perceived barriers to employment have been overcome in the seven Jobs First demonstration sites. Setting out the argument that people are better off in work than on welfare benefits, the article re-states the government’s view that, “where the amount by which individuals would be financially better off in work is small, the answer – in our view – is to increase the number of hours worked, rather than advise people against employment.”²⁵

The work across the Valuing People demonstration sites has also shown that fears about employer prejudices are often unfounded: “once employers are introduced to how people with learning disabilities could benefit their business (often a gap) and connected to high quality employment support (also a gap), many will respond positively to recruiting this group”. NORSE, a commercial services company is a good example of this. They reported that Project Search has saved them £5,500 per year in recruitment costs and £16,000 per year in overtime payments.

The Aspirations for Life campaign,²⁶ which was funded by the Department for Education under the Valuing Employment Now strategy, was set up to work with children and families to address this issue and raise aspirations and expectations of employment for people with learning disabilities. The project spoke with families about their experiences and received feedback that its work had been received positively:

“We need more positive stories about adults with learning disabilities getting work.” A parent involved in the Aspirations for Life campaign

“I really want my daughter to have a full life but never thought it could include work! It’s so good to know about the campaign and that people are out there to help.” A parent involved in the Aspirations for Life campaign

5 Many people don’t know what works or what helps people get jobs

Work in the GAL sites has shown that many people do not know the evidence base of what helps young people with learning disabilities get into paid employment and what needs to happen during the period of statutory transition.

6 Education is not focused on getting a job and a life for people who have learning disabilities

The outcomes of the present education system are undeniably poor for the majority of young people with learning disabilities. Very few go into employment and many young people and families feel that the current system does not help them to move into adulthood with a good plan of how to keep healthy, how to have a good social life and knowing what is possible with regards to successful independent living.

Even in the cases where young people have developed good skills for employment and have a good support network, the education system does not usually work with supported employment services and others to help young people to get a job. Many of the young people involved with GAL said that they do not feel sufficiently equipped for work when they leave school or college. They have often gained qualifications that are not going to enhance their chances of getting a job. One of the main reasons for this is that people with learning disabilities find it difficult to transfer learning from one environment to another. Research demonstrates that the ‘place and train’ approach used in Supported Employment is the most effective way to support people with learning disabilities into paid employment.²⁷

Greater emphasis on learning in the workplace does seem to play a significant role in getting young people with learning disabilities

into the workplace, but only if adequate work-based support and assessment can also be provided. Foundation Learning (FL) was originally set up to help offer more opportunities for work-based qualification with support, but the ultimate implementation has been criticised for being flawed compared with well-funded early pilots.²⁸ It is too early to determine whether the full implementation of FL will have any impact on the employment of people with learning disabilities.

Jason's story highlights the importance for young people to have access – as soon as possible – to supported employment:

Jason's Story

Jason, 31, works as a self-employed photographer. He has severe learning disabilities, and significant dysphasia. He attended a mainstream secondary school, and at 16 transferred to the local sixth form college to start a media studies course, where he became very interested in photography. He left college without a plan about what he would do next. Soon after, he became involved with social services and they suggested that he join a local five-days-a-week gardening project. Jason did this for three years, and while he initially enjoyed it, it became clear that it was not something he wanted to do.

Jason is a motivated, sociable, active young man and he and his family made sure that he has had a full and interesting life. But they have struggled to be taken seriously when they expressed an interest in Jason's employment. There was no expectation through his education that he would work, and when he first had a community care assessment, work was not mentioned. He received direct payments from the age of 24, for 17 hours per week. He used this to employ a fantastic personal assistant (PA) who made sure he had a good social life. At this time, Jason also became

involved with the local supported employment service, but was only ever supported to achieve two hours' work a week – despite the efforts of his family for this to increase. Jason's family had helped him to develop a person-centred plan, and realised that they needed to organise employment for him by themselves. Through a family friend, he started to work as a carpet fitter's assistant, which he did for a year.

Jason continued his interest in photography, and a chance meeting with a film maker, web designer and photographer led to him doing a short period of work experience. This went so well that the company started to commission him in his own right. Jason had recently employed a new PA, and by coincidence she had a photography degree and was able to provide appropriate support for him in his new career.

Jason's mother feels that if he and his family had been taken seriously much earlier, he could have developed his successful career in photography a while ago. He could have gone into employment at 19, rather than wait until he was 30. He would not only have been doing something that he really loved, but it also would have resulted in using the resources for support much more effectively and economically, for example, the cost of the gardening project for three years would have been saved. His mother says:

“We are so proud of Jason's career, and the success he is having. Our dream is that all young people with learning disabilities can get their dream job, and that the system expects this to be normal.”

Ofsted's review of SEN and disability underlines the issue of access to and quality of provision, stating that "the assessment of students for pre-entry and entry level courses was more variable than for others, frequently leading to less effective specialist support". In particular, post-16 opportunities were limited, with inspectors finding there to be "few courses available for young people with the lowest levels of attainment."²⁹

To help remedy some of these issues, the report suggested that the role of the local authority in co-ordinating educational support was crucial:

"Where educational support for children and young people was most effective, the local authority had taken a strategic and coordinating role to ensure that a wide range of needs could be met effectively, right through to post-16 education."

The funding for certain work-based programmes is often related to an expectation of achievement of an accredited level within a specific time frame. Disabled young people and adults may take longer than the 'expected' time, so employers and training organisations are often reluctant to make commitments, finding it more advantageous to accept people who are more able to achieve the desired results within the prescribed time. The review highlighted a concern that the funding agreed for some programmes would be sufficient only for three days each week, even when the Learning Disability assessment (S139a) suggested a possible 'package' of learning for a full week.

A number of initiatives were funded by the Learning and Skills Council as part of the Learning for Living and Work strategy.³⁰ The Ofsted review visited the nine Learning and Skills regions and found that projects aimed at employment for young people with learning disabilities had been funded. However, such projects were often short term and could not be funded from established and permanent budgets.

Emma's story further illustrates some of the barriers faced by young disabled people trying to gain employment.

Emma's story

Emma is in her final year at a residential college. Her mum Rose has high aspirations for her future but does not feel that the education system has equipped her well for employment. She says:

“The planning at school was ok but the onus was on me to look at, and find out about everything. We weren't given a lot of information or guidance. When Emma was 14, we were told to start thinking about after school. At that stage, I could not imagine her leaving home. We knew she was staying at school for the sixth form and I was unimpressed with the local further education college because it had a poor reputation, and when I was a student there, the disabled students were segregated. So I decided Emma would not go there. We went to a specialist residential college and we were told about lots of things. We did not get a good feel about it but it was convenient and we liked the idea of a 24-hour curriculum. I saw it as her doing her 'university years' like her sister had done.

Emma has got better at socialising and she has learned to deal with her tablets and she enjoys being independent. However, the social opportunities at college have all been structured, with very little choice. For example, Emma really likes the library but she hasn't been able to use it, even though it is close to where she is. The house where she lives is also close to the local gym but the young people don't seem to be able to go there at the weekend. Everything that happens seems to be short lived and the college don't tap into what the young people want to do. They go shopping in a group and if one has no money, none of them can buy things.”

Rose goes on to say: “I have not been very satisfied with the residential college. The main problem is the lack of communication. There is a lack of extra-curricular activities and a lack of continuity; this year Emma had a new house with new tutors and a different set of young people with limited opportunities to meet up with her previous friends.

The thing that really wound us up was being told that we could not visit without a prior arrangement. They need a big shake-up – not offer just a 9.00–3.00pm timetable – and more should be available. They should ask the young people what they want to do.

When Emma leaves college she will live in a house we are arranging but she would be equally happy to come back home. She would love to do something with drama but nothing has come of it. College has tried to find her something but drawn a blank. She is helping the head of her old school in assemblies and she is pleased about that but that is something I arranged. According to the head teacher, it is not likely to lead to a paid job.

Ultimately, I would like her to work but it won't come quickly. I don't think anything she has learned at college she could take with her into a job. I don't know where I would get help with her getting a job. I am hoping that the next place she goes will give her proper training for work.”

7 There is a lack of co-ordination and employment expertise to get a job

The Department of Education's Green Paper, Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and

disability, cites a lack of effective multi-agency working as a barrier to good support throughout childhood and during transition. It states that families often feel that they are “forced to negotiate each bit of their support separately.”³¹

This finding has been discovered as a result of research evidence^{32,33,34} along with the evidence collected from the Valuing People Now person-centred reviews programme,³⁵ the transition support programme and from the GAL programme.³⁶

There are a number of agencies that need to work together to support young people with learning disabilities into employment. These include:

- Schools.
- Colleges.
- Children’s centres.
- Children’s services (education, health and social care).
- Adult social care (including personalisation lead, commissioners and service heads).
- 14 – 19 commissioners.
- Connexions.
- Supported employment agencies.
- Jobcentre Plus.
- User-led organisations and parents groups.
- Employers.

Every agency needs to know that employment is positive and possible, and that it is what really helps people go into successful paid employment. They also need to know what they need to do to create local employment pathways for young people with learning disabilities.

The GAL demonstration sites established multi-agency project boards that carried out in-depth analyses of the local system and how well it supports young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition into adulthood. This activity identified that a

number of processes are in place and that each is governed by different legislation, requirements and strategies and that without exceptionally strong leadership, it is very difficult for people to work holistically and focus on life outcomes.

This is especially true of the assessment process. Typically, young people usually have at least five assessments as part of the statutory SEN framework. In addition, they have a community care assessment, possibly additional psychological assessments and if they are 'looked after', have mental health needs or are eligible for continuing health care, a number of other assessments. Many young people and families have said that having had all of these assessments, the process then starts all over again as they move into adult services and it feels like all of the information gathered over the years is not taken into account. Lots of different assessments are then undertaken. One mother says:

“George has severe autism, learning disabilities and challenging behaviour and has been known to the local health and education systems since he was a baby. He has had a statement since he was three years old, many assessments over the years and has received high levels of support. Despite all of this, there has never really been a coherent focus on what it is all for and certainly not on George getting a job when he leaves school. He is now 18 and has had to start a whole load of new assessments – all of which seem totally unnecessary. The psychologist and social worker from adult services said that they have to do assessments to check that George has a learning disability! This seems such a waste of time and resources for no purpose. George should have had one plan throughout his life – everyone should have contributed to it and worked from it.”

Analysis of the pathway for young people with learning disabilities in the GAL demonstration sites identified that often no one was focused on employment as an outcome. Generally no one was responsible for supporting a young person to develop a career plan and ensuring that the young person received the necessary support along the way.

8 Families and young people are treated as recipients, not partners

Michael's story

Michael has just turned 19 and is about to start a work placement organised and supported by a local supported employment agency. He is using an individual budget to pay a local specialist college to help him prepare for the work placement. Michael's family now feel that the future is much more positive for him.

Michael has always wanted to work and has talked about it since he was young. He consistently said he wanted to work in a games shop or Woolworths. His parents have also always had high expectations that Michael should work as an adult. They have always talked about it at home in the same way that they have with Michael's sister, who is now at university.

However, Michael's family feels that services have let them down and they are very disappointed with his experience of transition. Michael's dad says that he often feels that the current system is a "joke", and that professionals have not always treated the family with respect; they have cancelled appointments, turned up late or have made promises that they have broken. Their experience of planning, information sharing and professionals' expectations has been poor.

Although Michael started his education in a mainstream school, the staff did not have the skills to adequately include and support him, and after two years he transferred to a special school. Michael was not happy at the new school and he did not do well there. He did not have a transition plan and when he was 16, he moved to a specialist college, where he attended as a day student for two years.

He enjoyed his time at the specialist college and feels that he learned a lot. Although he had work experience, there was no plan for him to get a job when he left, so he went to the local further education college to do a life skills course. Michael was only at this college for a very short time when he ran away. He was found three miles away; his parents were very concerned about his safety and so he left the college.

Since getting involved in the GAL project, Michael's family feel that they have had better information and are more positive about Michael getting the support he needs to plan for and secure a paid job. His family says that schools and colleges need to have higher expectations for young people with disabilities. They should know how to include and support young people with disabilities, especially those with complex disabilities, autism and severe learning disabilities, for a future in work.

Many young people and their families have said that the current SEN, social care and health services are not person-centred enough and do not take account of the individual's aspirations. Children are directed towards specialist services based on a 'professional diagnosis' rather than what is important to them now and in the future. The strategic planning and commissioning of services rarely takes account of what young people and families

say that they want. In the GAL demonstration sites, the young people have told us that they want to work and have specified what jobs they want.

The SEN and Disability Green Paper recognises that the system needs to improve the way that services work with families and that “families feel they have to battle for the support they need, where they are passed from pillar to post, and where bureaucracy and frustration face them at every step”. The Green Paper includes a number of proposals to improve this situation.³⁷

Families in the GAL sites stated that they wanted to be included in discussions about how resources were spent and about planning, both for their sons and daughters and at a strategic level.

We will now go on to explore why having a job means having a life, including how employment can lead to greater life outcomes, be more cost effective and are an option for everyone; including those with complex needs.

Chapter 2

Why having a job means having a life

“Employment matters. Work is positive for health, for income, for social status and for relationships. Employment is a core plank of independent living and for many people work is a key part of their identity.” Liz Sayce, the Sayce Review³⁸

Having a job is central to having a good life. Experiencing the benefits of paid employment is something that could easily be taken for granted. But the positive effects of working – improved self-esteem, social networks and health – should be available to everyone, including young people with learning disabilities and complex needs. In this section, we will show that not only can supporting young disabled people into employment help them achieve greater life outcomes, but it can lead to more cost-effective solutions for councils when compared to traditional day service supports. So that this is possible, those of us who support young, disabled people must start with the presumption that everyone CAN work, as we go on to explain.

Employment can lead to greater life outcomes

Having a job can have many positive effects above and beyond earning a wage. When people with a learning disability are supported to work by a supported employment service, the benefits can include:

- A heightened sense of self-esteem.
- Improved community participation and social interaction.^{39, 40}
- Improved overall health.

Research on what works successfully, when supporting young people with learning disabilities to plan and prepare for employment, suggests that supported work experience, organised by supported employment providers, contributes significantly to improved independence and confidence amongst individuals.⁴¹

Having a paid job that the person can enjoy also improves overall health. A recent survey conducted by the Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities focused on looking specifically at supported employment providers and concluded that employment delivers some positive changes for the overall health of people with learning disabilities in four major areas:⁴²

- Mental health.
- Physical health improvement.
- Reduction of negative health behaviour, such as smoking.
- Changes in weight and obesity levels.

Anecdotal evidence from the GAL sites also supports the argument that paid employment can have the effect of increasing people's friendship ties and general social inclusion within their local communities. For example, many young people involved in the GAL programme reported that their social lives had improved as a result of having a job. Both Beth and Mark have found that having jobs has given them increased opportunities to develop social networks:

Beth, who is now working for two hours a week at a local manufacturing company, has made new friends at work and has enjoyed social events like the recent staff Christmas party. She is looking forward to a trip to the theatre with her colleagues.

Mark, 20, works twenty hours a week at a company that renovates machinery and says work is the "best time in his life." He feels like part of the team, sits with his colleagues at lunch and talks about work and his hobby, fishing. Mark has put his name down for the annual work trip and is looking forward to it immensely. After work, he usually walks to the bus stop with his colleagues and sometimes gets a lift home from one of them.

Supporting people into paid employment is more cost-effective for local authorities and for society as a whole

Two recent studies^{43, 44} found that the cost of supported employment is considerably lower than an equivalent day services place. In North Lanarkshire, savings of £7,782 were found to have been made through supported employment, and in Kent, savings of £1,290 were made, with increased savings as more people were supported into work. This evidence builds on previous large-scale studies undertaken in the United States that also showed the positive and cost-effective outcomes gleaned as a result of supported employment.⁴⁵

Additional savings for taxpayers came from the financial flow-backs, including increases in tax revenue, reductions in welfare benefits and decreased dependency on social care support. Again, in North Lanarkshire and Kent, there were respective net savings of £6,894 and £3,564 per person, per year. Overall, for every 50 people placed in employment each year, savings of £344,700 and £178,200 respectively, were made in each borough.

The discrepancies between the cost of day services and supported employment can only turn into cost efficiencies if the local authority links its strategy of helping people into paid employment into a reform strategy for day services and other vocational or work training provisions. Linking supported employment development to wider reform strategies can generate considerable financial savings, as well as delivering better outcomes for those who are reliant upon social care services.

Everyone can work – including people with complex needs

Full-time employment may be difficult for some people with complex health needs. However, the starting point must always be a presumption that they can be successfully employed. In the introduction to this book, we shared Ben's story, which is an important example of how supporting people into employment can help them become significantly more independent and happier with their lives. The Valuing People Now employment work included the Sustainable Hub of Innovative Employment for

People with Complex Needs (SHIEC). This programme was run in conjunction with the Tizard Centre⁴⁶ and supports people with the most complex needs (for example; profound and multiple learning disabilities, behaviour which challenges services, learning disabilities, mental health and offending behaviour) into employment.

There is also growing evidence around people with complex needs being supported to set up their own businesses and micro-enterprises. Some case studies were published on the Valuing People Now employment resource hub, including the story of Delroy, a man with a severe learning disability receiving intensive two-to-one support. He was supported by the Foundation for Learning Disability's In Business project to set up his own recycling business.⁴⁷ Then there is Alexander, a man with complex needs, who is being supported by miEnterprise to set up a micro-enterprise based around a courier service. They are working together to find potential customers and work out how they can use Alexander's motability vehicle for deliveries.

There is a small but growing evidence base of people with complex needs in employment,⁴⁸ yet there is still much to learn when it comes to understanding what people with learning disabilities are capable of when given the right support. In the next section, we will set out chapter by chapter the six ways to help more young disabled people into work.

HER EMPLOYER CATERS FOR

everyone



Name: Sharon Scully

Job: Catering Assistant

Employer: Stepping Hill Hospital NHS Trust

www.aspirationsforlife.org

Raising work aspirations for disabled
and young people with learning difficulties

Section Two **Six ways to get it right**

“I really enjoy my job. I like the people that I work with and my wage. I like to go out for meals, holidays, buy DVDs and go to the pub with my friends.” Ian, participant in one of the GAL programme sites

What can we do to get more young people into employment? The government, in its response to the Sayce independent review of specialist disability employment programmes,⁴⁹ says it fully supports the principle of enabling and empowering disabled people to meet their employment aspirations:

“It is very important that disabled people are supported to take up a wide range of jobs and careers across all types of employment and in every sector.”⁵⁰

In this section, we set out six ways to help young disabled people into work, based on our extensive experience of working directly with them, their families, adults’ and childrens’ services, education authorities, health services and employment agencies across England.

As we explained in the introduction, everyone must work together to:

- Expect more and aim higher so that everyone understands the benefits of paid employment.
- Embed person-centred transition reviews and plans within schools and colleges.
- Establish a personalised curriculum and provide meaningful work experience.
- Invest in personal and individual budgets for young people.
- Develop the market to offer a wide range of options for young people after they turn 16 that lead to employment, independent living and citizenship.
- Work together for change.

We will demonstrate each of our suggestions with practical examples drawn from the GAL sites. It is also important to note that schools have a key role to play in raising expectations of young people and families, by providing the right information and helping to find positive work experience in community-based settings. Working with local employers to help raise expectations can also increase the number of employment opportunities available.

Chapter 3

Expect more and aim higher

“We found out very quickly that Helaina was capable of a great deal and that she needed to be challenged on future days of the placement.” Sure Start staff member

We must all expect more and aim higher; young disabled people, their families and communities need to know it is positive and possible to get a job. Everyone must know what it takes to get jobs for people furthest away from the employment market. This can be done by showing images of possibility and sharing evidence-based practice that will increase awareness about the benefits of employment for young people, families, local authorities and wider society.⁵¹

Evidence shows that young people are more likely to go into employment if their parents view work positively,⁵² so support and good welfare advice should be made available to families so they can work through any fears and concerns. Families also need to be informed about what support is available and what kinds of reasonable adjustments can be offered; while employers should be helped with understanding the benefits of employing people with learning disabilities.

As established in the previous section, there are many reasons why young people and their families, people who work with them (from midwives to Jobcentre Plus, schools and colleges) and employers may not believe that employment is positive or possible for young disabled people. Given this scenario, it is unlikely that employment will be identified in the person-centred plan or support plan, and will therefore not lead to the right support that would result in a job. In this chapter we will cover why it's important to start from the beginning and the need to provide young people and family leadership programmes. We will also look at the roles schools play in raising expectations, the provision of positive work experience in community-based settings and working with employers to raise expectations.

The Valuing People demonstration sites used a number of different approaches to raise aspirations and expectations amongst their families and those who work with them:

- Leadership programmes for young people and families.
- 'Better off in work' events for people with learning disabilities and their circles of support, as well as the people who work with them to address concerns about benefits and clarify the positive rewards of working 16 hours or more per week.
- 'Planning Live' events, where employment focused support plans are co-produced in a group environment.
- Employability training for frontline professionals to demonstrate how people with learning disabilities can access mainstream employment.
- Sharing 'good news' stories of individuals who have gained paid employment or set up their own businesses.
- Strategic support for commissioners and senior managers on the evidence base for supported employment.
- Information and guidance on how to access all the various funding streams and price up employment services for self directed support.
- Targeting highly visible or high status employer organisations within the community.

In order to raise aspirations and expectations so people expect to work and get a full life, we need to remember and keep in mind the following:

Start from the beginning

“The notion of an adult life that includes employment, if it comes at all, is introduced in the early teenage years in formal settings such as transition reviews, by which time disabled young people and their families have assimilated the message that work, employment or a career is highly unlikely. This works against the notion of citizenship and actively forces young people into a relationship of dependency with one state.” Pippa Murray⁵³

So that young disabled people, their families and those who work with them can aim high and expect more, there is a need to raise aspirations for employment much earlier than transition. The Aspirations for Life campaign, funded by the Department for Education (DfE) as part of the Valuing Employment Now strategy, has sought to address this problem and provide positive messages about the presumption of employment throughout childhood. The campaign, which worked across six sites in England, found that aspirations and expectations are low amongst staff working with children with learning disabilities, and that parents need better and earlier information about what is possible.

As one parent said:

“My son has been getting ready to be 18 for 17 years and still we don’t know what is available after school.”

The campaign worked with parents, the health, social care and education sectors, independent and voluntary sector staff, midwives, paediatricians and early years professionals. It produced a toolkit of resources that can be used to provide positive images of people with learning disabilities in paid employment, including:

- Example lesson plans for teachers.
- An employment game for primary school children.
- Case studies.
- Downloadable posters.
- An employment related children's book.



Aspirations for Life found that children and families want to hear more about adults with learning disabilities gaining and benefiting from employment. As a result, they have worked with the demonstration sites to develop a 'Train the Trainer' course for young people with a learning disability. The courses, which have run in Stockport, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Oldham, Hertfordshire and Northampton, were designed to give young people the confidence to speak to professionals and other young people about their experience of work and how important their job is.⁵⁴

Provide young people and family leadership programmes

The need to raise the aspirations and expectations of employment becomes even more important in transition, as young people are faced with decisions that will determine the quality and direction of their adult lives. For example, these decisions could include subject options in Year 9, post-16 options like attending college or how to spend a personal budget. During these times, it is essential young people and their families are equipped with the information on what is possible and positive; the things that can really help them to get a job and a life.

This issue was addressed by the young people and family leadership programmes established in all of the GAL sites, which used person-centred approaches and circles of support to help people to think about their hopes and dreams and the kind of support they need to get the lives they want.

During the sessions, the young people and families involved learnt about:

- Jobs.
- Housing.
- What support is out there to help them build friendships, relationships and good social lives.
- Advocacy.
- Person-centred planning and support planning.
- Self-directed support and individual budgets.
- How to influence what is available locally.

In some sessions, young people and their families worked together, and in others they divided into separate groups so they could explore their own issues. In some sites, they established a young leader's programme which gave young disabled people the chance to have a peer mentor – someone who was a bit older than the young person, who could share their experiences of thinking about their life and getting a job.



Ames and John (left and centre) from Speaking Up in Cambridge, helped young people in Norfolk to think about their dream job

All of the GAL leadership programmes employed young people, who had jobs, to talk to other young people and their families about their experiences. This was really welcomed, particularly when their circles of support, person-centred plans and examples of working life were shared. It inspired some people to set up their own circles of support, which in turn led to real work experience opportunities. For example, a member of one young man's circle ran a hairdressing salon, so now he works there for a few hours on a Friday night. Facilitators found that it was harder to raise expectations when there were no local examples of people with learning disabilities in paid employment. This demonstrates the importance of working with a small cohort of people and supporting them to achieve paid employment.



Ellen Goodey and Christine Burke with dream job poster

Here is how one of the GAL sites supported Joe (not his real name) to take the first steps into exploring ideas for a career:

Joe's story

Joe is part of the GAL project in Norfolk. His dream job is to be a postman. Whilst taking part in the leadership programme, Joe and his family started to think about the steps they needed to take towards making his dream a reality. The first step will be for Joe to use his PA to support him in work experience, shadowing someone who distributes the local free paper, with the aim of Joe getting his own round. Other ideas included visiting a local sorting office, and talking to people that the family knows who work in the postal service.

Many families said the GAL leadership programmes helped them know what support to ask for:

“These joint sessions led to information sharing and gaining knowledge from other parents and local professionals. One parent was not aware that other young people from her daughter’s special school did work experience. Once she had this knowledge she asked the school for her daughter to have the same opportunity.” Jill Davies of the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

They also raised the aspirations and expectations of families:

“GAL has educated us as parents to think outside the box. The box being – ‘I can’t, I mustn’t, I shouldn’t’. There is more than one way to peel an orange and as long as my son can access work at his level, with the right support for at least 16 hours

per week, that is the GAL legacy. I now think it's personally possible whereas I didn't think of work as an option before then." Mother from a GAL programme demonstration site



Joe with his plan, showing the steps towards getting his dream job as a postman

GAL sites in the East Midlands worked with their young people and families to develop a seven-session leadership programme which covered the following areas of:

- Person-centred planning and personal budgets.
- Work and benefits.
- Friendships, relationships and leisure.
- Further education and training.
- Health and housing.

These materials are now being used with other young people and families across the East Midlands to support people to think about and help plan their futures.⁵⁵

School has a key role to play in raising expectations

The Centre for Welfare Reform's Personalised Transition report⁵⁶ explains that school is the major agency in the lives of young people with learning disabilities and their families. Pippa Murray explains this in more detail in A Fair Start:

“There is a need for schools to take a lead role in raising aspirations and educating disabled children to take their place in the workforce. An individual budget, available to young people aged 16 and over, helps them to gain practical experience in real work environments. Some schools are breaking new ground in the area. Exciting innovations include:

- **Giving all Year 14 students a modest individual budget to use to support learning and work experience.**
- **Personalising work experience placements to fit the interests and aspiration of individual young people.**
- **Working with local employers (including local authorities) to provide work opportunities for their students.”**⁵⁷

Schools have to convey the message that employment is positive and possible. One of the schools in the GAL demonstration sites worked with a local drama company to raise the expectations and aspirations of employment for young people and their families, along with all of the professionals involved with that school. Here is their story:

Moveable Feast - North Tyneside

In North Tyneside, the local authority appointed a Transition Employment Support Officer to work with young people with a learning disability as part of the GAL project. Their role was to raise young people's aspirations for employment and support them to plan and prepare for paid employment when they left school or college.

Young people from three local special schools took part in a week of drama with Moveable Feast, a performing arts workshop company, focusing on hopes and dreams for future careers.

The young people, supported by school staff, artists from Moveable Feast and the transition employment support officer, rehearsed and performed their show to three audiences – more than 300 people – including families and professionals working with the young people.

Using drama, singing, dancing and poetry, the young people explored what they wanted to do after school – including design, working with animals, selling cars, working in healthcare, the police, postal service and sport.

Sue Wilson, who led the development of the GAL programme in the East Midlands, understood the key role teachers play in helping young people and their families to think about their futures. She found that schools needed more information and training about employment for people with learning disabilities, so that they could support and advise young people on the post-16 options available to them. Using money from the local SEN hub, Sue paid a teacher to work with her to develop training for teachers on improving the life chances of young people with learning disabilities. This programme also helps schools influence commissioners to pay for post-16 options that lead to jobs and stay clear of routes that lead to a life of dependency and isolation.

Some of the GAL sites like those in North Tyneside, Herefordshire and Oldham were co-located with Jobs First sites. In these authorities, 'Better Off in Work' events were provided for young people, families and key professionals who worked with them, including care managers, day service staff, teachers, Connexion workers and Disability Employment Advisors from Jobcentre Plus.

Work with employers to raise expectations

There is an assumption that employers will not want people with learning disabilities working for them. Valuing People Now's employment work has found this not to necessarily be the case.⁵⁸

Employers need the opportunities to see what young people with learning disabilities can offer their business. Young people from the Young Leader's programme in the Manchester GAL site have taken a proactive approach in helping employers to see what they can offer to their businesses.

Dragons' Den style event - Manchester

In March 2010, a number of young people pitched their skills and interests to local employers in a 'Dragons' Den' style event, to gain work experience, jobs and interview practice. They were supported to give a presentation, using one page profiles, pictures and videos to show the 'dragons' why they would make great employees.



The event was organised by a team of people from different agencies in Manchester who were involved in supporting young people with learning disabilities into employment, including the Manchester Learning Disability Partnership, Jobcentre Plus, the Manchester College and Tricia Nicoll, an independent consultant who ran leadership programmes for young people and their families in the GAL sites.

Work needs to happen to ensure that employers understand how employing people with learning disabilities can improve their business. Feedback from employers engaged with the GAL sites reported the following benefits:

- A more inclusive workforce that was more representative of the local community.
- Businesses gaining a better understanding of disability awareness.
- More efficient business processes as a result of analysing gaps.
- Improved ability to fill gaps in the workforce. Many of the jobs that people with learning disabilities can offer are at a basic entry level. These are often positions that are hard to fill and have a high turnover, resulting in spiralling costs for employers.⁵⁹

These kinds of benefits were also reported by other businesses around the country. For example human resource and recruiting managers at LEGOLAND, who now employ a number of people with learning disabilities following their involvement in a programme coordinated by the local council's supported employment team, report that this work has saved money by significantly reducing the turnover in first level entry jobs.⁶⁰

It is also important to remember that all of the agencies involved in transition and employment (for example schools, colleges, local authorities, health services, support providers and Jobcentre Plus) are employers themselves and have a valuable role to play in leading employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

Local areas will have a number of initiatives focused on bringing together education and employment. It is essential that reasonable adjustments are made for people who are furthest away from the employment market to ensure that they benefit from these incentives. The GAL site in Lincolnshire has worked closely with its local Education Business Partnership to increase the number of employers offering work experience opportunities to young people with learning disabilities and help young people to consider a wider range of career options.

Lincolnshire - Highlighting Opportunities and Prospects for Employment (HOPE)

Local data, collected by the Lincolnshire and Rutland Education Business Partnership (EBP) indicated that many young people with learning disabilities were not getting the chance to take part in work experience placements.

Through the GAL programme, the EBP started to work with Lincolnshire Transition Service and Welfare to Work to develop better opportunities for young people with a disability to try out different careers.

The approach they are using combines awareness raising activities for students, schools and local employers, and has started to open up more opportunities within the area. So far, the project has organised:

- An awareness-raising conference for students, schools and employers looking at existing good practice in work-related learning.

- Industry taster days for young people with learning disabilities to find out about different jobs through practical employer-led workshops, and for employers to find out more about employing young people with learning disabilities.

As a result, five special schools have now committed to reviewing their curriculum and work experience offers, to improve the support that young people with learning disabilities currently receive to plan for their future careers.

A SEN schools focus group is being set up to monitor transition to employment for young people with learning disabilities, and to develop better links between schools and employers.

In the next chapter, we'll go on to look at how to embed person-centred reviews and transition plans within schools and colleges to ensure young people are supported all the way through school to think about employment options.

Chapter 4

Embed person-centred transition reviews and plans within schools and colleges

“I think it is wonderful Ian has got a job. He wouldn’t be where he is if it wasn’t for work – independent and living in his own flat. Having a job really makes him feel a part of society. His family wouldn’t have been able to support Ian to live independently and go on holiday, thus working is allowing him to have these opportunities.” Family member of Ian, participant in one of the GAL programme sites

Young people need support to make decisions about life and work. We must work to ensure that from Year 9, each individual has a person-centred transition review and plan with a specific focus on employment. Person-centred reviews in Years 9, 10 and 11 need to build into a support plan that includes a focus on employment.

Planning needs to start early if young people are to move into paid employment when they leave school or college. The current system is not set up to support young people into getting employment. This is partly because expectations that people with learning disabilities can work are not widespread. As a result, it is important that there is a focus on employment during the transition years so that young people have the best chance to move into work when they leave school or college.

The lack of positive early planning and support can have a direct and negative impact on the use of personal budgets for employment. A number of the Jobs First sites found that the families who were unhappy about their children using their personal budgets for employment, were those who had bad encounters with work experience and employment support

before they left school. Where work placements or jobs had failed because of poor support, people and their families were more concerned about trying again.

Person-centred transition reviews need to start in Year 9 and build into a person-centred transition plan that focuses on employment (person-centred transition and career plan). The person-centred transition review at Year 9 grows person-centred information about what is important to the young person, how they need to be supported and what they want in the future in their life and their work. This is built into the person-centred transition and career plan. In Year 10, the plan is added to, with information about what is possible – getting a job and other areas of their life. This can be developed into a costed support plan through the Year 11 review if the young person has a personal budget. Employment has to be a thread throughout the person-centred reviews and transition planning.

In this chapter, we explain what person-centred transition reviews are and how they can emphasise work. We also look at how work experience can be built into transition and career planning.

Person-centred transition reviews

When the Valuing People Now⁶¹ strategy was published in 2001, two of its top priorities were transition and supporting people to have choice and control through advocacy and person-centred approaches. In 2003, the Department of Health's Valuing People Now support team began a programme of embedding person-centred thinking into the process of transition planning. This became known as the person-centred reviews programme.

Person-centred reviews were initially developed in education to transform and replace the Year 9 transition review by ensuring that the young person was fully at the centre of the review, and that it identified actions that made a difference to their life. After the first person-centred reviews at a school in Hull, the Department of Health organised successful pilots in four London boroughs, eventually leading to a national roll-out of the approach to every local authority in England. Evaluation of Year 9 person-centred reviews demonstrated that young people felt at the centre of the process, family members were fully included and the process met statutory requirements:

Person Centred Transition Reviews

What people said

"It's an inclusive, transparent process."
a parent

"I like the way the action plan get generated, very specific and linked to discussion."
a professional

"One dad liked hearing all the positive things."
a family member

"The person centred process facilitated the production of a far more comprehensive plan than is usual, as there was a thorough look at all the important points."
a professional

"Using flip charts is a good way of capturing everyone's contributions all in one go! I never normally speak - this is the first time I've contributed to a review.

Being able to write on the flip chart enabled me to say something I wouldn't have been confident to raise verbally."
a parent

"The preparation work that was done prior to the review was vital to the smooth running of the review; it meant that no one would be put in any embarrassing situations and everyone felt safe.

Everyone present knew what to expect and could therefore participate fully."

"Throughout the meeting he was smiling and appeared relaxed and interested in what people were saying about him and his achievements; at times he was encouraging others to write more about him by giving them pens!"
a young person

"The paediatrician felt it was useful to target specific actions related to the whole of the person's life."
a professional

"Excited - had a brilliant experience."
a young person

"It was relaxed and much more open; you could see what was happening and the interest that people have in my son."
a parent

"It was the first time in many years of attending reviews that I have remembered the young person hours later. It helped to identify accurate information, good needs profile and was client-centred and at all times enlightening."
a professional

"Getting the trust of the head teachers to allow us to facilitate the meetings [was important]."
a professional

“This process not only meets statutory requirements; it greatly exceeds them, in that you are exploring the young person in a much more holistic way and listening more closely to what matters to them.” A head teacher

Most areas of the country have now taken part in this programme and person-centred reviews and planning are now widely acknowledged as an important aspect of good practice in transition.⁶²

Valuing People Now set the following expectations for all young people with learning disabilities:

- To have person-centred transition reviews and plans by 2012.
- Young people and their families to have a strong voice at person-centred review meetings.
- To know what is positive and possible in terms of the future, and that clear actions have been set in the areas of health, housing, jobs and careers, friends and relationships.

Schools in the GAL programme reported the benefits of person-centred reviews and changed the way they used their resources to embed them in their transition planning processes. There are many examples of schools embedding person-centred reviews such as Ambergate Sports College.

Ambergate Sports College, Lincolnshire

Ambergate Sports College, a special school in Grantham, is now implementing person-centred reviews for all children and young people at the school. To release capacity for person-centred reviews within their existing resources, the school converted an administrative post into a dual role, which included facilitation of person-centred reviews. The facilitator gets all the information ready, talks to parents and

children about what will happen and conducts the reviews. Afterwards, they make sure that all actions take place, using a local system, including action plans and a quarterly action-chasing system, to ensure all actions are followed-up.

Having this dedicated role has already shown benefits: actions are followed up swiftly, the head teacher and other senior staff only attend reviews when needed, and teachers can focus on their students' learning rather than on preparing for reviews.

Person-centred reviews are still new to staff, young people and their families, but they are proving more popular. Deputy Head, Mr. Shane Smillie, says:

“They really make the review about the pupil, which is more meaningful and relevant. They are more involved in their own action plan...making the process more likely to succeed.”

Family attendance and participation has increased from around 30% to 60%, and people's comments are positive. Parents' comments included:

“My child liked hearing about his successes!”

“Much better than the old reviews.”

“My child really enjoyed the process.”

The school plans to introduce person-centred reviews to their partner school, Sandon, and will be introducing career plans to ensure that they are targeting the job interests of individual pupils.

Emphasising work in person-centred reviews

Early findings from the GAL programme identified that due to a culture of low aspirations and expectations around employment and the lack of supported employment agencies in schools and colleges, employment was often overlooked during the person-centred reviews process. In order to prepare for adulthood, young people need good planning from the age of 14 that is not only person-centred in approach, but also aims to provide good employment support, so that they can plan for a job and a life.

The recent SEN and Disability Green Paper recognised the role that GAL sites have played in showing how person-centred transition planning – with a focus on employment – has played a significant role in bringing funding streams and resources together so that young people can get a job and lead a full life.⁶³ Information and actions from the person-centred reviews contribute to the person-centred transition and career plan, and to the support plan required for a personal budget as the young person leaves school.

As a result of this learning, the person-centred reviews process has been adapted to ensure that there is an emphasis on work.

The Year 9 review – the important to/for review

This now specifically includes headings about work (and work experience), health and wellbeing, friendships, relationships and community and housing. This is in addition to the original headings of; what people like and admire about the person, what is important to the young person now, and in the future, how to support the young person to stay healthy and safe, questions to answer, what is working and not working from different perspectives and then outcomes and actions.

The Year 10 review – what's possible?

This person-centred review originally used the headings from the Keys to Citizenship.⁶⁴ Based on feedback and learning from schools, the Year 10 review now covers:

- What is practical and possible for the young person?
- Getting into paid work (including work experience).

- Their health and well being.
- Friendships, relationships and community.
- Housing.

The review also includes a reflection on progress on the actions and outcomes from the Year 9 review. The purpose of this review is to continue to raise aspirations and enable young people to move forward with their ideas and choices, building on the shared knowledge of what is important to the young person. Like all of the person-centred reviews, this review ends with outcomes and actions.

Year 11 review

The Year 11 person-centred review focuses on preparing to leave school and going into work. If young people have an indicative allocation for their personal budget, then the Year 11 review is a way to get started with a support plan (which is required for a personal budget). It builds on the information shared at the Year 9 and Year 10 reviews including; what is important to and for the young person, what they want to explore and what is possible, what this means as they leave school and how they are going to achieve this. This is the way to help young people and families navigate post-16 options and decide how to use funding streams to help them to get a job and a life.

Laura's story

It was at the point when I left college that I started to take control. I had my first experience of person-centred planning when I was asked what I thought about my life, what things I enjoyed, and what I was good at. For the first time I felt I had a chance to really think about my life and to begin to think about getting a job. This was a really positive time for me, with the support of my family and friends we talked about my skills and gifts – I felt really good about myself.

So what about work? I decided I wanted to work in fashion, not for someone else but I wanted to set up

my own business selling fashion accessories. So that's what I did. I called my business Serendipity. I started working with my business advisor and a small group of close friends. My ideas grew and grew and I soon realised that if I was going to do this and do it right I needed someone to help me on a more formal basis. This is where my personal budget and my support plan come in. I am now looking to employ an employment personal assistant to help with my business. My family and friends will still be in my life as part of my circle of support. I can go out with them for a meal and say "so what did you do at work today? I did..." You don't know how good that sounds to me. I am a businesswoman, a woman who runs her own business, how many other 23 year olds can say that?

Serendipity is not just a dream; I have made it a reality. Personal budgets will give more young people the opportunity to contribute to society and to break down the barriers.



Clare's Story

Clare is 18 and, with her family, took part in a day of person-centred thinking and planning, where everyone found out lots of things about her, including that she loves animals and already has responsibility for looking after the chickens her family keeps. This day encouraged Clare's mum to approach her school about work experience, and Clare now has a placement at a local museum. In addition, Clare is gaining more experience of working with animals, grooming horses at a stable and with a cat breeder where she helps to feed their cats.



The GAL pathway into employment⁶⁵ recommends that in Year 9, when the person is 14 years old, they are supported to have a person-centred transition review and that someone is identified as the person who will support them to develop a career plan or vocational profile that helps them to plan for employment. This

could be developed by the school curriculum, Connexions advisor or supported employment service. It is important that supported employment agencies work together with young people from this stage, because they have specific skills in vocational profiling, planning, job searching and job coaching, and will have already established relationships with local employers.

GAL demonstration sites have been exploring how to support people to develop person-centred transition and career plans.

In Richmond-on-Thames, the GAL team has commissioned an easy-read vocational profile from EmployAbility called 'Me and My Job' and are trialling it with young people in a local school for children with severe learning disabilities, as well as a college. This plan then feeds into the person's person-centred transition plan.

Power Employment, the council's in-house supported employment service, is working with 10 young people to complete the profiles and identify work experience placements or Saturday jobs based on their interests and skills. These placements will be supported by Power for those still at school, and those at college will be supported by their PAs and funded through their personal budgets.

This trial is part of a wider development of Power's involvement with schools and colleges, to improve transition into employment for young people with learning disabilities.

Me and My Job

Helping us to find the right job for you

This questionnaire is designed to be filled out by an Power Employment worker with a person with a learning disability who would like a job.



A copy of the filled in questionnaire can be given to the person afterwards as a record of the meeting. The questionnaire has small images to help explain many of the questions.

Larger copies of these images are on the laminated booklet that is designed to be used with the questionnaire.

Many people will find the images helpful when thinking about the questions, though some people will not need to use them.



Your details

Your full name:



Your address:



Your phone numbers (home and mobile):



Your email address:



Work experience and person-centred transition and career planning

It is really important that work experience is meaningful and is built on within the curriculum at a school or college. In Herefordshire, young people have used person-centred reviews

with an employment focus to help them think about what type of work experience would be specifically meaningful for them.

At Westfield school in Herefordshire, all young people have person-centred reviews that focus on their employment. The school is embedding supported employment thinking into the curriculum, encouraging pupils to think about going into employment when they are older. As a result several people have left Westfield school and got paid jobs rather than going to college or day services.

Beyer⁶⁶ has stressed the need to capture what worked and didn't work for the person on work experience and to use this in helping the young person develop their support plan. The following questions can be used to inform career planning and identify what type of employment support would work for the young person:

- What did I like or enjoy about my work experience?
- What I did not like or enjoy about it?
- What was I good at? What did my supervisor say I did best?
- What new skills did I gain through my work experience? How can these be built on?
- What does this tell me about what work I want to do in the future?
- What do I want in my future job?
- What don't I want in my future job?
- Are there photos of what I did best or quotes of what people said I was good at?

GAL identified good examples of supporting people to capture learning from their work experience.

In addition to working in Richmond with Power Employment, EmployAbility has also been working in Surrey to develop an accessible work experience log book. It supports the young person

to plan and capture the learning from their work experience so it can be built on and used to inform career planning.

The work experience log book has sections on:

- **Important information about my work place.** Address and contact numbers, start times, days I will work, my manager's name. Information my manager may need to know about me to support me.
- **Planning my work experience.** Working out my journey, deciding what to wear, thinking about what to take with me each day.
- **The rules of work.** Understanding health and safety. The social rules of work like chatting using your phone etc. Tips on coping with tea and lunch breaks.
- **A record of my placement.** Space for the young person and the manager to write a summary of how each day has gone. Also a report the manager can fill in at the end of the placement.

In the next chapter, we will go on to look at how an employment focus throughout school and college can be established that supports work aspirations, through a personalised curriculum and meaningful work experience.

Lunch breaks and tea breaks

Some work places have set times for lunch breaks and tea breaks.



People in other work places take breaks at different times each day.



Many workers like to do their own thing on their break, so you may be left on your own for a while.

It's a good idea to bring something to do if you are on your own during your break.

Things like:



a newspaper



an ipod



a games machine



money to buy a drink



your own food and drink

Chapter 5

Develop a personalised curriculum and provide meaningful work experience

“Ian is always smiling and happy to be in work – anything we ask him to do, is never too much trouble. He is always smart and well turned-out, wearing full uniform, and customers compliment him on his hard work. They are happy to see that we are a supportive employer.” Ian’s employer, participant in one of the GAL sites

We must work to ensure there is an employment focus throughout school and college that supports work aspirations. Research shows that work experience is essential for raising aspirations and expectations of young people with learning disabilities and those furthest away from the employment market. The opportunity to learn in real environments while still at school and college will help young disabled people get a job. The learning from partaking in meaningful work experience should be built on with the assistance of supported employment agencies.

More needs to be done to ensure that experienced supported employment agencies can work with young people whilst they are still at school and college. Young people need job coaches who can support their work experience from Year 10 and support them into work when they leave education. This will also support and encourage parents to view work in a positive light.

In the publication *A Fair Start*,⁶⁷ Pippa Murray explains that one of the key elements of a personalised pathway is a curriculum for citizenship. She goes on to explain that “people do need support

and additional expertise, but this support should be focused on helping the young person to achieve active citizenship.”⁶⁸ Having a job you enjoy is an important aspect of citizenship. It enables us to make a contribution to our local communities and society, and allows us to have control over our lives, along with gaining resources that can enable us to explore other avenues we are interested in.

Therefore in addition to learning how to communicate what is important to them and make choices, young people need the opportunity to gain skills that will maximise their employment outcomes.

Personalising learning through person-centred thinking

There are a range of person-centred thinking tools that enable young people to share what is important to them, how they want to be supported, what they want to change about their life, and how they communicate and make decisions. Here are some of the person-centred thinking tools that schools are using as part of creating a person-centred culture and personalising the curriculum:

- One page profiles.
- Working/not working from different perspectives.
- Relationship maps.
- Community maps.
- Communication charts.
- Decision making agreements.
- Learning logs.
- Doughnuts.⁶⁹

Person-centred thinking tool	What this tool can do	How it can be used with children and young people	How it can be used within schools and colleges
What is important to you and what is important for you?	Identify what matters to the young person and what is important for them to stay healthy and safe, and find a balance between them.	To create a one-page profile that captures what matters to them and how best to support them, along with what people like and admire about the young person. This can then form the basis of a person-centred plan.	To create one-page profiles for staff as part of supervision and appraisal as the basis of a person-centred team plan.
What is important in the future?	Capture young people's ideas and aspirations about their future.	As an opportunity to share information about what is possible (e.g. paid work) and an important part of a person-centred review.	To develop a vision of what is important in the future for the school. To develop a display of dreams and aspirations.
What is important about work?	Explain the importance of contributing through work.	To build a personal profile that can be used and added to throughout the young person's journey through work experience and paid jobs to a life-changing career.	To discover and record individual strengths, interests and skills that will be useful to a future employer; and to provide information about funding and support to facilitate successful entry into work.
What is working/not working?	Help young people to reflect on their life and school experience and to agree on actions to continue what is working and change what is not working. Help to prevent us from inadvertently changing aspects of a young person's life that are working and are important to them.	As a way to look at issues from different perspectives, including those of the young person, families, staff and other professionals. To enable us to share and build on what is working and to identify what is not working, who it is not working for, and what can be done about it, as part of a person-centred review.	To inform the school's improvement plan (see description of <i>Working together for change</i> on page 26) and its Disability Equality Scheme and Access Plan. As a part of consultation process – asking young people and families what is working and not working about elements of school life.

Person-centred thinking tool	What this tool can do	How it can be used with children and young people	How it can be used within schools and colleges
Like and admire	Provide a way to appreciate the positive qualities of a young person.	To create 'feel good' folders for young people that describe what other people appreciate about them. This helps staff working with the young person to understand what other people like and admire about the young person and counter a focus on what is 'wrong with' them, as part of a one-page profile and person-centred review.	To recognise and appreciate the qualities of team members.
Relationship circle	Provide a way to identify who is in a young person's life.	To identify relationships that can be strengthened and developed.	To identify key stakeholders in connection to the school, as part of strategic planning.
Communication charts	Provide a way to describe in a simple chart how the young person communicates through their behaviour, and how people communicate with them.	To provide vital information where young people do not use words to communicate.	Helps the class explore the different ways that they communicate with one another.
The doughnut	Identify specific responsibilities – what is core, where people can use their judgement and creativity, and what is not part of the job of paid staff.	As a way to clarify who is responsible for what in a young person's life. Helps learning support assistants, teachers and other staff to know what their core responsibilities are and where they can use creativity and judgement in relation to an individual young person.	As the basis of home-school agreements. To clarify roles and responsibilities in a staff team.

Person-centred thinking tool	What this tool can do	How it can be used with children and young people	How it can be used within schools and colleges
Learning log	Record what happened and what was learned.	As a way of recording situations that focus on learning. Could be used as a structure for communication books with families, recording, for example, what the young person did, who was there, what did the young person like/not like about the activity, and what needs to be different next time.	For reflection on and evaluation of progress and learning with a young person around a specific issue (e.g. for a young person who is having difficulties at lunchtime).

Ellen Tinkham Special School, Exeter

Ellen Tinkham Special School was the first school to use the process of Working Together for Change, a simple process that uses person-centred information from person-centred reviews to drive strategic change and commissioning. From the outcomes of this process, the school and its head teacher, Jacqui Warne, worked on a ‘core promise’ for all children and their families. The promise is that each child will have an up-to-date one page profile, a communication chart, a decision-making agreement, a home-school agreement and a person-centred review as they go through their school life.

The core promise is designed to create ‘effective partnership between the child or young person, family, school and other agencies’. It provides the school with a process which allows staff to ‘keep listening’ to what works for children/young people as their one page profiles grow and develop with them throughout their school life. This information forms the basis of transition planning when the young people leave school.

The staff also recognise that one page profiles provide great information for teachers and school staff as they get to know new children in their class. Some of the comments from staff about using one page profiles were:

“It gives us a real understanding of the students and tells us so much.”

“Students can participate in decision-making in their lives.”

“It allows for problem-solving before the problem.”

“It provides information for strategic developing and commissioning and consistency across service.”

One page profiles

A one page profile is simply a written description of what people appreciate about the young person; what they like and admire about them, what is important to the young person (from their perspective) and how to support them. It can be developed through a person-centred review or by using person-centred thinking within the curriculum. A detailed description of the process and how to develop them in partnership with parents is set out in *One Page Profiles in Schools*.⁷⁰ We are gradually seeing one page profiles and person-centred reviews being introduced across the whole school to develop a person-centre culture. Here are two examples from Norris Bank Primary School and Oxley Park Academy:

Norris Bank Primary School

Norris Bank Primary School is a mainstream school in Stockport that has been working to make sure every child and their teachers know what is important to the individual and what they need to be supported in the classroom.

Every year, the school develops 'one page profiles' for all students. This is done with the young person themselves, their family, friends (contributing to the like and admire section) and school staff. The one page profile explains ways to work with, and help each child, by describing what people like and admire about them, what is important to them from their own perspective and how they should be supported. Ultimately one page profiles can influence the way that child is taught within school. Because it is a 'live' document, it can be added to on a regular basis – for example, at the beginning and end of each school year. They form an essential starting point for discussions with new teachers and anyone else who might work with the children. They are also developed into personalised reading bookmarks that include how to support the young person with their reading. The classroom assistants and teachers have their own one page profiles that are used in their supervision and appraisal.

This is Norris Bank's way of putting the learner in the centre of the education process, personalising the curriculum to their needs and supporting their welfare. It's at the heart of all the school does. The school is continuing to implement person-centred approaches into their whole curriculum. Their progress has culminated in their latest Ofsted inspection result of 'outstanding', up from 'good' only a few years ago.

So that one page profiles are meaningful to children, parents and teachers, it is essential there are clear links to work already being done in the classroom. Being a 'bolt on' is not really an option. The profiles need to be integral to at least one aspect of teaching and learning to start with and then extended across

the curriculum with other person-centred thinking tools. This way, they become self-sustaining; there will be a set point every year when they are revisited, revised, updated.

Tabitha (deputy head teacher) said that Norris Bank places a high priority on building the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum into everything that they do.

“The school year is divided up into six sub-headings, each building on skills that are taught and experienced through assemblies, teacher-led class sessions, small group activities and circle time sessions. The Spring half term topic is entitled ‘It’s Good To Be Me’, and the areas of study fit the different sections of the one page profile perfectly.”

Oxley Park Academy

Jane Ralphs is the deputy head teacher and the inclusion manager at Oxley Park Academy in Milton Keynes. ‘Dream, Believe, Achieve, Together’ is the motto and is at the heart of the school. This is expressed by using person-centred thinking, approaches and reviews to provide an inclusive learning culture. They have been implementing person-centred reviews for all their children with Statements of SEN, in place of the more traditional approach to annual reviews.

“For our parents, this has been a big change and it has taken careful introduction and facilitation to give

them confidence in the process. From the outset, they loved the concept of their child being present for the review so that thoughts and discussions were about a 'real' person, rather than one depicted on paper. Most importantly the fact their child had a voice at the actual review was seen as a massive step forward.

Charlie's review was a fantastic example of a very wide range of people working together to map the best way forward for the child. Charlie is a delightful, resilient young man who marches through life with enormous determination and enthusiasm despite the complexity of his needs. Charlie is registered blind, has bilateral conductive hearing loss and has a rare congenital condition – Osteoporosis. As you can see from his 'like and admire' record at the review, there is a lot to like and admire about Charlie!

Charlie, like all our children, sent out his own invitations to the review – beautifully Brailled by Charlie and scribed by his teaching assistant. This is a fantastic way of highlighting the child as the owner of the review. All our children create their own invitations, address them and take them to the local post box as part of the preparation for the review. Along with choosing their own music for the mingling times and their trip to the local shop to buy their choice of snacks and drinks for the review (there have been interesting selections over the year!). Our children feel, and are, very much in charge of their review day.

Standing back during Charlie's review and reflecting on the process as it was underway, I felt a real sense of how right this process is for our children. They deserve the very best in the provision we make

for them and provision can only be best when the child is fully involved in the process. For Charlie, this meant the review was a real blend of basic pen on paper, Charlie's Scooby Doo toys and high tech CCTV equipment to allow Charlie to access and contribute. However, by far the most important element was the depth of discussion and the richness of information that emerged during the review, all of which has contributed to a firmly pupil focused action plan in which all of us involved with Charlie know who is going to do what and by when.

Another student, Zach, has been an Oxley Parker for two years and is a valued and important member of our school. He was the first pupil to have a pupil-centred review – the success of this led to the reviews becoming part of our whole school strategic plan. A year on and we find ourselves at Zach's second pupil-centred review. It was brilliant to see his 2011 invitation as it represented the incredible journey he has been on this year. Last year, one element that was 'not working' was Zach's writing. This became an agreed agenda for action and a huge effort over this year on the part of teachers, Zach's parents and most especially Zach has resulted in fantastic progress in his writing. Last year Zach traced over his name at the end of his invitation – this year he wrote over half of his invitation – amazing!"

“I like to see my friends outside of school and I like playing basketball with them. Everyone knows this now because of my profile. Also, my friends read my profile so it helps them understand me better.” Adam, a young person who has a one page profile

“One page profiles have taught me how to really listen. Beforehand, I thought I was listening to young people but I wasn’t. One page profiles are about really getting to the core of what makes young people tick and then takes that and moves it forward. This work also throws up things you would never have known about the young person and would never have thought of.” Deputy Head, Abbey Hill School, Stoke-on-Trent

Shaping the school curriculum for employment

Feedback from young people in the GAL sites⁷¹ identified they would need the following skills:

- To tell the time and get up in the morning.
- To use money better.
- To use a mobile phone.
- To travel to work.
- To use email.

Opportunities need to be created to raise expectations, learn about the world of work, and develop career plans, personal profiles and CVs. Schools in the GAL sites have been exploring how to use information from pupil’s person-centred transition plans to shape the school curriculum and young people’s work experience. Westfield school provides a good example of how person-centred plans have helped to shape the school curriculum and work experience for the students.

Westfield school, Leominster, Herefordshire - embedding discovery into the curriculum

Teachers at Westfield School have started using picture profiling as part of the techniques of

'discovery' to support young people with learning disabilities to plan for jobs and careers.

As part of the GAL development programme, school staff, local authority managers and representatives from Mencap Pathways (who provide supported employment in Herefordshire) attended an introductory day where they found out more about supported employment and job coaching. Parents also attended an information session to help them start thinking about future jobs for their son or daughter.

All young people in the transition class are now being supported to create picture profiles about their aspirations for work and the skills they could bring to a job. These profiles will be used as CVs to engage with local employers and find opportunities for work experience placements and jobs when they leave school.

Westfield school uses the creative curriculum to ensure employment is incorporated into each subject and term subject theme. Last term's theme was transport. This included learning about all the different types of jobs there are available within the transport industry and key employment skills – such as independent travel training.

Nicky Gilbert, the school's acting head teacher, led the redesign of the curriculum, which has allowed them to focus on supporting young people to prepare for their future jobs. She says that being involved in the GAL programme gave her the justification to transform the curriculum so that it creates better outcomes for the young people involved.

Providing meaningful work experience

Research on what works for young people with learning disabilities in transition demonstrates that young people whose families thought that work was positive and possible were more likely to get jobs after leaving school or college. The study, published by the Shaw Trust in 2008,⁷² describes that families who were not positive about employment had the following concerns:

- Would the young person or family be financially better off if they were in employment?
- Would they be bullied?
- Do employers really want people with learning disabilities working for them?

They found the key things that helped change families' views on these issues were:

- A chance to talk about and work through anxieties.
- Good welfare advice.
- Positive work experience in community-based settings with positive feedback from employers.

Research suggests that positive, supported work experience, whilst young people with learning disabilities are still in school, is one of two key factors that increase the chances of their future employment. Local data from the GAL sites indicates that many young people with learning disabilities do not get this work experience in community-based settings, let alone in Year 10 like their non-disabled peers.⁷³

Work experience in community-based settings, supported by supported employment agencies, needs to start in Year 10 so people can plan their work experience.

While not found everywhere, some schools are starting to commission supported employment providers to arrange and provide supported work experience for young people with learning disabilities. Different approaches have been used, for example using the Work Related Learning budget, to employ specialist staff

at the school, or to 'buy in' staff from the supported employment provider.⁷⁴ Firwood School is an interesting example of this new approach to supported work experience:

Firwood School - supported work experience

Firwood School, a special school in Bolton, is using its specialism in applied learning to support young people to gain the skills and experiences they need for work, both in the classroom and through supported work experience.

The school has a dedicated teaching assistant to support work experience for pupils in Years 11 to 14, through the funding for their applied learning specialism. The school also works with Pure Innovations, a supported employment provider, to provide supported work experience placements for young people with severe learning disabilities. An employment officer, based in the school, works with young people and local employers to match placements to young people's skills and interests.

In the first year of the scheme, six young people were supported in work experience placements. The scheme demonstrated the importance of job matching. For example, one young man with autism was matched to a work placement that utilised his ability to focus intensely on specific tasks.

Young people's experiences of understanding the world of work and moving into paid employment needs to be further developed during college. The success stories we have seen are where supported employment providers or trained job coaches have been able to work alongside young people in ways that directly relate to their learning and their plans for employment.

Progress Employment: supported work experience

Progress Employment has built up partnerships with special schools (and some mainstream schools) that now commission supported work experience for their students, to meet the statutory duty to provide work-related learning for students in Key Stage 4. Progress works with students to ensure that work experience is meaningful and relates to the student's plan for employment after they leave school.

They are starting to see paid employment for some students before they leave school (e.g. holiday and weekend work). They are also running a pilot project (using £7.5K of funding) with a school for students with severe learning disabilities, to support six young people into getting Saturday jobs.

Stephen's story highlights the positive aspects and effects of being in paid employment:

Stephen's story

Last November, Stephen, 18, started a permanent paid job as a kitchen assistant at the Vauxhall Centre, a community resource centre in Norwich. He is thrilled to have the opportunity of a job he really loves and is now working 9.00am-3.00pm, five days a week.

Whilst at college, Stephen undertook work experience there for six months, working one-day-a-week. When the job at the centre was advertised within Norwich City College, the foundation centre manager at the College encouraged Stephen to apply. Following a three-week temporary paid contract, during which time he received training from a job coach who used

Systematic Instruction to help him learn his job, Stephen was appointed as a permanent member of staff.

Although Stephen finds remembering verbal instructions difficult, he can now undertake all the different tasks required in the centre, including working the till and giving correct change. With support and encouragement from colleagues, Stephen is doing well and staff members have commented on his excellent customer service skills and that he goes out of his way to be helpful and polite to customers.

Mint, a project run by Norwich City College to help young people with learning disabilities, provided Stephen's job coach and will be working with him and his employers to review progress and provide any support Stephen needs to continue doing his job well.

Holiday jobs and Saturday jobs can increase the variety of a person's work experience, as well as allowing young people with learning disabilities to start understanding the responsibilities and rewards of paid work. Peer support can be a valuable and effective type of supported employment for young people with learning disabilities. As part of the GAL programme, Manchester City Council agreed to organise the Youth Supported Employment Programme (YSEP) that matched non-disabled peers to young people with learning disabilities. The main aim of the programme was to find Saturday and evening jobs for young people still at school, mirroring the work pathways of non-disabled peers.

Research findings on YSEP strongly suggested that youth supported employment schemes can raise family expectations and the chances of part-time employment for young people with learning disabilities.⁷⁵ Peer supported employment programmes should be an indispensable element in the work portfolio of young people with learning disabilities whilst still at school.

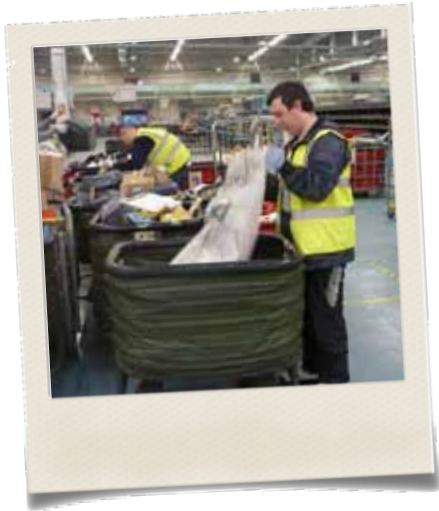
The findings also indicated that peer support programmes for Saturday and evening jobs need to work in tandem with work experience and good employment-focused career advice to increase the chance of employment for young people. While YSEP clearly delivered work opportunities for young people with learning disabilities, it was often the only chance they had to obtain some experience in 'real life' jobs, which in turn prompted the families and the young people to try to hold on to those jobs.

While this outcome was contrary to the main objective of YSEP, it was a reflection of the poorly developed range of opportunities for young people in general. Where nothing else is available, Saturday and evening jobs are readily taken because they provide the only opportunity to be in employment.

Manchester - Youth Supported Employment Project

The Youth Supported Employment Project (YSEP) is helping young people with learning disabilities to secure paid part-time and holiday jobs. Funded by Manchester City Council and delivered by Pure Innovations, the project is working with eight young people from the GAL project.

Working closely with young people, their families, schools and colleges, and employers, the project has already succeeded in supporting young people into paid jobs, in a variety of sectors, including retail, youth work and cleaning. A core feature of YSEP is that a non-disabled young person is recruited to support the young person with a learning disability to get a Saturday or holiday job, which not only provides volunteering experience but employment opportunities, for both young people.



YSEP young people at work

Some young people's work experience was organised by families after becoming involved in the GAL programme – like Helaina.

Helaina's story

Helaina has just turned 16 and is thinking about what she wants to do after she leaves school. She has an interest in working with babies and young children and her work experience placements (organised by her mum Cath) have given her a taste of what it would be like to have a job in the future.

Helaina's first experience of work was at New Moston Library, where she helped with activities for mums and young children, stamped and filed books, used the computer and did photocopying and laminating. Helaina was already a frequent visitor at the library and the staff were happy to offer her the opportunity to come in for four days, spread over two weeks.

Helaina had also completed five days of work experience at Moston Sure Start Children's Centre,

where she got involved in a wide variety of activities, from greeting and escorting parents attending the centre, to choosing and setting up activities for children, and carrying out office tasks.

The staff at the Sure Start Centre put together a report about Helaina's work experience, with photos and descriptions of what she had achieved: "We really enjoyed having Helaina at the Centre. We found out very quickly that she was capable of a great deal and that she needed to be challenged on future days of the placement."

Through GAL, Helaina has started having person-centred reviews at school, which have helped the family to think about what's working and not working, and what is possible for the future. Helaina's mum Cath says: "Being involved with GAL has given me such a lot of valuable information. It has put me in touch with all the people I need to know and talk to about Helaina and her future. And it's given me the skills and tools to take me to the next stage in sorting out a life for Helaina. After Christmas, I am organising more work experience for her, including at her local dance school."

Helaina doing work experience
at New Moston Library



Person-centred planning and person-centred reviews have been used to identify the type of work experience a young person may be interested in and what support they will need to be successful in the work place. Feedback from young people's work experience has been built into one page plans so that skills and interests are reinforced and people who support the young person know how to do this more effectively.

In the next chapter, we will go on to explore the importance of investing in personal and individual budgets for young people.

Chapter 6

Invest in personal and individual budgets for young people

“Without an individual budget, self-directed transition planning simply cannot work. Young people and families need to know how much they have to spend, and what they can spend it on, before they start to plan.”⁷⁶ Centre for Welfare Reform

We need to invest in personal and individual budgets for young people and ensure that personal budgets can be used alongside other funding streams such as education or employment support. Getting a job should be the first focus, so flexibility in using the budgets on services like job coaching and supported employment is important. Agencies need to plan early on how they will bring these funding streams together so young people with learning disabilities can get a job and a life. Ideally, young people will have an indicative allocation as they go into their Year 11 person-centred review.

Whilst there have been a few initiatives to develop personal and individual budgets for children and families (including Dynamite,⁷⁷ the personalised transition model,⁷⁸ In Control, GAL,⁷⁹ and the pilots of Individual Budgets for families with disabled children⁸⁰), progress in personalisation for children and families has been slow compared to that of adult social care.⁸¹ However, this looks set to change with the direction of travel of the new SEN and Disability Green Paper.⁸² This paper states the government’s commitment to providing greater choice and control for families over the support their family receives, and proposes the option of a personal budget by 2014 for all families with children with a statement of SEN or a new ‘Education, Health and Care Plan’.

In order to develop personalised pathways into employment for people with learning disabilities, local areas will need to bring

together a number of different funding streams from different sectors (education, social care, employment and in some cases health).

Early findings from Jobs First suggest that it costs approximately £11,000 to support an individual with moderate to severe learning disabilities into sustained employment. This is more than some individuals are able to pay out of their social care budget alone. A co-funding approach allows individuals to pool funding from their social care budget with additional funding streams such as Access to Work and Work Choice, alongside education budgets for those still in education, such as Additional Learning Support.

The government's Vision for Adult Social Care⁸³ actively encourages the use of personal budgets to pay for employment support. People will consider this option more seriously during their support planning sessions if there is an increased awareness of the different funding streams available to people to pay for employment support.

GAL and Jobs First sites demonstrated how young people could access individualised funding to fund support for employment. Person-centred transition plans with an employment focus have been used to develop support plans for personal budgets and access other funding streams from employment and/or education. Sites that are co-located with Right to Control trailblazers⁸⁴ have also enabled young people to take their work choice allocation as a direct payment. Although GAL sites were not initially co-located with Children's Individual Budgets sites,⁸⁵ a few areas enabled families to use direct payments to purchase support for Saturday and holiday jobs.

Thomas' story highlights the success of person-centred transition plans that have a specific focus on employment.

Thomas' story

Thomas attends a residential college and has been doing work experience in a local factory as part of his course. During the summer holidays, he received a jacket from the factory to thank him for all the hard work he did whilst on placement there. This gave him

a taste for work in the wider world. Thomas made it clear that after college, he wanted to move back to his hometown and find work. The plans he made with his family were to identify a few work placements in his local area for when he has his next summer holidays. This would give him tasters of different jobs and enable him to start establishing links with local people.

Six months after the individual planning meeting, Thomas had two placements set for the summer; one in a museum and another working for a gardening and handyman business, a contact established through his uncle. He will use his direct payment to make sure he is supported on these placements and will work three to four afternoons a week during the long holidays.

It is essential that people know their individual budgets (which is the money available from all funding streams) as soon as possible so that they can start to plan for employment. Young people in the GAL cohort in Herefordshire were given an indicative budget to think about their futures. This enabled young people like Emrys to develop a more effective and personalised pathway into employment and make the transition straight into paid employment after leaving school.

Emrys' story

Emrys, 20, has two jobs – as a caretaker and as a cleaner. He is the first young person from his school (a special school for children and young people with learning disabilities aged 4–19) to leave and go straight into paid employment rather than going on to college.

Whilst still at school, Emrys and his family got involved in the GAL programme and they started to think about employment and what job he would like to do when he left school. Emrys knew that he did not want to go on to college but wanted to get a job straight away.

When he reached 16, Emrys started to receive a personal budget from social care funding, and used this to pay for employment support from Mencap Pathways. He undertook supported work placements and volunteered at a local cafe to help him decide what kind of job he wanted.

Once Emrys felt he knew what he wanted to do, he applied for a variety of roles and succeeded in securing his two jobs. He is really pleased with these and is currently receiving on-the-job training to help him learn the different tasks. This support will gradually reduce with Mencap Pathways remaining in the background to review how the job is going.



Early findings from the Jobs First sites suggest that people are more likely to use their personal budgets for employment when:

- The Resource Allocation System (RAS) allows sufficient points for employment outcomes but funding that is not directly attributed to employment outcomes (such as day services) may be used to fund employment support.
- Person-centred planning teams carry out employment-focused reviews and develop support plans that prioritise employment and allow a budget for employment support.
- There is a policy that no support plans are signed off that do not address employment as a priority life goal and consider employment goals when other life choices are made.
- Supported employment providers are invited to take part in the support planning process.

Some Jobs First sites have invested in developing the workforce (care managers, brokers, user-led organisations) so they can be sure that employment, as an outcome, is positive and possible and that it can develop the market to provide good support for employment for marginalised groups.

In the next chapter, we will explore developing the market to offer a wide range of options for young people after they turn sixteen.

Chapter 7

Developing the market

Pelham's story

Pelham, 19, lives with his family in Lincolnshire, has a passion for black and white films, and for marionette puppets. He knows he does not want an office job when he leaves school, and so he and his family used a person-centred planning session with his transition worker to think about how he could turn his interests into a business opportunity. Pelham is now going to do some research about producing and mending marionettes, so that he can decide whether to pursue this as an opportunity for self-employment.

We must work to develop the market to offer a wide range of post-16 options that lead to equal life outcomes, including employment. These options should help young people to have more choice and control over their lives, get jobs, achieve independent living and community inclusion rather than simply follow traditional routes of college courses and day centres. Good local options should be developed that increase outcomes and reduce costs to the system. Supported employment and job coaching, including vocational profiling (finding out about the person's interests and potential contribution), job finding, job analysis and placement, job training and follow-on services⁸⁶ needs to be available to all young people.

Even if aspirations have been raised and person-centred employment support and individual budgets are in place, people with learning disabilities can still find themselves excluded from employment if there are no effective post-16 options in place.

Research has shown that even when young people with learning disabilities do pursue employment, they find a lack of available support, limited transportation options and a lack of clear information about welfare benefits, all of which make it harder for them to move into work.^{87, 88, 89, 90}

The GAL Pathway identifies five employment routes that need to be in place in a local system to support young people into employment. These routes are based on research evidence, and the experience of young people and their families along with the multi agency teams in the GAL sites. The five employment routes that need to be developed in local areas are:

- Supported employment.
- Internships.
- Apprenticeships.
- Self-employment.
- Employment-related further education.

This chapter will explore each of these five employment routes, based on the Valuing People Now 'How to' guide, which was produced to capture all the learning once the employment demonstrator projects, including GAL, concluded in March 2011.⁹¹

Supported employment

Supported employment is a well-evidenced⁹² personalised approach to enabling people with significant learning disabilities to access and retain real jobs in supported open employment, as opposed to sheltered employment. Local areas need to build capacity for supported employment and job coaching and enable job coaches to work with young people before they leave school or college. Funding can come from a variety of sources, including children's services, adult social care, education, Access to Work or charitable funding.

Guidance for commissioners has been published as part of the Valuing People Now employment resource hub⁹³ including a business case for investing in supported employment and a model of supported employment to inform better local commissioning.

Paul's story gives an example of how a person with a learning disability moved into paid employment with the support of a job coach.

Paul's story

Paul has been attending day services for at least 10 years. He has a moderate learning disability, low self-esteem and is very reluctant to voice his opinion, let alone be assertive.

Paul was supported to undertake a work placement valeting cars, and following that, further support was provided so that he could set up his own business providing this as a service. He now works one day a week cleaning mini buses at a local school.

Kent Supported Employment staff and Paul's key worker at the day service worked together so they could support him. Using pictorial action planning, Paul could take the lead on his ideas, and was supported through the process of getting public liability insurance and, most significantly, opening his own bank account. Day services staff also attended training in Systematic Instruction provided by Kent Supported Employment to ensure they understood how Paul would be supported by a job coach to travel on public transport and learn the skills needed for the job. After only one month, Paul's support is already being reduced in the workplace.

The positive impact of this opportunity on Paul's confidence and self-esteem is immeasurable – he is more assertive and noticeably taking the lead on occasion.

Internships (e.g. Project Search)

Internships can provide an effective route into employment where people have access to intensive on-the-job training in a real work setting, and there is a clear focus on employment as the outcome. Project Search is an example of a supported internships model that works well for people with learning disabilities.⁹⁴ It involves a partnership approach from employers, schools or colleges and supported employment providers.

Because the employer leads the model, there is an up-front commitment to offering jobs at the end of the internship. The internships also help to drive significant cultural change, because staff and customers see disabled young people performing a variety of valued roles. The model is funded in partnership: the education and supported employment providers fund a full-time job coach and tutor for the interns, and the employer provides accommodation for a classroom, a range of work placements and a 'business liaison' post (typically around 10% of a full time post), whose role is to support Project Search across the organisation.

The story below shows how a young man with a learning disability moved into paid work as a result of taking part in Project Search.

James' story

James, 22, works for 16 hours a week in the staff bank at Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. James got the job after taking part in Project Search.

Before he started Project Search, James had been at City College Norwich for four years doing a variety of foundation studies courses. He had never had any formal work experience. James, who is a wheelchair user because of his cerebral palsy, relied on education transport to attend college and his Project Search placements.

After a term of study at City College (where he achieved an understanding of the hospital's work,

studied employability skills and gained a basic food hygiene certificate), James' first work placement was as a clerical assistant in the Practice Development department, combined with working on a reception desk.

Initially James struggled with organising his workload and following the sequences of paperwork, but his job coach used Systematic Instruction to break down the tasks into steps, and by the end of the placement, James was able to work independently. The hospital made reasonable adjustments for James' mobility needs following an occupational therapy assessment.

In his second placement, as an administrator in the staff bank, James was able to organise his workload well from the outset using the skills he had developed in his first placement. He took on new tasks including processing data, writing letters and producing training/information packs.

James found that he liked the busy team environment in the staff bank, and his manager gave him positive feedback about his performance. At the end of the Project Search course, James was encouraged to apply for a job within the department, and to his delight, he was successful.

Since James secured the job, Remploy have been working with him to provide continuing support for the job, and James is undertaking travel training so that he can use the local bus service independently.⁹⁵

Apprenticeships and apprenticeship-style opportunities

Apprenticeships offer young people the opportunity to learn the skills to work in a specific industry, whilst being paid. While they

are an important employment strategy for young people, many of the GAL sites found that elements of the apprenticeship scheme, such as the functional skills requirements, were a barrier to young people with a learning disability who wish to take part. Some areas are building on the idea of on the job learning by offering apprenticeship-style opportunities to young people. This way, those who want to train on the job rather than remaining in school or college-based education can develop their skills and move towards paid employment – this is what Nikki chose to do:

Nikki's story

Nikki, 17, lives in Kent. He has started doing a variety of work experience placements, one of them is at a garden centre with his father, and he is really happy to be working. He wants to try a variety of options and get a paid job in the future like everyone else.



When Nikki turns 18, he will get an individual budget funded from adult social services. Until then, he has an individualised budget of £8,000+ (comprising of a direct payment from social services and from the funding given to his school to meet his statement of SEN), which will be used to fund accredited courses and tutoring, along with profiling Nikki's skills and interests and to contact suitable employers. It also funds one-on-one leisure and workplace support.

This individualised budget was agreed as a result of the GAL project team who worked together to design a package of learning and support to suit him and help him realise his ambition of getting a real job.

Because of Nikki's success, Kent County Council is rolling out similar apprenticeship-style opportunities for young people facing multiple disadvantages in gaining employment. Three young people have already started a similar programme.

Employment-related further education

Research shows that on the job learning is more effective than classroom-based learning when supporting people with a learning disability into getting paid employment.⁹⁶ However, many young people who took part in the GAL programme were still being channelled into college courses, which did not lead to employment.

Further education that includes supported employment approaches such as job coaching, training in Systematic Instruction and work-based learning in the curriculum can significantly increase employment outcome, particularly if they have a strong partnership with a supported employment service. Colleges are beginning to use further education and training funding more creatively, not only to enable people to access the mainstream curriculum, but also to provide on the job support.⁹⁷

Realistic Opportunities for Supported Employment (ROSE), Havering

The ROSE project, based at Havering College, works with young people aged 19–24 to secure paid work placements as well as qualifications. The course takes place in the college and the workplace, where a job coach supports the young people. The course also includes travel training to enable students to travel to college and the workplace. In addition, the project works with 10 adults (over the age of 25) on a similar course.

So far, the project has supported 73 people into securing paid jobs. One of the people they have supported into work is Alex, a young woman with a severe learning disability who now has a job of over 16 hours a week at Sainsbury's. Alex's dad Steve says: "Alex was nervous, withdrawn, lacking confidence, self worth and purpose. Through the determination, patience and perseverance of the job coaches, and Sainsbury's manager and staff, Alex now works independently."

Funding for the project comes from the Young People's Learning Agency (for those age 19–24) and the Skills Funding Agency (through the college's annual Adult Learner Responsive allocation), and through Additional Learning Support (ALS) funding allocated to the learners taking part in the ROSE project. Although the project is currently supplementing its funding with money awarded by the Big Lottery Fund, the team are exploring

sustainable funding routes including Access to Work (for people securing work of over 16 hours a week) and additional ALS funding.

Most examples of colleges offering employment-related further education (such as Havering College's ROSE project, Bolton College and West Cheshire College⁹⁸), have not yet found a sustainable way of funding job coaching. This is despite emerging evidence that these approaches produce positive 'cost: benefit' outcomes at the taxpayer level.⁹⁹

However, information published in March 2011 by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills provides updated information on the changes to skills funding which combined with a clear willingness on the part of further education providers to adapt provision, could significantly change this. This will set out how the new freedoms and flexibilities in further education budgets can be used by providers to fund non-mainstream provision (such as tutors for supported internship and employment models).

Self-employment

Supported self-employment and micro-enterprises are emerging as an additional option for people with a learning disability. The model is based on an individual assessment of the wishes and interests of the person in question that is then used to design a profit-making venture. A micro-enterprise is a small business created around one person.¹⁰⁰

The primary benefits of this model are that it:¹⁰¹

- Builds on the capacity and assets of a person with a learning disability.
- Concentrates on people's interests and strengths, and can provide a more flexible employment option than community employment.
- Addresses a gap in the self-employed sector of the labour market, where people with a learning disability are not generally present.

- Enables people to be more active in their communities through using their earned income from the micro-enterprise.
- Is a way of gaining income from a hobby or an interest.
- Promotes people with a learning disability as citizens with a positive profile in the community.

The GAL and Jobs First sites have sought advice from the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities (FPLD) In Business Programme, and miEnterprise – a social enterprise that supports people with a learning disability to set up their own micro-enterprises.¹⁰² Derek has set up his own business under this initiative.

Derek's Story

Derek is 41 years old. As part of the Jobs First project, Derek had his first employment-focused review, which looked at how his skills and interests could fit in with paid employment, and how he could spend his time and his funding differently.

Derek decided to start his own micro-business selling locally sourced produce. He chose to stop some leisure and training activities and instead bought membership of miEnterprise and to use his PA to help him run his market stall.

Derek has surprised people who know him well with his new found confidence. His business is developing each week and he now travels independently by bus. His mother feels people are finally listening to what Derek has to say.

Derek is thinking of growing his business into a door-to-door service for the local community. It is important for him to take small steps and build his business up at a pace he controls. He is now applying

for Access to Work to use alongside his social care budget, so he can get more support from miEnterprise to take his business to the next stage.

Derek goes swimming in the evenings now, paying for it out of his earnings.

The final chapter focuses on coproduction, and how GAL sites used the Working Together for Change approach to gather information from young people's person-centred reviews to identify local priorities for change and re-commissioning of services.

Chapter 8

Work together for change

“We need one point of contact. Someone who knows us as a family, knows what’s out there and believes in possibilities.” A parent from the Aspirations for Life campaign

Learn together about what works and what gets in the way. Keep asking young people and families what is working and not working about the system to get young people into work, and act on what you find.

In this chapter we look at the importance of co-producing employment strategies with young people and families. As families and staff start to see more people with learning disabilities in employment, and begin to understand better what helps young people to get a job, they start to ask questions like:

- Why is money spent on things that don’t result in people getting paid jobs and a life?
- If we are facing such difficult times why can’t we make sure money is spent on things that make a difference to people getting a job?
- Why aren’t we included in decision-making?

Parents are also getting clearer about what they need and how the money should be spent.

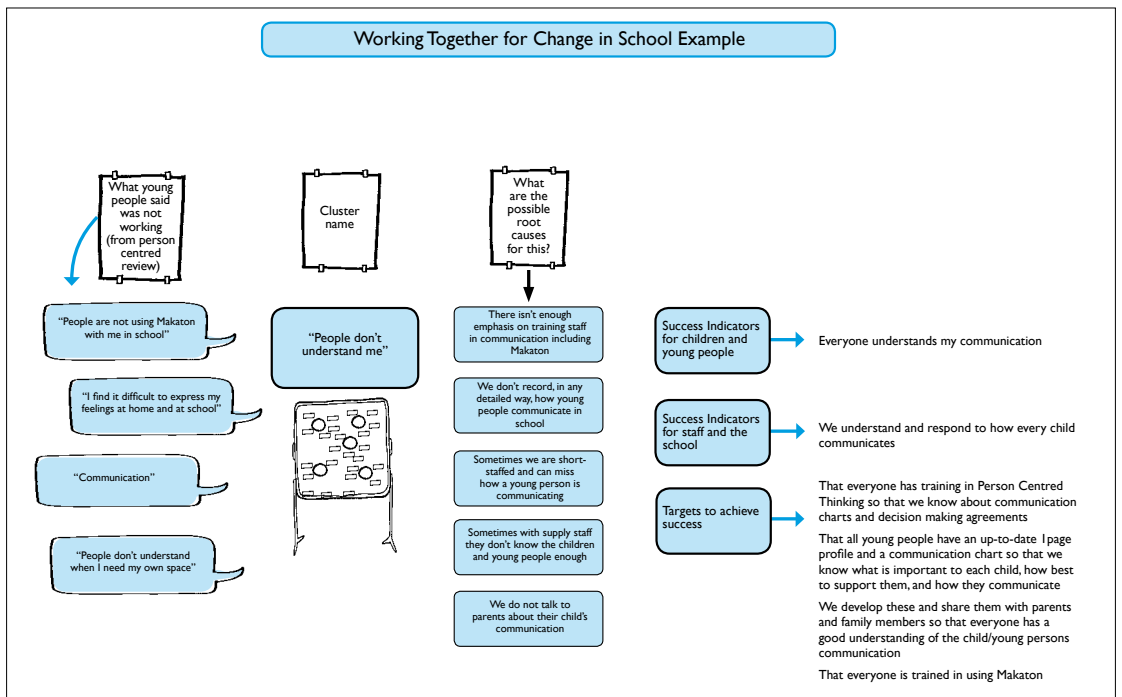
Local areas need to work with young people and their families to redesign transition pathways and develop post-16 options that support young people with learning disabilities into getting a job and a life. GAL used the following approaches to ensure people and their families were central to redesigning local systems:

- Young people and family leadership programme to support them to think through what is positive and possible around work and getting a life.

- Young people and families members on the GAL multi-agency project teams.
- Working Together for Change – a simple process that involves taking information from people’s outcome-focused reviews about what is working and not working for them, and what is important to them in the future.

GAL sites used the Working Together for Change approach to gather information from young people’s person-centred reviews, which could then help identify local priorities for change and the re-commissioning of services.¹⁰³

Working Together for Change has also been used in several schools to inform transition planning and contribute to school development plans. Every Child Matters: Change for Children¹⁰⁴ states that true participation with children and young people is about asking them what works and doesn’t work and what could be better in involving them in the design, delivery and evaluation of services on an ongoing basis. Working Together for Change is one way to achieve this. The process uses information from person-centred reviews under the following headings:



The example shows what some young people said was not working about communication and how this information was used to agree targets for change.

The GAL programme demonstration sites used the Working Together for Change model to find out how local services and systems needed to change to ensure young people went into paid employment and lead full lives when they finish school or college. Events were held to capture important information about what was working and not working from the perspectives of young people involved in the programme.



One of the themes that came out in the early events was that young people's person-centred reviews rarely mentioned employment outcomes. This was less true of later events, where the young people and leadership programmes had played an important role in raising expectations and aspirations supporting young people to think about employment; prompting employment to become a focus in their person-centred reviews.

Working Together for Change in North Tyneside

The team in North Tyneside looked at the person-centred transition reviews of 30 young people aged between 14 and 25 and identified key themes in each case: what was working for the person; what needed to change; and what was important for them in the future in relation to employment. Young people, families and senior decision-makers responsible for supporting young people in gaining jobs (for example in education, Connexions, Jobcentre Plus, local authority childrens' and adults' services, employment services and LSC) shared this information at a co-production event.

All the participants worked as a group to identify:

- How to build on what was working.
- What they needed to do to address the things that were not working.
- What services they would need to commission to support young people in planning their careers and finding paid employment.

One of the issues raised was that employment was not often mentioned in reviews, and the group spent time thinking about the reasons for this. Some feedback indicated that people involved in Year 9 and Year 10 reviews didn't know what was possible in terms of supported employment or understand the positive impacts of having a job.

The group identified actions to address this problem, including:

- Employing a transition support employment officer who would attend reviews from Year 9.
- Reviewing the person-centred planning process in Year 9 to initiate a career plan.
- Working with the local multi-agency GAL team to provide accessible information for young people and families about the possibilities and positive aspects of work and how to get help locally.

Working Together for Change - Manchester

The Manchester GAL team used Working Together for Change to celebrate the changes they have made and to create a plan for the future.

The workshop included young people, parents and staff from the council's childrens' and adults' services, the 14-19 team, Connexions, and local colleges. During the day participants worked in groups (a mix of young people, parents and staff), to look at themes coming from young people's person-centred transition reviews and then identified what was not working for young people. Several key themes emerged:

“I don't understand the process and don't have a real choice.”

“I want to have the same opportunities as everyone else.”

“I want a person-centred plan for now and for the future.”

“I need to be able to trust professionals.”

“I need you to remember my health needs when we are planning.”

“I want you to help me to do as well as I can in education and in life.”

“I need help to find a job that suits me.”

“I need to be asked the right questions and given the right information.”

The groups then looked at root causes, and what success would look like, and created an action plan for what they will do differently in the future. Actions agreed included:

- Involving parents in training for brokers and person-centred planning facilitators.
- Exploring using person-centred tools to improve communication between schools and families.
- Getting Connexions PAs to make contact with parents of young people with learning disabilities at the end of Year 8.

Participants’ impressions of the day were positive, focusing on the importance of reflecting on the change that has already taken place, and of building trust between people with learning disabilities, their families, and the professionals who work with them. One mum said, “It was good to talk to people on an equal basis. It feels like the actions are positive and achievable.”

What this could look like?

Working together for change also means supporting people to get a job and a life through a multi-agency approach. Employment is not the responsibility of any one government department, service or agency. The employment rates of people with learning

disabilities will only increase if everyone believes it is possible, and makes changes to what is commissioned and provided locally to ensure that services work together. Often professionals will only make changes to their behaviour if others also commit to change:

“I signpost young people and their families to further education as I have no faith that the local supported employment service gets people paid jobs. They all seem to be doing work experience in charity shops.”

Connexions worker, GAL

The GAL programme supported local systems to redesign their transition pathways so they supported young people to get a job and a life. The following strategies were used to achieve this:

- Establishing a multi-agency project group.
- Working with a small cohort of people and identifying what needed to happen locally to ensure people with learning disability got jobs.
- Ensuring people with learning disabilities and families were central to redesigning local systems.
- Raising aspirations and expectations and helping people understand the need for change.
- Identifying the cost benefit of what is currently funded.
- Using the GAL employment pathway¹⁰⁵ to complete a gap analysis of the local system.

The GAL employment pathway is a graphic tool that was developed by sharing the evidence base of what works with young people, their families and local agencies and analysing what was working and not working in relation to supporting young people to get a job and a life in the demonstration site. As a result, it was co-produced¹⁰⁶ and focuses on outcomes and activities rather than services. Because each area is different, it is not important who does each task, as long as they take place.

The GAL employment pathway has resulted in local areas opening up opportunities for young people with learning disabilities to get

paid jobs. Dr. Steve Beyer, from Cardiff University evaluated the GAL model:

“Sites that have started to implement the pathway have seen increased awareness among families, professionals and young people about employment as an option. They have begun to set goals for young people who are still at school around future employment. In some areas, we have seen people taking up evening and weekend jobs with support: the first steps on the career ladder most people begin with.

Person-centred planning has driven people forward towards qualifications achieved in work environments, where they can benefit from vocational training. More people from the GAL cohort are finding jobs from school and when leaving college where qualification training might only hinder them. Person-centred planning has also provided a route for others to explore self-employment that suits their very particular situations. The work being done for those still at school will hopefully lead to an increasing demand for, and flow of, young people into employment in future years.”¹⁰⁷

In North Tyneside, the GAL project team used the GAL pathway to complete a gap analysis of their local transition pathways. They identified that one of the shortfalls was that employment was not embedded into their person-centred transition planning processes, and that supported employment agencies were not engaged with people until they reached 18 years old. They decided

to use some of the money that they had received from the transition support planning to try out a new role that would help to support young people with learning disabilities and their families plan and prepare for employment.

Transition Employment Support Officer

North Tyneside employs a Transition Employment Support Officer to support young people with learning disabilities at Beacon Hill and Woodlawn schools to think about future jobs and careers. This role is funded until December 2011, through the National Transition Support Programme (TSP) grant. The North Tyneside multi-agency joint GAL and TSP project team identified the need for the role when they used the GAL employment pathway to evaluate the local transition pathway.

Since starting in the role in September 2010, Kerry Davidson has been working intensively with staff, young people from Year 9 upwards and parents at Beacon Hill school, getting to know the young people and helping them to plan and develop skills for the jobs they would like when they leave school.

Kerry has been attending person-centred reviews at Beacon Hill, making sure that employment is discussed. She says, "I am very pleased with the response from the parents – work experience and employment has been a topic of discussion at the majority of reviews and they are welcoming support for the young people".

Another aspect of the Transition Employment Support Officer role is to develop work experience opportunities for young people. Kerry has been working with Beacon Hill's work experience co-coordinator and targets have

been agreed for each year group, in particular focusing on those young people in Year 14 who have not yet had any work experience, and who will be leaving school in summer 2011.

Kerry has developed work experience portfolios that young people can use to demonstrate their skills and interests. Using text and photos, the portfolios will show what the young person can do, in school, in a work environment and at home. Teachers are also building some of the planning and discovery work into the curriculum.

In January 2011, Kerry started to work with a second school, Woodlawn, to develop work experience provision for sixth form students.

What this means for professionals

Everyone needs to work together to have a person-centred approach and focus on getting young people into work. For professionals, it means ensuring they use person-centred thinking tools with young people. These practical tools can be introduced into assessment, transition planning and the curriculum as a whole.¹⁰⁸ There are examples of mainstream and special schools adopting person-centred thinking to personalise learning,¹⁰⁹ which we discussed in Chapter 5.

Ensuring that person-centred thinking is at the heart of assessment and transition planning

The SEN and Disability Green Paper state that families find the SEN system to be “bureaucratic, bewildering and adversarial.”¹¹⁰ It proposes to put in place a better system that supports life outcomes for young people; gives parents more control; and transfers the power to professionals on the front line and to local communities. One way it intends to do this is to have pathfinder sites that develop a new single assessment process along with an ‘Education, Health and Care Plan’, and to extend the children individual budget pilots. The pathfinder sites will act as demonstration sites and promote innovation.

In order to ensure that young people and their families do have more control over their support and have better life outcomes, professionals will need to learn from good practice in personalisation that embeds person-centred thinking at the heart of the support planning process and uses individualised funding. This requires taking a person-centred approach to their assessment process and practice, and working together to inform the support planning. The two-day person-centred assessment workshop held in GAL sites asked professionals to think about the following questions so they could focus their professional approaches into a specific person-centred approach:

- What assessments do you do?
- Why do you do them?
- What information do you get from them?
- Does this information help you to support young people achieve their aspirations to get a job and a life?
- What needs to change?
- How can assessments feed into person-centred transition plans and how can person-centred thinking change your approach to assessment?

Professionals working with young people with learning disabilities in North East Lincolnshire completed training on person-centred assessment, as part of the development programme for GAL. Attendees at the training days recognised that young people with learning disabilities were often assessed by lots of different people and services using different criteria and methods. As a result of the training day, professionals agree to work out how they could ensure their professional support was informed by person-centred thinking and used in such a way that it supported people to achieve their aspirations. Each group identified some initial changes they could make to their practice. The group agreed to meet again to discuss how assessments could be rationalised to reduce the burden on young people and their families, whilst still meeting the needs of the different organisations involved in providing support.

Conclusion

“We will use learning from these approaches to raise aspirations and set an expectation for the way in which services should support young disabled people to make a successful transition to adulthood.” SEN and Disability Green Paper

Very few disabled people with learning disabilities, mental health needs or autism have a job. But in our experience, the vast majority of people in these groups tell us they want to work. We are also learning through the push for personalisation and the continued implementation of person-centred approaches in childrens’ and adult social services, that unless employment is very high up on the agenda, young disabled people just don’t get jobs.

GAL and other employment and transition-related work programmes have highlighted the importance of focusing on life outcomes when preparing young people for adulthood. The employment rates of people with learning disabilities and some other groups of young people are so low that unless there is a focus on supporting people to get a job and live a full life, employment opportunities will always be overlooked.

The GAL evaluation by Cardiff University demonstrated that young people who were of working age were three times more likely to go into paid employment in the GAL sites than the national average.¹¹¹ This is positive, as all the young people in the GAL sites had severe learning disabilities and were receiving services from local authorities. Through working on approaches similar to those we have set out in this book, the GAL sites reported:

- Increased presumption of employability amongst young people, their families and agencies that supported them.
- More schools engaging in person-centred transition planning and reviews, as well as employment support.
- Reduction in out-of-county placements and spend on day services.

- Increased understanding that sites needed to change commissioning practice so there were more effective post-16 opportunities that lead to employment and full lives.
- Positive outcomes from using person-centred reviews: a process that was liked by the young people and families involved in them.

The idea that employment must be everyone's business is now fully embedded in government policy. The SEN and Disability Green Paper¹¹² states that by 2015, disabled young people and young people with special educational needs will have early and well-integrated support for – and advice on – their future. This will include: a single assessment process; a combined education, health and care plan; support into employment; access to better quality vocational and work-related learning options; and good opportunities and support to get and keep a job. It has committed to building on the good practice and learning from the 12 GAL sites and sets out the importance of person-centred planning and reviews in bringing together support to help young people with learning disabilities leave education and achieve paid employment and fulfilling lives.

The Sayce Review said a foundation for success in helping young disabled people's transition to adulthood would be “education, health and social care systems that raise the aspirations of disabled people and their families, and prepare people from day one for a successful transition (or retention) into sustainable employment and career paths.”¹¹³ At the time of writing, the Government's response to the review is out for consultation, but it is clear that the work of GAL and the learning we have set out in this book would go a long way to help meet those aspirations.

The Getting a Life programme and its parent strategy Valuing Employment Now made important contributions to identifying the practical steps required to increase employment chances and to get it right. They set out how to take a whole system, whole life approach to developing employment pathways for people with learning disabilities and published their advice in the 'How to' guide referenced in Chapter 7. However, with an average employment rate of only 6.4%¹¹⁴ there is much still to do to ensure

people's potential is maximised and employers and society benefit from the skills and attributes of all young people, even those with the most complex needs.

We can't emphasise strongly enough that for this to happen, people need to believe it is possible and positive for young disabled people to get and keep a job. We need to encourage those who hold the purse strings to spend scarce resources on what works, rather than what keeps people further away from the employment market. We must also continue to innovate and keep our eyes open to the opportunities and ideas that haven't been explored yet.

Projects like Vela Micro-boards,¹¹⁵ which help people with higher support needs to develop a business by working with friends and family to link their person-centred plans to a business plan, are just one example of new and creative ways of approaching employment for young disabled people. Small groups of people come together to form a micro-board that develops the business, manages grant funding and takes care of professional service functions that the individual may otherwise be unable to carry out. The link between person-centred plans and business plans means that the individual can administer a small business, use personal support funding and hire support staff where needed to help run their business. These, and other inspired ideas like them, create new visions of how employers and social entrepreneurs can support people, and develop business circles of support.

Getting a job, getting a life and getting it right: six ways to support young disabled people into work has provided a starting point to understand what needs to happen to increase the employment outcomes of young people furthest away from the employment market. We have set out that employment can lead to greater life outcomes and that having a job can have many positive effects above and beyond earning a wage. We have also shown that supporting people into paid employment is more cost-effective for local authorities and for society as a whole. Finally, we have set out that it is positive and possible for everyone to work – including people with complex needs.

By sharing the experiences of the young disabled people who successfully found work through the GAL programme we hope we have encouraged you to step back and look at the whole system

so a conversation can begin on how to raise aspirations and expectations around employment. Only when more people start to aim higher, embed person-centred transition reviews, establish personalised curriculums, provide meaningful work experience, invest in personal and individual budgets, develop the market and work together for change, can we ensure more young people with learning disabilities have the opportunity to get a job and live a life they love.

Footnotes

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1. Sanderson, H., Smith, T., Lewis, J. (2011) Personalising Education – Person-Centred Approaches in Schools www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk
 2. Sanderson, H., Smith, T. (2009) Introducing Person-Centred Thinking in a Primary School <http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/media/46337/introducing%20pct%20in%20primary%20schools.pdf>

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Young disabled people can and do want to work. Having a job is a crucial part of leading a fulfilling life yet very few adults with learning disabilities in England are in paid employment. So what does it take to help young disabled people get a job and get a life?

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