

Are We Nearly There Yet?

by Helen Wheatley, Council for Disabled Children

This short report has been compiled by a 16 year old young woman, Eleni Burgess. She examined the experiences of almost 80 young people who use wheelchairs and attend mainstream secondary schools across the UK.

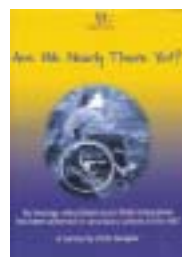


'Interviews were held, questionnaires distributed and individual stories recorded in order to answer the question, about integration, Are We Nearly There Yet?'

The report gives a concise and powerful summary of the barriers young people using wheelchairs face in accessing education in mainstream schools.

It contains accounts from five young people who talk about their experiences which include getting around school, learning support, transport and provision of equipment.

In each section, the findings from the research set out clear messages on the experiences and wishes of disabled young people. A range of issues are covered. These include:



- PE and sport
- Role models
- Sex Education
- Learning support
- Physiotherapy

The report comes with a short checklist for schools and local education authorities (LEA's) to consider when planning to meet the needs of disabled young people using their service.

This report is a recommended read for all those involved in education in mainstream schools and those providing services for young people. It offers a concise account of the main issues services are likely to need to address in developing an accessible service for young people using wheelchairs.



my future choices

The Magazine of the Transition Information Network

Summer 2004 issue



- Empower 2001
- From Here to There
- Prospects Summer
- DDA Quiz
- Sounds Good
- News in brief



A copy of the report and checklist costs £3 and can be ordered from:
Telephone: 0161 449 9635 Email: chris.burgess7@btinternet.com

Diana
THE WORK CONTINUES

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my future choices aims
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Please enquire for
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Editors:
Steve Easter & Bronia Kita

Address:
c/o Campaigns Department
Scope
6 Market Road
London N7 9PW

Editorial & Subscriptions:
020 7619 7244
Fax: 020 7619 7380
Email: bronia.kita@scope.org.uk

Design & Printing:
Cottier & Sidaway
Tel: 01767 262858

Front Cover: The Empower
2001 Group at Center Parks
by Wendy Greenwell

Transition Information Network Forums.



'We had many visitors to our stand at *Learning Disability Today* in London on 26 November 03'

We held our first new forum last November on 'Direct Payments'. There was a lot of interest in this topic. Instead of receiving services from your local authority, you ask for money to employ a personal assistant yourself. We were told about some new research on the use of direct payments. 'Scope' had recently led a strategy and discovered that some disabled young people had found the 'direct payments' schemes very complicated. This was a concern. The disabled young people wanted more independence and wanted to use 'Direct Payments'.

Most people enjoyed the forum. In future there will be more pictures and smaller discussions. Our aim is to make it easier for disabled young people to be included. Our spring forum is in London on 7 May. It will be on 'Overcoming Barriers in Education'. Our planned forums are:

- Overcoming Barriers to Education in London on 7 may 04
- Further Education and Employment in Birmingham on 6 July 04

These forums are free. They start at 1030 and end with a Sandwich lunch at 1230. This gives time to meet other people, or ask more questions. Just let us know if you want to come along. Contact:

Bronia Kita 020 7619 72444
bronia.kita@scope.org.uk

Empower 2001



By Kate Caryer

Like many disabled young people, I need help when I go out. As I am 20 it is better if the person helping me is young as well. My mum doesn't want to go clubs or pubs and stay up late! So for some years now I have been employing young helpers and I call them my personal assistants, or PAs for short.

My life is really full and I do all the sorts of things any young person, disabled or non-disabled, wants to do. I think all young disabled people should have the help they need and now Direct Payments are available from Social Services to enable people to pay for personal assistants. To encourage young people to use or become personal assistants, with some friends I set up a group called Empower 2001.

We have run 2 weekend training courses for disabled and non-disabled young people where they learn how to use or how to be personal assistants.

We held our last course last summer at Center Parks and it was an enormous success. Young people with all sorts of disabilities came and we were particularly pleased that some people with learning difficulties came to learn how to be a

PA. Some of the non-disabled young people had never spent time with disabled people before and I like to think they went away with a really good attitude towards disabled people.

We ran various workshops, including The Meaning of Independence, How to Chose a PA, Dealing with Difficulties, Disability Equality etc.

The workshops were informative, original and really good fun. If something makes you laugh, you remember it much better!

Everyone who came on the weekend said they had a really good time and learned a lot. We thought it was a shame that only the 48 people who came would benefit, so one of our funders, Connexions North London, agreed to pay for a video of the weekend so that even more people can share the fun.



Images by Wendy Greenwell

So, if you want to learn more about personal assistance for young disabled people – or even just need a good laugh, buy this video!

The cost is £20 plus £1 post & packing for organisations, or £10 plus £1 post & packing for individuals and unfunded voluntary groups. Each videotape includes two versions – a straight version and a sub-titled and BSL interpreted version. Running time is approximately 45 minutes.



Action 19 Plus

For an order form contact Empower 2001

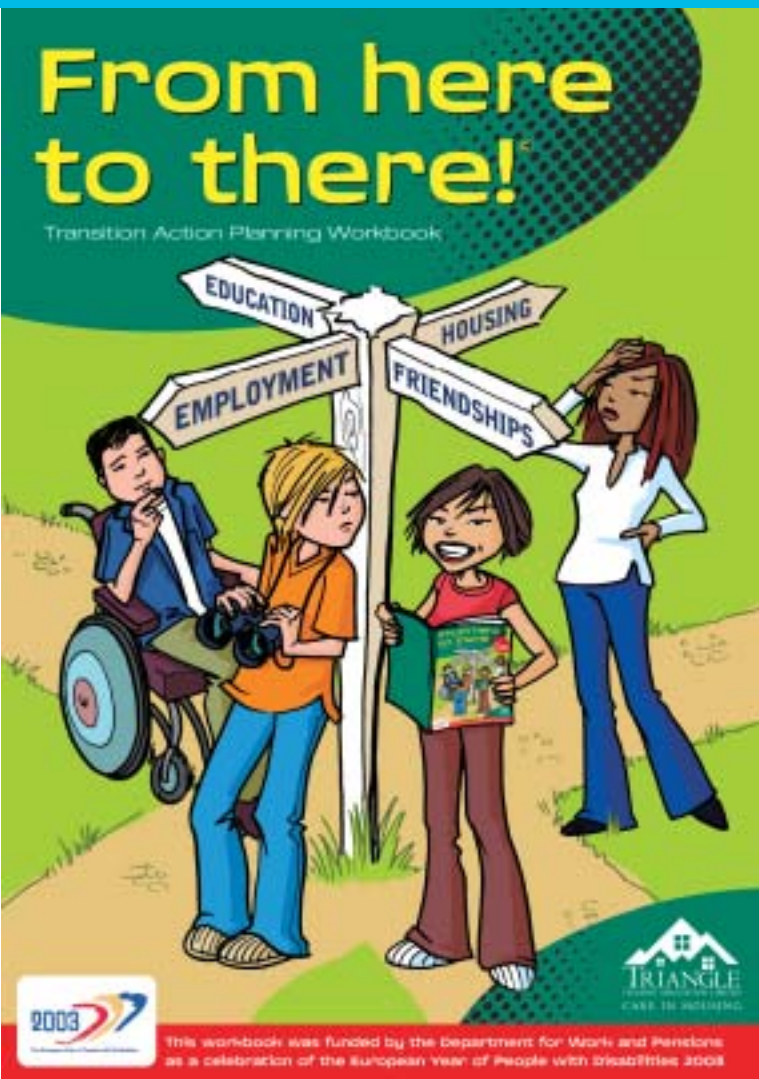
21a Muswell Road London N10 2BJ

Website: www.empower2001.org.uk

Email: hq@empower2001.org.uk

<<http://www.empower2001.org.uk/>>

From Here to There.



Recently in Northern Ireland, Triangle Housing Association's Transition Service launched their Transition Action Planning Workbook. *"From Here To There"* is the result of a year's consultation with families and students across six schools for young people with severe learning difficulties. It will be piloted with these six schools in 2004, with the final version of the Action Planning Workbook available 2005.

Triangle's Transition Service developed the project in partnership with the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). They received a "local project" grant from the Department of Work and Pensions, as part of the European Year of People with Disabilities. Their focus is young people in their last three

years of special education. They include families enabling them to plan with the young person for a full life beyond education. For families of young people with learning disabilities transition from school a highly stressful time. The workbook promotes early planning, a key for success, and families have welcomed this:

"I am delighted that Triangle Transition Service has listened to our concerns for the future of our sons/daughters and has produced this action planning workbook to help us as a family unit to plan for a socially inclusive life for our young adults on leaving special education at 19 years."
(Chairperson of Kilronan Parents Action Group, Magherafelt).

Garth Anderson is the services manager. This new project builds upon Triangle's successful 'School to Employment' programme, that uses the 'supported employment model'. The new project offers further encouragement to young people and families:.

"Parents and carers have high hopes and expectations for their sons and daughters and have a huge dignity and resolve that they will lead as full a life as possible....."
(Garth Anderson, Manager of Triangle Supported Employment/Transition Services. Contact:

**Triangle Housing Association Ltd. 60
Eastermeade Gardens Ballymoney
N.Ireland BT53 6BD Tel. 02827666880)**

There's more on employment in our next issue in July.

Prospects Summer Activity Programme 2003



By Tom Partridge (15yrs)

I would like to tell you about my very positive experience with the Positive Futures Summer Programme earlier this year. What this entailed was a completely new experience for me, in which I took part in different activities one day a week for seven weeks.

These activities started with rock climbing, which I didn't really like because I wasn't used to it and didn't feel very secure. I did, however, manage to calm my nerves enough to be able to participate. More enjoyable was the visit to the cinema, which was also a new experience for me, but much more positive than the previous week's climbing. The most enjoyable activities were when we went cycling and raft building at Loch Lomond. I enjoyed the cycling because it was an exciting new challenge for me, as I had very little prior experience. The raft building, however, was the perfect activity for me, as I have a great interest in technical activities!

To draw the programme to a close, we all went out for a meal to an Indian restaurant in Glasgow. The venue was decided upon by the group, and proved to be an excellent choice! During the programme, I met several new friends who I got on very well with, and hope to meet again in the future.

This very positive experience gave me the confidence to take on the next challenge - work experience, which everyone in S4 had the opportunity to do. I spent the week working with Kier Homes, who are based in Hillington. The first four days I spent in the office doing a wide variety of tasks, from sorting out drawings to setting up new computers, which I found very interesting!

What I enjoyed most was being out on site, especially as it was National Construction Week during this week, and we had a photo call at our local site in Helensburgh, which is currently under construction. I also particularly enjoyed the final day, when I was out on a much larger site in Glasgow. During the day I learnt a lot about the various stages of construction, and also about construction techniques - both from watching other site workers at work, and doing practical tasks given to me by other workers.

Looking back, I feel that my Positive Futures experience has set me up for the increased independence required for work experience, and I'm very grateful for this. A word of advice for any future potential participants, even if you have any doubts about taking part, give it a try - I am sure that you will never regret it.

Using The Disability Discrimination Act to stay in Education

By Kate Goddard, Skill

What is the DDA part 4 and who does it make a difference for?

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Part 4 is all about dealing with discrimination in education. It covers education both before and after 16 years old. There is guidance called 'codes of practice'. These explain how the law should be used. There is a different 'code of practice' for 'pre-16' concerns, and another for '16 plus' issues. It is not always simple, as some of the 'pre-16' issues apply to up to 19 year olds. The important thing is that education and training providers are required by law to be fair to disabled people, and not to discriminate against them. This applies in England, Wales and Scotland but not, as yet, in Northern Ireland.

The new law applies to people who are considered disabled by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). This means the law applies to people who have a disability that makes a real difference to their everyday life. The DDA part 4 says that all schools and colleges, and all the different forms of adult education must not discriminate against disabled people. The only training that is not covered by the DDA is training for employment. In this article, to keep things simple, we will use the term 'college' when we mean all education providers.

What does the DDA cover, and what must colleges do?

The law means that schools, colleges and other education providers must not discriminate, not just in admission to courses and training, but also must include disabled people in all the services and activities that are part of their education. So if you are accepted on a course, you should be included in all the other things that go with it such as the canteen, library, careers and welfare, sports and leisure, field trips and other 'campus' and even residential services. Colleges must be fair to disabled people, and make adjustments.

Colleges must not treat a disabled person 'less favourably' than they treat non-disabled people. They cannot turn people away just because they have a disability, nor can they leave a disabled person out of examinations or activities. This does not mean that any disabled person can be accepted on any course. Many courses do require that students start the course with particular knowledge or skills. Also students can be asked to leave a course, if they don't study or if they interfere with other student's studies.

However, if a disabled student is at a 'substantial disadvantage', the college must take reasonable steps to reduce or prevent that disadvantage. This could require the college to change the way it does things. This could include the way that admissions and exams are dealt with. It could also include adjustments to changing course content, including work

placements. It may be that access to premises must improve, or that new teaching and support arrangements are needed. Some students may need particular help with communication, such as symbols or signs. Staff training may help to overcome some barriers.

How much can you expect a college to change? what is reasonable?

A college should teach people to required standards, and on some courses the aim is that students pass exams and get qualifications. A college will need to keep up standards on many courses. Its aim should be to find ways of offering disabled students the extra help they need. It can be reasonable for a college to make special arrangements to help a disabled person with their studies and exams, making adjustments that will help the disabled student achieve standards. Also it can be reasonable to make allowance for illness or disadvantage. Colleges can decide if an adjustment would be reasonable in terms of cost, practicality, health and safety requirements and disruption to other students.

Colleges are required to do more than respond to the needs of current disabled students. Colleges must think about the adjustments that may be necessary for disabled people in the future. They should try to make adjustments in advance, so that when a disabled person makes an enquiry, they get a helpful response. The college should be preparing for disabled people to become students and join in the activities of the college, as well as making adjustments in response to particular needs.

Disclosing disability

Colleges have a responsibility to find out whether students have disability-related needs. They can ask for information on an application form. The college can also make disabled

people welcome and can explain the support available to disabled students. Telling the college in advance about a disability can help them prepare and make arrangements. Information about students' disabilities will be kept confidential, and only made available to college staff that will provide assistance to the disabled student. Colleges are expected to prepare to include disabled students, but can only make specific adaptations if the student informs the college of their disability.

What happens if discrimination occurs?

If a college appears to have treated a disabled young person unfairly, they should first of all use the college's complaints procedure. If the college do not deal with the complaint fairly or helpfully, the DRC has a 'conciliation service'. They will try to help the student (and their family carer) to sort things out with the college. If this is not effective, the alleged discrimination can be taken to the County Court (or Sheriff Court in Scotland). The alleged discrimination must be reported within six months. Courts have the power to determine the rights of the case, and also award compensation and impose injunctions or interdicts that bring an end to discriminatory practices.

These laws are in operation except that colleges have until September 2005 to make buildings more accessible or relocate classes to improve access.

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities has further information about the DDA Part 4. Visit their website: www.skill.org.uk or contact Skill's freephone information service on: 0800 328 5050 textphone: 0800 068 2422 or email: info@skill.org.uk.

Can you recognise disability discrimination?

1. Sally, who is dyslexic, applied to her local FE College to do an A Level course in English. The college turned her down because of her dyslexia. Does the law allow this?

2. Ahmed is also dyslexic and applies to do English A Level. The college see that Ahmed has the necessary qualifications, but they are worried that his dyslexia may interfere with his studies. They ask him to sit an additional entrance test in spelling and grammar. Does the law allow this?

3. Celine has an artificial limb and is not allowed to train on the college sports track. Other students are allowed to train there. Does the law allow this?

4. Priya is visually impaired, and submits her essays electronically. Priya receives her essays marked with handwritten comments. Priya cannot read these. Would it be reasonable to expect electronic comments?

5. Lee is on a hair and beauty course run by a local college. Lee has depression. The effects of his medication interfere with Lee's morning work experience in a hairdressing salon. Is it reasonable for Lee to attend instead on afternoons?

6. Anil has severe back pain when sitting still for long periods and needs to be able to get up and move around. The college arranges him to sit her exams in a separate room so he can do this. Is this a reasonable adjustment?

7. Katie is doing an NVQ in Catering. She has learning difficulties and has difficulty with the basic skills required for the theory parts of the course. The college provide her with a basic skills support worker at designated periods each week to give extra help. Is this a reasonable adjustment?

8. Henry has a visual impairment, which means that he needs to have all written material in large print. His class tutors arrange for him to have handouts in large print, and they also put notes from the classes on the college intranet so that he can use specialist software to read the notes. Henry cannot read the menu cards in the canteen and staff refuse to produce a large print version or read the menu to him. Does the law allow this?

Answers:

1, 2, & 3 No – likely to be unlawful. 4, 5, 6 & 7 Yes – this is reasonable. 8. No

Sounds Good



Transition is for disabled young people a time of change and choice. For the young person to get truly involved in the process requires that they have support and encouragement to express their own wishes. The aim is for them to have real influence over the decisions being made about their future. Support from an advocate is a good way of increasing the young person's involvement and offering them choices and opportunities they can understand. An advocate alongside them can help the young person speak out for what really matters to them.

There are many community based advocacy projects across the country, which use volunteer advocates. However, only 25 or so projects have a specific project for learning disabled young people. 'Sounds Good!' encourages citizen advocacy projects to extend their remit to provide citizen advocacy projects specifically for young learning disabled people in transition (14 – 25 years). We also support new projects starting up from scratch. 'Sounds Good!' is a support network across England and is part of CAIT (Citizen Advocacy Information & Training).

'Sounds Good!' provides information, training and networking to support advocacy for learning disabled young people. We have a very popular

course – "Something to Say" – designed to help people communicate with young learning disabled people in transition. Led by an experienced speech and language therapist the course offers many practical ways of improving communication skills in advocacy with disabled young people. This course is much in demand and the photo shows a recent course held in London. We also run regular networking sessions in the North and South of England. We offer support and exchange of good practice between projects. If you are interested arrange to join our next networking meetings in London on June 16 or York on 24 June 2004.

Our next aim is to produce an Education guidance pack for schools. This will build upon disabled young people's own experiences. It will raise awareness of the potential of advocacy to improve the transition process. So far The Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund has funded us. Our future work depends upon further funding becoming available.

For further details contact Nigel or Rachel on 01663 719662. email nigel@sgood1.fsnet.co.uk

Active Advocates

Wyre Forest Self Advocacy Group have a new pack with a really great video. There is a facilitator's guide. For disabled young people, there is a video and a wonderfully illustrated advocate's guide. They show how to get self-advocacy started – step by step – and how advocacy can make a big difference to your life. The pack is £25 to user groups and £50 to organisations plus p&p. For more details contact them on 01562 820262 or wfsa@bopenworld.com



The Government's Transition Road Map

helping disabled young people to have the choices they want?

Emily Wooster, Policy and Researcher Officer at Scope, explains some of the policy changes that the Government is making.

Preparing to leave school can be a time of high anxiety for young disabled people. They have to find their way through a complicated system of services. Moving from school to further education, university or employment often means different benefits and funding organisations. Young disabled people and their families can be left feeling frustrated and confused. The Government is trying to make this transition easier, by introducing policies and standards that are more 'joined up'. We look at how this is happening in England.

Children's National Service Framework

The National Service Framework (NSF) for children will be launched in spring 2004. New national standards across health and social services will ensure that there is closer working together between health and social services. The NSF approach has already been used to modernise services for mental health, diabetes, coronary heart disease and older people. They consist of a set of standards and examples of good practice. Six external working groups have been working on the Children's NSF. One of these has focussed on children and young people with disabilities and learning difficulties.

An NSF transition task group (part of the external working group for disabled children) have produced some key recommendations. These are standards designed to promote joint working of services, so transition is effective. Ministers will soon make the final decisions on which standards are included. For more details on the NSF go to: <http://www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/children/index.htm>

Every Child Matters

The Government's Green paper, 'Every Child Matters' has a long-term vision of integrating children's services. Some of the aims include a common assessment framework across

children's services and the sharing of information that will be collected centrally and made available to relevant services. A lead professional would make sure that the disabled young person has 'joined up' services, and would usually be the point of contact for the young person and their family.

The Government want more children to stay in education and training after 16. They are developing (in England) the Connexions Service that provides information and support for young people. For those who need it, a personal advisor can work with the young person, to develop an individual package of support. For more details go to:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters>

Removing Barriers to Achievement; the government's strategy on SEN

Removing Barriers to Achievement is the Government's long-term strategy for special educational needs, launched on February 11th 2004. The strategy focuses on 4 key areas: early intervention; removing barriers to learning; raising expectations and achievement and improving partnership. There is an emphasis on putting the young person first, and enabling organisations to organise themselves and their services around the young persons' need. For transition, the aim is that the Connexions Service will help to improve the quality of transition planning. The Government wants the Learning and Skills Council to expand educational and training opportunities. For more info go to:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/senstrategy/>

So what does all this mean?

These policy improvements reinforce the Government's aim to bring about 'joined up' and effective transition services. There is a real concern to open up new opportunities in education and training for young people with disabilities and learning difficulties. Many good initiatives which aim to share good practice and

raise standards have already started. In many places there are now specialist transition workers helping disabled young people to make choices about their futures. We will know if this has worked if we see that young disabled people are able to make informed choices about their lives. If you know of any some good practice examples that you would like to share with us,

please contact Bronia Kita on
bronia.kita@scope.org.uk

Articles for 'Community Living'

Bright Enterprises is looking for people with learning difficulties to write articles for Community Living Magazine. The magazine comes out 4 times a year, and it will pay people for their articles.

The articles can be about anything you want to write about, and should be either one or two pages long, with photographs, if you have any.

They are also looking for professionals to write articles.

For further information, or to send an article, please send an email to:
communitylivingbenterprises@yahoo.co.uk.

'How to use Easy Words and Pictures'

the Disability Rights Commission has produced a booklet called 'How to use Easy Words and Pictures' which gives guidance on how to make documents more accessible to people with learning disabilities.

Disability Rights Commission, Helpline, FREEPOST, MID 02164, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 9BR

Telephone 08457 622633

Textphone 08457 622 644

Fax 08457 778878

email enquiry@drc-gb.org

website www.drc-gb.org

News in brief

Charity Flowers

Age Concern runs a mail-order flower delivery service. It costs less than Interflora and Teleflowers, and most importantly, Speakability (the charity for people with aphasia, a language disability) will receive 15% of the cost of your order as a direct donation.

Just remember to give the charity code SPEAK when you order your flowers. You can contact Charity Flowers on their 24 hour hotline: **08705 300600**.

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Bill

This Bill was presented to Parliament at the beginning of January and will have its second reading on the 6th February. Its focus is on health, employment and life-long learning with the aim of making further progress in relation to carers' rights and giving them access to the vital support they need. To read a copy of the Bill visit Web: <http://tinyurl.com/2nqt4>.

Concert in aid of Speakability

The London Medical Orchestra will be performing a concert in aid of Speakability at 7.30pm at St. Giles Church, Cripplegate (Barbican). Contact Melanie on **020 7262 9572** for more details.

Cook with Compass

Jennifer Davidson, a volunteer at Compass Advocacy Network (an organisation promoting advocacy and equality for adults with learning difficulties) in County Antrim has produced a recipe book with CD-ROM designed especially for people with learning difficulties. {Details to follow}.

Financial help for students

The DfES has produced a booklet called 'Need Financial Help?' for students aged 16-18 or at college. The booklet is available in a printed version, in Braille, audiocassette and in other languages from:-

DfES Publications Centre, PO Box 5050, Annesley, Nottingham, NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 6022260

Fax: 0845 6033360

Minicom: 0845 6055560

Email: dfes@prolog.uk.com