

my future choices

The Magazine of the Transition Information Network

Issue 1 2008



- My journey from education to employment
- Patrick Fitzgerald: My story
- What kind of future?
- Getting a job
- Jambo's carwash
- My Dreams for the Future

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my future choices
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my future choices aims to feature new opportunities for disabled young people from across the four nations of the UK. The editors are pleased to receive relevant information and articles. Please enquire for details. The Transition Information Network (TIN) is an alliance of organisations and individuals who came together with a common aim: to improve the experience of disabled young people's transition to adulthood.

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Welcome to all our new readers and hello again to everyone else!



Happy New Year! This issue of *my future choices* is all about getting work. This can include things like paid work, unpaid voluntary work and work experience.

When you've finished school or college it's important to get involved with things in your local community and one of the ways you can do this is by getting a job or doing voluntary work. This will help you get out of the house and meet new people!

There are a lot of people around to support disabled young people to find work. On page 4, you can read about the Ela Nisbet from Oaklands College, who helps young people from the college find work. One of the young people she supported is Lee, who was able to find a job after doing lots of different work experience. Ela also supported Patrick, and on page 6 he tells us about his experience of the world of work and what he has learnt along the way. We have also included a list of top tips to help you find work, and a list of people and places where you can find out more information.

Finally, we hope you have found this issue of *my future choices* interesting. If you are a young person, parent or professional and you would like to write an article for the magazine, or if you have ideas of what you would like to read about in future issues, please get in touch!

Lucia Winters

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News from TIN

In October 2007 TIN had a seminar in Bristol. The seminar was about keeping safe and speaking out. We talked about issues like bullying, advocacy and being safe. Over 80 people attended from the South West of England and everyone had a good day and learnt something new.

In the morning there was a talk about how young disabled people can keep safe and speak out by the Listening Partnership and the DICE project, which are based at the West of England Centre for Inclusive Living www.wecil.co.uk. This was followed by four workshops.

The Guidepost Trust ran a fun and interactive workshop for young disabled people, parents and professionals to explore issues to do with sexual health and relationships.
www.guidepoststrust.org.uk.

“[The]Sexual health workshop worked well because they had young people who used their services actually present and leading. We heard their points of view first hand and could see their reactions and insight into a very serious topic. It made such a change to see service users involved. Well done all Guidepost participants.”

“It was enjoyable and everyone was friendly and sociable.”

“Positive to interact with young people and listen to their views.”

Rachel Hughes from Mencap ►

The National Autistic Society ran a workshop about their Keeping Safe project, which aims to help young people at school with Asperger syndrome understand better how to keep safe, and what to do if something bad happens to them
www.nas.org.uk.

Mencap’s workshop was a chance to hear about their campaign ‘Don’t stick it, stop it!’ which is a campaign against bullying of young people with learning disabilities www.dontstickit.org.uk.

In Voice UK’s workshop, we learnt about their project to get equal access to justice for people with learning disabilities.
www.voiceuk.org.uk/equalaccess.htm.



◀ Jill Davies and Andrew Blandford



At a glance

Ela Nisbet is the Outreach Transition Worker at Oaklands College. She supports disabled students to get work experience.

Ela Nisbet

Ela Nisbet from Oakland College, talked to TIN about her work supporting young disabled people in transition from college to employment.



Ela Nisbet ►

I am the Outreach Transition Worker at Oaklands College in Hertfordshire. One of the tasks of my job is to provide supported work experience for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. During my time here, I have learnt that a lot of important vocational learning and social development can take place during work experience, and that work experience can lead to paid employment, providing that we put the right support mechanisms in place.

In 2003 I was given the task to develop a new system of transitional support; one which would take our disabled students a step up from work experience and provide them with a bridge to employment. They were keen to find employment but finding work was often difficult.

There were a number of reasons for this such as lack of social and communication skills and lack of employability skills, as well as little experience of the real world of work. Another reason was the lack of transition support for young people in finding employment.

The way that most people develop their wider employability skills, such as initiative, reliability, punctuality, problem-solving, and working in a team as well as the more job-specific skills such as shelf-filling, answering the phone and photocopying, is

through experience in the workplace. This is usually done through daily interaction with other workers and customers, when doing a real job. Skills which we acquire in real life situations, including college, the workplace, or the local community, are the building blocks for a successful, happy and fulfilling life for all of us.

By providing Oaklands' students with a choice and a variety of real working opportunities (appropriate to their skills and abilities) in the form of "stepping stones", such as job tasters, work shadowing, supported voluntary work, supported work experience, and with on-going individual support, we are now ensuring their successful transition to an independent life.

There were some challenges that I encountered in my work; the biggest were students' job development (increasing working hours for part-time workers or changing a job role), benefits, and the strict college timetable systems. Realisation that it is just as difficult to sustain employment as to access it, for a disabled person, was an eye opener for me too.

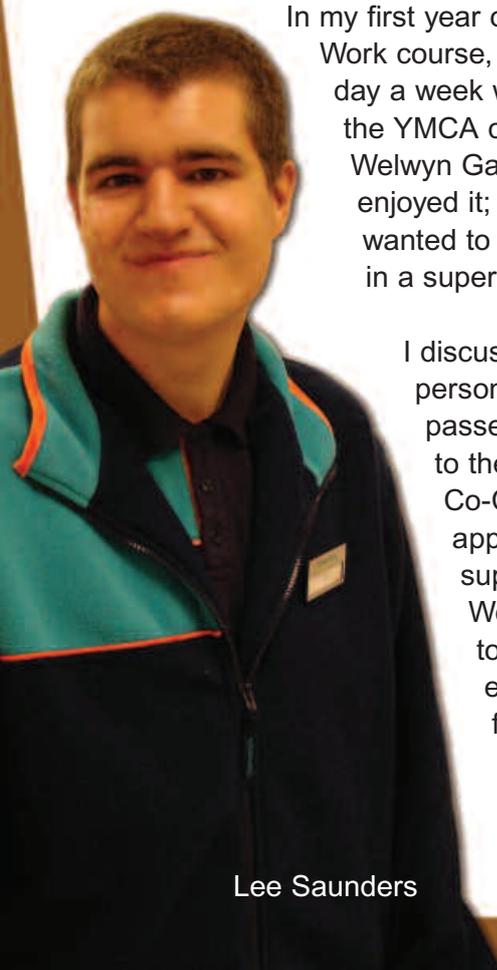
With the employment of young disabled people now becoming a much more urgent issue, there is a greater need for the sharing of our experiences (good and bad) and exchanging ideas and good practice.



My Journey

from education to employment, from Oaklands College to Somerfield

By Lee Saunders



In my first year of the Ready for Work course, I was doing a one day a week work experience at the YMCA charity shop in Welwyn Garden City. I really enjoyed it; however, I really wanted to work in retail, like in a supermarket.

I discussed this with my personal tutor who then passed this information to the Work Experience Co-Coordinator. She approached local supermarkets within Welwyn Garden City to look for work experience for me. I finally got an interview with Somerfields in October 2006.

This led to doing a one day a week work experience in Somerfields.

I really enjoyed my work experience in the Bakery and the Dairy Sections. I liked bagging and wrapping the bread, pricing and shelf-filling. I enjoyed it so much I wanted to move on to paid employment there.

She then referred me to Ela and with her help I was able to get paid employment three days a week in the Somerfields Bakery.

I started my paid employment on 21 May in 2007. With support I am now being trained to bake fresh bread in the Store. I work hard in Somerfields, but I really enjoy my job because there are nice people supporting me in my work.

My work experience and paid employment in Somerfields have built up my confidence and next year I have decided to do an Entry Level course in Business and Retail.

Lee Saunders

At a glance

Patrick is 24 years old. he has Asperger's Syndrome. He did lots of work experience and now has a paid job.

My story

Patrick Fitzgerald is 24 years old and has Asperger's Syndrome (AS).

People with AS usually find it difficult to communicate with and relate to people, and I was no different. I found life hard at school, where I was academically able and did well, but as schoolkids will pick on anyone who is even slightly different, I was bullied a lot.

I have actually found the adult world easier to deal with than school, and this probably began with my first work experience placement, which I undertook while at secondary school. I worked for a company in St Albans, and I learned a lot, including how to use an e-mail system for the first time!

However, what really struck me was that people in a working environment were so much more civil and mature to each other than at school. No-one had a problem with me being "different",

A year later, just before leaving school, I did a placement at Oaklands College, where I then went to continue my education.

I spent four years at Oaklands, and the first yielded a GNVQ Intermediate in IT and another placement on campus. For my final year at college, I moved from the St Albans campus to the one in Welwyn Garden City, and enrolled in a "Ready for Work" course. There were only a handful of students in this group, and they all had some form of learning disability, like me. Part of this course involved undertaking three placements, with the first two being on campus, and the third was an external one.

My external placement took place at St Albans City Hospital, where I worked in the supplies department. This involved a lot of computer work, and one day in particular was very interesting, as I assisted the delivery man with his deliveries around the hospital. Unfortunately, this involved entering the area where the operating theatres were located at one point, and I don't like those places – I don't think anyone does!

Seriously, though, I really enjoyed it and it certainly helped me to adjust as I left college in 2003. Working closely with my outreach transition worker, Ela, I identified several jobs in my local papers and made enquiries. I attended three interviews before the turn of the year, which served as an eye-opener.

The first interview, opened my eyes in particular. You see, the company had not mentioned telephone work in the advert, but they did in the interview. At the time, I was not even remotely comfortable with using a telephone and this threw me off course. It did, however, make me realise that some employers will not tell you everything in the advert and so you must expect the unexpected.

My first experience of the outside world of work arrived when I began doing voluntary work with the St Albans District Shopmobility Scheme in December 2003. I had not even entertained the possibility of doing voluntary work when I left college, but Ela persuaded me to give it a try and I'm glad I did – I have found it so rewarding that I'm still there now! I also did some voluntary work at Hatfield Library in 2005.

I attended an informal meeting with representatives of a company called Accord plc in January 2004 in

Welwyn. At the time, they were not advertising a specific position, but they wanted to speak to me about my skills and the type of work I could do.

A couple of weeks later, I received a letter from Accord inviting me to begin my first paid job. This was for one day a week and involved more computer work, as well as photocopying and filing.

I had finally found my place, but I knew how hard it had been to get there, and I also knew I would need to work hard to stay there. To begin with, I did not have a place to call my own, as I was working at many different desks, both upstairs and downstairs, but over time I moved into a specialised role of database administrator and ended up with a permanent desk downstairs.

I finally left Accord after they were taken over by a rival company and I was made redundant. I was able to take the positives from this, though, as I had made good friends there, which had been very tough for me before.

I managed to find another paid job, at a company called ACP (Architects Co-Partnership) and this is also for one day a week.

I am working in the accounts department and ACP are based in a 19th century country house. This was a big change from Accord, who were based in a modern office building with an open plan design on both floors. Still, I have got much better at adapting to change over the course of my life.

However, ACP did have one thing in common with Accord, as they too were not advertising a specific position, and again I attended an informal meeting. This means that I have not had a successful official job interview, and yet I have had two paid jobs, so I haven't done too badly!

Also, I have become involved in WorkABILITY, a project run by Hertfordshire PASS (Personal Assistance Support Service) and



▲ Patrick Fitzgerald

funded by the National Big Lottery. This is a three-year project, just coming to the end of its first year, that aims to assist students with disabilities into work experience and paid work.

I am a member of the operations group, which includes other students with disabilities, and the first thing we had to do was to appoint a full-time employment facilitator. This meant that I was involved in the recruitment process on the other side of the fence, first with helping to shortlist seven candidates out of the fourteen applications.

My involvement in the placements group consists of helping the employment facilitator to canvass employers about the possibility of taking on one of our students, and finding students to fit the placements. I have found my involvement in Herts PASS extremely rewarding.

I think what my experiences, particularly with Accord and ACP, prove is that you cannot assume that the obvious route will be the one that works, and if you explore all possibilities, you will eventually find the right thing for you. You just have to identify and improve your strengths, work on your weaknesses, and grab the opportunity with both hands!

What kind of a future?

Supporting young people with Down's Syndrome to lead full lives after they leave school. **New booklet out now!**



The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities has written a booklet aimed at giving information and advice on how to lead a busy life after leaving full-time education, writes Jill Davies from the Foundation.

We spoke to ten young people with Down's Syndrome who lead full and busy lives to find out what had enabled them to bring about the changes they wanted. We have written up the findings in a booklet and it has information on person centred planning, how to get direct payments, going to college or getting a job, moving away from home as well as how to

travel around and money management. Some of the young people worked or did voluntary work.

This booklet is for young people and their families, friends and supporters to read and talk about together. It is not easy to bring about lots of changes all at the same time! You may want to read about different topics at different times. It can take a long time to bring about changes in your life. It is not always easy.

You can download the booklet from www.learningdisabilities.org.uk or you can order a hard copy by calling the publications department on 0207 803 1101.

Aaron's story

One of the young people interviewed for the booklet is Aaron. Aaron has a job and does some unpaid work experience.

Aaron is 19. He lives with his family in Scotland. He left school when he was sixteen because he was not happy there. Whilst at school he did some work experience and really enjoyed it. This led to his and his family's decision to leave school and look for some meaningful occupation.

Aaron ►



He receives direct payments and has personal assistants to support him for 52 hours a week. They support Aaron in his job delivering the local free paper on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. He gets paid for this. He also does voluntary work at a local restaurant putting glasses in the dishwasher, bottles in the bin and clearing the tables for a couple of hours a week. Aaron is registered blind so his personal assistants had to give him lots of help when he started his jobs. When he first started delivering papers they would give him physical guidance to each house and letter-box. Over time they reduced these prompts and now they stay at the gate whilst Aaron delivers each paper by himself.



Getting into work

Things to do to help you get into work.

- Talk to friends, family and others who know you well about the kind of job you might like.
- Do courses at college or other centres which might help you to get the skills you would need.
- Talk to people who are helping you make plans. These might be your social worker if you have one or in England your Connexions adviser.
- Make contact with Job Centre Plus and ask to talk to the Disability Employment Adviser. In Scotland, you can make contact with an adviser in Careers Scotland and in Wales with an adviser from Careers Wales. In Northern Ireland you can get advice from the Careers service.
- Ask if there are any supported employment agencies in your area that could help you.
- Try to get some work experience. School or college should be able to give you advice.
- Do some volunteering, as this is a good way of building up your experience and confidence.
- See if you can practice doing an interview with a friend or family member or member of staff.
- Get advice on how to write a CV. A CV gives details about a person's education, skills and experiences and you will need a CV when applying for a job.
- Talk to a supported employment agency or the local benefits agency about how earning a wage will affect your benefits.

Useful information

Supported employment

The British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) in England www.afse.org.uk

WISE-the Welsh Initiative for Supported Employment www.wisewales.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE) www.niuse.org.uk

The Scottish Union for Supported Employment (SUSE) www.suse.org.uk

Employment

Moving into Work. Supporting people with learning difficulties to make the transition from vocational education and training into employment. Parents information sheet: www.niace.org.uk/research/HDE/Documents/Parents.pdf
Information sheet for people with learning difficulties: www.niace.org.uk/research/HDE/Documents/Learners.pdf

Employment Opportunities. A voluntary organisation that helps people with disabilities into employment www.opportunities.org.uk

The Equality and Human Rights Commission have lots of really useful booklets on disability and employment which can be downloaded from their website. www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publications-andresources/Disability/Pages/Employment.aspx

Doing Work Differently. RADAR's new guide to getting and keeping a job while managing ill health, injury or disability (IID). This easy-to-read booklet has been piloted in four areas of the country and will soon be rolled out nation-wide. Please check the website for updates on availability. www.radar.org.uk

USER DRIVEN. This is a new booklet written by and edited by a group of young people with physical or learning challenges. It is about their own personal experiences of trying to overcome the barriers they found to getting work. Contact Hertfordshire Pass to order a copy (£5.99): Tel 01707 321442 pass@hertspass.com

Volunteering

Into Volunteering. A guide for disabled people who are interested in volunteering and want to know more. Contains profiles of disabled volunteers discussing their own experiences, contact information and useful advice on how to get started. Available to order from: www.skill.org.uk

Can do volunteering. A guide to involving young disabled people as volunteers. This guide focuses on how to involve young disabled people (aged 16–25) in volunteering programmes. www.can-do-volunteering.org

do-it.org.uk. National database of volunteering opportunities in the UK. do-it.org.uk is part of the registered charity YouthNet. www.do-it.org.uk

It's all about you. Do-it recently started a new national campaign to celebrate people who volunteer every day of the year called "It's all about you". Visit the website: www.itsallaboutu.org.uk



Jambo's Carwash

Dimensions is an organisation that supports people with learning difficulties across the UK to live the lives they want. One of the things they do is support people to access employment and leisure opportunities. James Messenger was supported by Dimensions to start his own business.

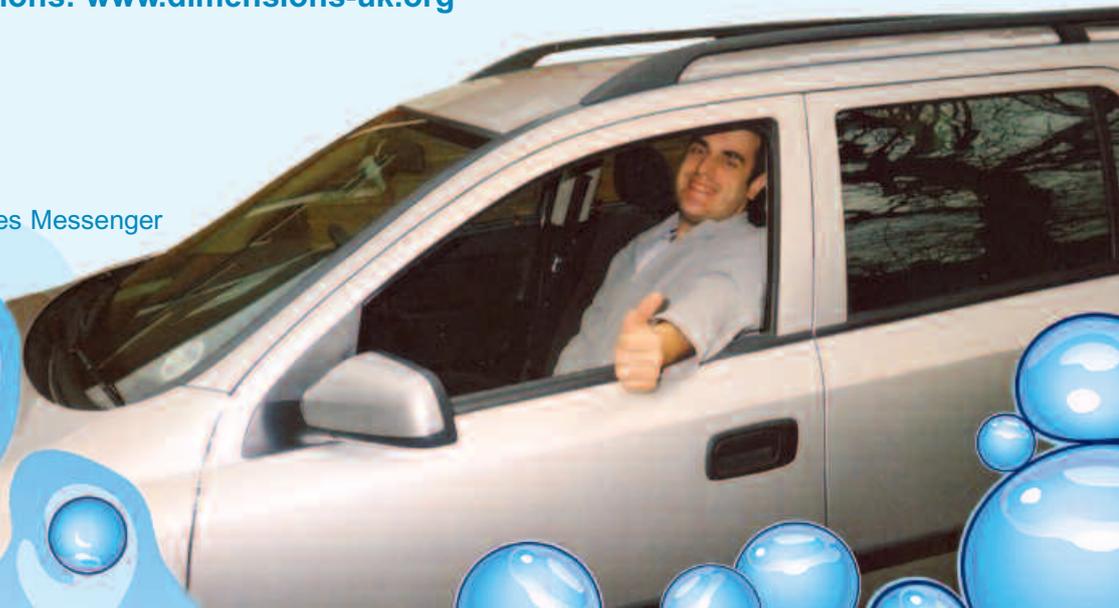
James wanted a job. He liked cars, so he talked to his support workers about what he wanted to do and decided to set up his own car cleaning service!

James tried it out and liked it but just needed some money to help him get mobile and buy some equipment. He applied for some money from the Learning Difficulty Development Fund but got turned down, so he then applied to New Dimensions Supported Employment project for some money. Together with his support staff, James wrote a business plan which explained how he would use the money to set up his business. He then went to Sheffield to meet the panel from Dimensions and answer their questions about his business plan. James was successful and was awarded £9000!

James' business is called Jambo's Carwash and business is good. He has bought his own vehicle now and some more equipment. If he gets more work he may need to get someone else to help him!

Dimensions: www.dimensions-uk.org

► James Messenger



Profile of Work Ltd

By Simon Nieder (Association for Real Change)

'WORK Ltd runs a garden centre supplying plants and craft, garden furniture and a wide range of products to the public in Sheffield. It aims to provide employment skills, education and accredited training for adults with learning difficulties. I went to visit them and meet some of the young people training there.

Ryan has been at WORK Ltd for one and a half years. He has tried his hand at lots of different things and now has responsibility for watering and planting the baby plants, as well as delivering orders to people. Ryan and two other trainees have recently been to Brussels, the capital of Belgium, on the Eurostar to collect an award for a piece of decorative glass work that they made together at WORK Ltd.



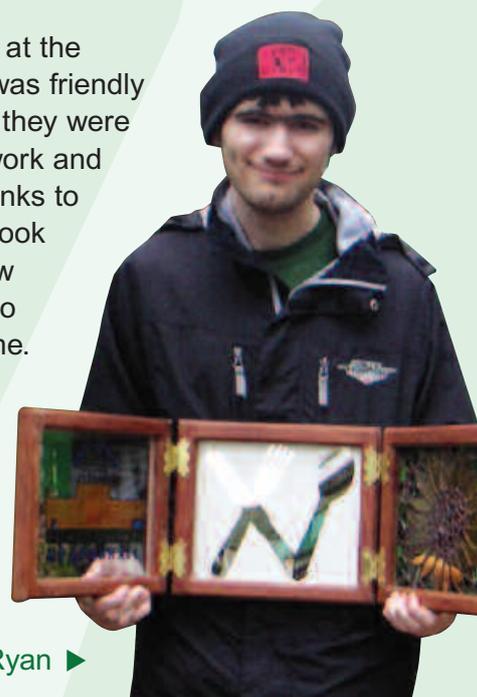
Each trainee gets experience of all the different areas of work. This means a trainee could be making garden furniture, or serving food in the café and helping out with the till. The trainees get paid expenses and also get subsidised meals. WORK Ltd have taken advice from the Benefits Agency to ensure that this does not cause people to lose their entitlement to benefits based on the hours they work and the amount of money they get paid.

Chris Wainwright is in charge of trainee development. Chris has been developing progress files with each of the trainees. He said that the progress files are becoming an important tool in helping them to give the best

support and training experience for each trainee. The progress file is a bit like a transition plan, but it focuses on the work and training at WORK Ltd. Each person's file helps to keep a record of how they are getting on and what they want to achieve. Everyone can decorate and personalise their file. There are sections where they can record what they enjoy, what people think they are good at, what jobs they would like to be able to do in the future and a plan for the future training. This gives everyone something to work towards to ensure that the experience is useful.

There is also a café for the general public where trainees can get experience in preparing and serving food and learning customer service skills. I had a great cup of coffee there and met Andrea. She has been at WORK Ltd for quite a while and for a number of years she specialised in painting the decorative planters. She used to go home covered in paint everyday! Recently she has started working in the café and she enjoys this even more than the painting, and she doesn't get as messy!

Everyone I met at the garden centre was friendly and looked like they were enjoying their work and training. My thanks to everyone who took the time to show me what they do and chat with me. Keep up the good work!



Ryan ►

For more information about WORK Ltd they can be contacted by telephone on 0114 262 0094, or by post at Work Ltd, Ringinglow Road, Sheffield S11 7TB. Visit: www.jworkltd.org

My dreams for the future

Rory (14 years old)



What do you like to do?

I like seeing my girlfriend and doing magic as well, like tricks. I can make a frog disappear in a box! I can make inventions and I'd like to make a timemachine. I'd like to go to the future! I'd like to go travelling [to countries with] hot weather and cold weather. I like to cook. I like lasagne and pasties.

Are there lots of things you'd like to do in the future?

Oh yes! Get a car, a black car and a house and get a job. And get some money. I'd like four kids. I want to plan for my future. What's important to me is college and learning to cook. [And I'd like to learn to] make films. Any films. I've got loads of favourite films. My favourite film is Night at the Museum.

What is your dream job?

To work in an office, on the phone, doing emails and using the skills I used when studying for my NVQ.

What is your dream for the future?

I'd like to share a house with people the same age as me.

Andrew (20 years old)



Where do you live?

I live in Stroud in a place called Kingfishers. It is run by the National Children's Home and helps people with learning disabilities learn about independence. I moved there in April and love it there. I am from London but went to a residential college in the Stroud area and have remained here since. I share a house with six people, a mix of men and women and we get on very well together.

What are you doing at the moment?

At the moment I'm currently doing charity work, in a charity shop for 2 days a week.

What are your dreams for the future?

My ambition is to remain living in Stroud, to live on my own independently and to have as much independence as possible, in my own place.

Would you like a job?

I'd like to go into the administration services. I like using computers and have a diploma, and I've also got an NVQ in business administration level 1.

Frances, (23 years old)



Tell us about yourself

I live in Kingfishers, Ebbley. I want to move on and when I leave here, I want to live in Gloucester. I have a number of NVQs. My first was to pass the NVQ Foods and drinks service level 1. Then I did an NVQ in Office and Reception skills. Then I did a Food Hygiene certificate and another qualification in computers.

People who support us

Lynne Muirhead from Jobcentre Plus tells us about the Access to Work scheme.

Have you heard of Access to Work?

The move from school or college into employment is a huge step for all young people. Jobcentre Plus has a special service to help disabled people, including people with learning difficulties, called Access to Work.

This service is for disabled people aged 16 or over who have paid employment or are about to start paid employment.

use the available buses or trains. This help could involve either paying for a taxi or perhaps a travel buddy for a time until people are comfortable with their journey to work;

- special computer programmes for people who cannot see very well;
- for someone to be with a person at a job interview if communication is difficult for them. For example, advocacy for people with learning difficulties or mental health problems, or an interpreter if they are deaf.

The rules also allow for other one-off support payments.

What does Access to Work do?

It can pay for things to remove the practical barriers that disabled people face in work. This helps disabled people to enjoy the same career opportunities as their colleagues. Access to Work Advisers are available to work with people and their employer to find the most appropriate help for the employee.

How do I find out more?

If you want to apply for help from Access to Work, you should phone the Access to Work Centre. The telephone number of your nearest Centre is available from your local Jobcentre Plus.

You can also find out the address and phone number at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

What help can people get?

Access to Work can help in a number of ways, for example, paying for:

- a job coach to support someone with learning difficulties who may need help in the early stages of learning a job;
- a counsellor, if people are experiencing anxiety, panic attacks or mental health related difficulties. Support like this may be useful in helping people develop ways to cope with these problems at work;
- help with travelling to work costs if people cannot

What if I have left school or college and don't have a job yet?

Jobcentre Plus has special advisers that can help people find the right job or training or talk about benefits, called Disability Employment Advisers. The contact details for Jobcentre Plus are on the website or in your phone book. When you phone, ask for a Disability Employment Adviser and make an appointment.

News

Consultations

Valuing People Now

The government has written a new paper called Valuing People Now. It's about making the lives of people with learning disabilities better. They want people to read it and tell them what they think about it by 28th March 2008. You can order hard copies from Prologue by calling 0870 1555 455. To read the whole paper visit: www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/dynamic/valuingpeople2.jsp

Improving Specialist Disability Employment Services

This consultation contains proposals to reform disability employment services (eg WORKSTEP, Access to Work) that help disabled people who have complex issues to find, retain and progress in work. They are particularly interested to hear from disabled people, employers and organisations who represent the interests of disabled people.

www.dwp.gov.uk/resourcecentre/des-consultation.asp

Campaigns and charity news

Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM)

EDCM are encouraging young people to sign up and show their support for disabled children and young people. Go to www.edcm.org.uk and click on 'Children and young people'.



Changing Faces' Young People's Council win award

17 young people with disfigurements have won RADAR's People of the Year Human Rights Award for creating a website for young people. The website encourages young people to feel more confident around disfigurement. www.iface.org.uk

Young people in Kingston upon Thames win award

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames' Recruits Crew has won the national Skills for Care Award for the best involvement of children and young people in workforce development. Young people and staff attended a ceremony in London to receive their award. The Recruits Crew involves young people who are

themselves service users and includes young disabled people. Over the past 3 years they have been involved in the recruitment and training of children's social care staff and foster carers. As well as helping the Council find the right staff, their involvement has helped the young people themselves in their future careers. www.skillsforcare.org.uk



Muscular Dystrophy transition campaign

The Muscular Dystrophy Campaign is launching a new campaign to ensure the smooth transition into adulthood for all young people with muscle disease. They will publish findings from a series of case studies and interviews, documenting the personal experiences of people living with muscle disease as they embark on the journey from children's to adult-centred services. To join the Campaigns Network email campaigns@muscular-dystrophy.org or visit www.muscular-dystrophy.org. Alternatively, you can call Nic Bungay on 020 7803 4847.

Call for families to test law on short breaks

The Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) campaign is calling for families with disabled children in England and Wales who have been refused support by their local authority to come forward to take part in a groundbreaking wave of legal test cases. The cases are based on a legal opinion from expert community care lawyers which suggests that, in certain situations, families with disabled children may have a legal right to short breaks. Families with disabled children have repeatedly reported that short breaks are their number one service priority – yet currently, only one in 13 families receive any kind of support service. EDCM therefore believes that families with disabled children should have a clear legal right to short breaks to enable them to keep caring. EDCM is looking for families who have been assessed as needing short break services but have been refused these services, for example on resource grounds.

Families will also need to be on a low income and eligible for legal aid, so that the costs of the case will be covered. Families are being encouraged to call the Contact a Family freephone helpline on Tel: 0808 808 3555 to get further advice about the test case and to check whether they are eligible for legal aid. Website: <http://tinyurl.com/39lwd>

Skill awarded funding for volunteering project

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities has been awarded funding by v, the youth volunteering charity, towards their Volunteer Voices project. The project will get 250 disabled young people aged 16-25 involved in creating opportunities and raising aspirations for young disabled people of their own age. Murtaza, 22, who volunteers for Skill said: "It is important to get young disabled people involved in volunteering because it is a way of entering the real work market. The more volunteering a person does, the more it gives them confidence to excel in life." The volunteering opportunities will be available from April 2008. For more information visit www.wearev.com www.vinspired.com and www.skill.org.uk.

Top tips from young people on how to make sure they are listened to.

A new DVD from a group of young people who use alternative ways of communicating is now available. These disabled teenagers who have severe communication impairments have come up with their Top Tips on how to make sure are listened to and consulted with. 1Voice Teenage Project won the Guardian Charity Awards 2006 and the teenagers have worked closely with a team of facilitators to write the lyrics to what is a cool musical DVD. A track is available to watch on You Tube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5ZIUnU8Oeo

Events

National Youth Agency

With the introduction of the 10 year strategy, it is vital that young people are informed of the opportunities which are being presented to them and that they are supported to take action upon this and build on their successes. The NYA are working in partnership with a number of Regional Youth Work Units to facilitate workshops with young people. The workshops aim to inform and debate with young people issues arising within the Aiming High strategy.

<http://aiminghigh.practicalparticipation.co.uk/aiming-high/nya-and-aiming-high/events-young-people>

Dimensions transition events

Dimensions are hosting 3 transition seminars for parents in Southampton, Norwich and Sandwell. Each event will include information about good practice measures from Dimensions Transitions Service and the tools that help make this happen, i.e. person centred approaches, self-

directed support. The days will a good opportunity for parents to network and share information relating to transition practice. For more information please visit the Dimensions website www.dimensions-uk.org/transitions

Reports, articles and publications

How am I supposed to get up there?

Nick Bishop has cerebral palsy. He explains how he deals with the obstacles he comes across in everyday life - such as the steps that come between him and a pint with his mates. www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/jan/10/disability.longtermcare

Supporting Parents with Learning Disabilities – Good Practice Guidance

Parents with learning disabilities sometimes need extra support to help them with the responsibilities of parenting. The Good Practice Guidance has been written to help commissioners and staff in children and adults' services to support parents with a learning disability. www.changepeople.co.uk/default.aspx?page=9545

A transition guide for all services: key information for professionals about the transition process for disabled young people.

This guide, funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and produced by the Council for Disabled Children has now been published. To order a hard copy from the DCSF's publications department, call 0845 60 222 60 or dcsf@prolog.uk.com quoting 00776-2007DOM-EN. Copies can also be downloaded from www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk/view/6/83/346

A new CSCI inspection report shows young people in transition miss out on services.

In its third annual report to Parliament on the state of social care, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) explores the experiences of people not deemed eligible for social care services. Although focused on disabled adults and older people, it shows that young people making the transition between children's and adult services are particularly disadvantaged by eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria is the system used by councils to determine who is entitled to social care services. The report also says there is a gap in opportunities and outcomes between the majority of young people and those who use social care services.

http://www.csci.org.uk/about_us/news/state_of_social_care_2007_ne-1.aspx

Useful Organisations

Organisations that make up the Transition Information Network

Association for Real Change (ARC)

www.arcuk.org.uk

Contact a Family

www.cafamily.org.uk

Council for Disabled Children

www.ncb.org.uk/cdc

Dimensions

www.dimensions-uk.org

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

www.learningdisabilities.org.uk

Macintyre

www.macintyrecharity.org

Mencap

www.mencap.org.uk

National Autistic Society

www.nas.org.uk

National Development Team (NDT)

www.ndt.org.uk

Scope

www.scope.org.uk

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

www.skill.org.uk

Organisations who support the Transition Information Network

Barnardo's

www.barnardos.org.uk

British Institute of Learning Disabilities

www.bild.org.uk

Children in Scotland

www.childreninscotland.org.uk

The Children's Society

www.childrensociety.org.uk

Children in Wales

www.childreninwales.org.uk

Home Farm Trust

www.hft.org.uk

Norah Fry Research Centre

www.bristol.ac.uk/norahfry

Paradigm

www.paradigm-uk.org

Sense

www.sense.org.uk

The Shaw Trust

www.shaw-trust.org.uk

Social Care Institute for Excellence

www.scie.org.uk

Valuing People

www.valuingpeople.gov.uk

