

# my future choices

The Magazine of the Transition Information Network

Issue 2 2008



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*my future choices*  
is published by  
the Transition  
Information  
Network.

*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 this issue of *my future choices*.

**As our regular readers will know, every issue has a theme; this issue is all about education.**



On page 4 you can read about Danielle Farrel's journey from school to university, the challenges she faced and the decisions she still has to make. On page 11 you can read about Ben's experience of going to university and his advice on how universities can improve their support for students with Asperger syndrome. On page 6 you can find out about a Student Ambassador scheme in London that aims to break down the barriers to further and higher education for learners with disabilities.

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities are experts on post-16 education for disabled people, so if you're thinking of going to college or university, you can contact Skill for advice. On page 8 you can read all about their helpline.

We think it's important that everyone who works with young disabled people works in a 'person centred way'. This means listening to young people about what they want to do when they leave school. On page 10 you can read about how Hillcrest School in Bedfordshire is now offering every young disabled pupil a person centred transition review.

On page 12, some of our readers tell us about their lives and their dreams for the future. There are a lot of changes happening in the world of education and so we give a very brief outline of some of them on page 13.

As ever we hope you found this issue useful and if you would like to contribute to future issues of *my future choices* please get in touch.

Have a great summer.

**Lucia Winters**

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# News from TIN

In February, TIN had a seminar in London. The seminar was about how young disabled people can be supported into employment. Over 60 people attended from London and the South East. In the morning, there was a talk by the Director of the Shaw Trust in Scotland. This was followed by three workshops.

The first workshop was led by Stephen Beyer, Deputy Director of the Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities at Cardiff University. He gave an overview of a project carried out in partnership with the Shaw Trust that looked at the transition of young people with learning disabilities to employment.

[www.cardiff.ac.uk/medic/subsites/learningdisabilities/index.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/medic/subsites/learningdisabilities/index.html)

Judy Weir from the Shaw Trust gave a workshop about how the Shaw Trust supports young people into employment. [www.shaw-trust.org.uk](http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk)

Ela Nisbet, Outreach Transition Worker at Oaklands College, was joined by two students, Lee Saunders and Patrick Fitzgerald. They talked about how Ela had supported them from college to employment. They are now very busy doing a mixture of paid employment, college and volunteering. Afterwards, Lee said:

**“I liked doing the introduction for our presentation. I talked about what does work mean to me; it means helping customers and working as part of a team. I have gained more confidence by working at Somerfield.**

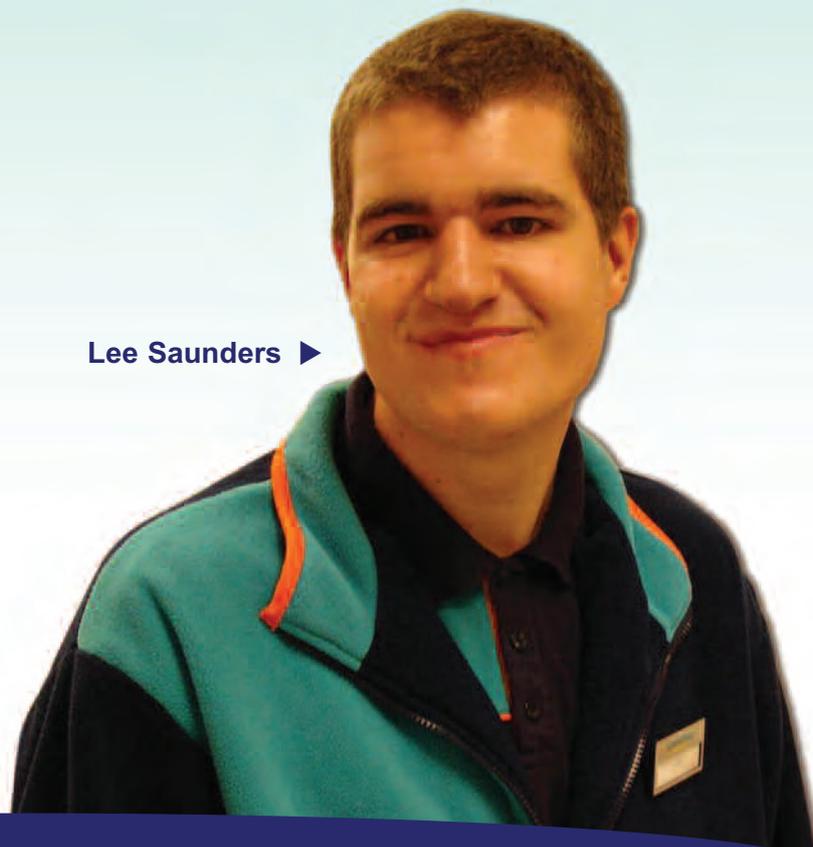
**I was in charge of the Laptop and I liked doing the slide show from the Laptop. At the end of our presentation I stood up and said this is the end of our presentation. I did not feel nervous**

**either and I am pleased with myself being able to stand up in front of everybody and doing my talk.**

**We had a free lunch and it was lovely and enjoyed having Green Tea with Ela. It was a lovely day out for me to do my presentation and the people who worked there were really nice to us. Everybody was very helpful to us all day.”**

[www.oaklands.ac.uk](http://www.oaklands.ac.uk)

Lee Saunders ►



# My Story

## At a glance

Danielle has cerebral palsy. This is her experience of going from school to university

By Danielle Farrel

Cerebral Palsy can affect lots of different people in a variety of different ways. No two people with this disability are the same and impairments it causes range from mobility to hearing and visual difficulties as well as many more. Individuals with CP have to overcome many barriers put in front of them as a result of their disability. These barriers are likely to be aspects of daily life that non – disabled people take for granted including accessing social activities and education.

For me education has been one of the main barriers I have faced as a result of my CP but I am proud to say that with my BA Honours Media from the University of the West of Scotland pending, it is safe to say that it is a barrier I have overcome with the support of my family and friends.

However, looking back even at primary school age my parents even faced conflicting opinions about what was best for me in terms of my education. My Cerebral Palsy affects my mobility to the extent that I'm wheelchair bound and use a powered wheelchair to get around. I also need support when carrying personal care tasks. These limitations in no way affect my learning ability or social skills. Therefore my parents were keen for me to attend a mainstream primary school. People in authority however, didn't agree with my parents and felt that as a result of my CP, I would be 'disruptive' in a mainstream environment. Now at the age of 22 and looking at all I've achieved I feel like going back to those who said that and ask them what they meant by 'disruptive!'

Luckily for me, my parents are not easily swayed. They stood their ground with the education department and with the right support, from the age of four and a half till 11 I attended my local primary school. For the most part I was happy there. I know bullying can sometimes be an issue when you are disabled but I can happily say, excluding the very odd insensitive comment that it never has been for me. I made friends who didn't see my disability and who I am still in touch with today. To them I was and still am 'Danielle' not 'Danielle with Cerebral Palsy'. I also had the support of the teachers who had realised very early on that academically I was just as capable as my peers.

Despite having everyone's support in mainstream education at this stage, as primary school came to end, I made the decision to continue my education at Ashcraig School, a special school in Glasgow. It is the only special school in Scotland that follows the mainstream curriculum. It was here that I began to gain my qualifications including six Standard Grades and two highers. The authorities didn't agree with my decision and now very aware of how wrong they were about me being disruptive, argued that Ashcraig would shield me from the real world.

That couldn't have been further from the truth. Not only was everyone treated equally as a result of every pupil having some sort of disability, I obtained the same qualifications as my able-bodied friends, got the chance to undertake a work experience placement, and attended college one day a week in the 6th

year which helped me make informed choices about my preferred career path. I may be wrong and some may argue with me but I feel that choosing to go to Ashcraig School was the best decision for me. Far from shielding me from the real world, it opened up many opportunities and showed me that despite my disability, I can achieve my goals in all areas of life, personally, academically and in employment.

It may be considered ironic but it was with the support of staff in special education as well as the never ending support of family and friends that I decided to move back into mainstream education to work towards achieving my goal of becoming a journalist. I had always had a keen interest in writing, even as a child I often sat for hours writing stories around the life of one particular fictional character. After researching various options, I decided that journalism was the way for me to go as this would not only give me the opportunity to develop my writing skills, but there was also the possibility of combining this with my knowledge of disability with an increase in the number of specialist magazines available.

At college I studied my NC in Media and Production followed by my HNC and HND in Communications with Media, spending a total of three years there. The courses covered many aspect of the media industry from journalism to video and photography but despite giving me an insight into other aspects of the industry, it only further confirmed that journalism was my preferred career.

Whilst at college I received a great deal of support from academic staff but failed to receive the same standard of support when it came to personal care. I felt that despite having the Disabled Student Allowance funded by SAAS which paid for any support or equipment I needed to carry out the course as a result of my Cerebral Palsy that I was often forgotten about. I think that because I could manage academically, the fact that I need personal support was overlooked regardless of the money the college were receiving in order to provide it.

Thankfully this has not been an issue I have experienced since gaining a 3rd year entry into the Media degree at the University of the West of Scotland. I now have someone with me at all times who acts as a note taker in classes and assists me with personal care when required. Like most things in life, this too has had its problems but on the whole, I feel that universities are better at providing support for disabled students than colleges. This has certainly been the case in my experience.

Now, nearing the end of my Honours year of my Media degree, I am still facing conflicting opinions about my career choice but I have to say the level of negativity has considerably decreased compared to in the past. Those who still hold a negative opinion tell me they only hold this view in order to make me aware of barriers I may have to overcome in the future. My response to this is that I've been overcoming barriers as a result of my Cerebral Palsy for the last 22 years. I'm not going to stop now.



## At a glance

This London Student Ambassador scheme helps young disabled learners find out about higher education.

# AchieveAbility

In 2006 the AchieveAbility Network and the ThisAbility project collaboratively developed a ground breaking student ambassador scheme that aims to break down the barriers to further and higher education for learners with disabilities studying in Greater London.

The scheme is funded by Sir John Cass's Foundation with the support of University of Westminster, London East Thames Gateway Aimhigher, West London Aimhigher, London North Aimhigher and Aspire.

The scheme is led by the AchieveAbility Network and the ThisAbility Project. The two projects focus on two different strands and cohorts of students. The AchieveAbility Network is a multi-faceted educational provision for students with Specific Learning differences (SpLD) and works solely with learners with SpLD. The ThisAbility strand works with learners with sensory impairments, physical impairments, autistic spectrum conditions and Asperger's Syndrome. Each strand recruits university students with disabilities as ambassadors and trains them to deliver outreach activities to young people with similar disabilities in secondary school, further education colleges and pupil referral units across London.

The aim of the scheme is for ambassadors to deliver up to 5 outreach sessions to young people within the school or college; however sessions are flexible depending on the needs of the individual, school or college. The sessions include a range of interesting and engaging activities that focus on raising aspirations among young people and increasing awareness of the opportunities in higher education and employment. To complete the sessions and heighten the experience for the young people involved they are given the opportunity to visit a University in London, accompanied by the ambassadors, for a taster day.

The ambassadors are comprised of a diverse group of current undergraduate and postgraduate students studying at a university. They are recruited from a number of different London Universities and



therefore are pursuing a variety of degrees, all with varying experiences. They are fantastic role models who help to raise aspirations of young people, as well as providing them with the opportunity to gain real insight and knowledge of higher education from a student's perspective. Through this scheme the ambassadors are also given the opportunity to participate in other events; these have included schools' parent sessions and parents evenings, SENCO meetings, SEN local authority organised events and other Higher Education events and conferences.

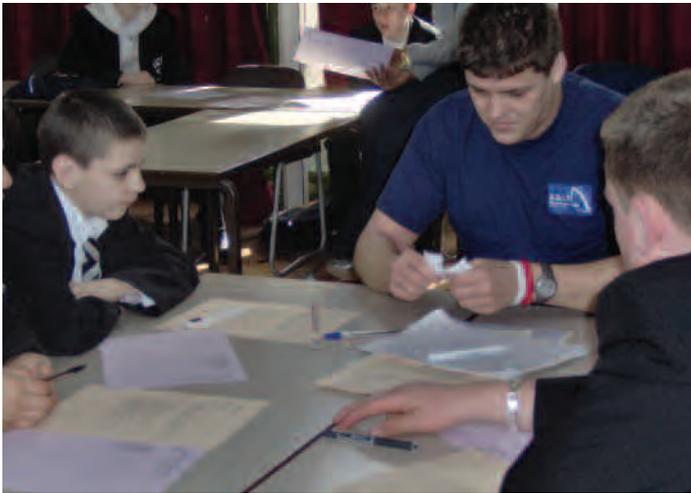
Having overcome huge personal and practical barriers to education, our student ambassadors have pushed themselves to excel against the odds. We hope that the London Student Ambassador scheme will help young people in schools to not only identify with the challenges posed by these barriers to education for our ambassadors, but also with their achievements and successes. This in turn will help them choose the best path for themselves and progress into higher education.

**“The benefits of being involved on this project, on a personal level allowed me to develop my communication skills, patience, and realisation that such pupils had so much potential and could be re-engaged with the right help and guidance. On reflection, particularly towards the end of the program the insight and interest in education, particularly in university that the pupils had gained was truly amazing to witness. And being a part of this was self rewarding.”** AchieveAbility Student Ambassador

**“Because of all the things that I went through when I was young, if I could help someone... by talking about my experiences and helping them to explore what’s out there, then it would be worthwhile.”**

ThisAbility Ambassador

To assess the scheme’s effectiveness and impact on its targeted young people, the scheme is undergoing a 3 year evaluation. The evaluations and feedback collected from the young people who participated so far have been extremely positive, with sessions proving to be beneficial and inspirational. The scheme has also been well received and highly regarded by teachers, SENCOs and parents, having witnessed the positive impact the sessions have had upon the young people, as well as the ambassadors.



**“Helped me to figure out what I want to do in the future”.**

**“I didn’t really have much understanding of my learning difficulty before AchieveAbility.”** Learner Year 9

**“It is good, it is insightful and it makes you think more about Higher Education and your future.”** Learner Year 11

**“Hearing from the students was brilliant as they are the ones who have dealt with situations and it was encouraging to see what they have achieved.”**

Learner Year 11

**“We have all been so inspired by the mentors learning journeys, they have taught us new strategies to adopt, which make our life so much easier. Above all though they have confirmed what we have always known – that young people with special educational needs can and do achieve.”** Parent and SpLD Learner

**“I was supporting a student today who attended the meeting and he actually did some work for the first time in weeks today, ‘Hip Hip Hooray’. During the lesson he repeated to me several times that he wanted to go to University. Another student has been to see me about college courses and lots lots more. After 1 session I believe this is going to have a positive effect for all pupils and become an ongoing project.”** Teacher

**“The impact it had was immeasurable. The self esteem, optimism and self advocacy of the students involved increased beyond all my expectations.”**

SENCO

Since the start of the scheme the AchieveAbility Network and the ThisAbility project have recruited and trained more than 54 students from 12 different London universities. These ambassadors have been delivering outreach sessions in a variety of settings and have reached a total of approximately 200 young people across the two years. Sir John Cass Foundation and other partners continue to support the work and it is hoped that this scheme will continue to expand in the next academic year, recruiting more ambassadors to work with more young people in schools and colleges across Greater London.

**If you are interested in the AchieveAbility or the ThisAbility London Student ambassador scheme and would like more information either about becoming a student ambassador or are a school or college interested in participating in the scheme please contact:**

**AchieveAbility Network**

Kate Byford

Email: [k.byford@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:k.byford@westminster.ac.uk)

Tel: 020 7911 5794

Visit: [www.achieveability.org.uk](http://www.achieveability.org.uk)

**ThisAbility Project**

Bee Ong

Email: [k.b.ong@open.ac.uk](mailto:k.b.ong@open.ac.uk)

Tel: 020 7556 6153



SIR JOHN CASS FOUNDATION  
Supporting education for  
young people since 1748

A day in the life

# Skill

information services



**Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities** is a national charity. It helps disabled people and people with learning difficulties who are studying at school or college, or looking for a job. It gives young people and their families information about:

- the support that should be available in learning or work
- making choices about your future
- your rights.



Every morning, the Skill Information Service staff check to see if there are any email messages from students. Nowadays, many enquiries come direct through the website.

You can call the Skill Information Service free on 0800 328 5050. The helpline is open on Tuesdays 11.30 am – 1.30pm and Thursdays 1.30pm – 3.30pm. You can also look at the website [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk) or email [info@skill.org.uk](mailto:info@skill.org.uk) at any time.

**Name:** Michael Turner

**Email:** mturner@reallywant.co.uk

**He/She is:** Disabled Student

**Living/Studying in:** North West

**Impairment:** Deaf/hearing impaired

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** Under 16

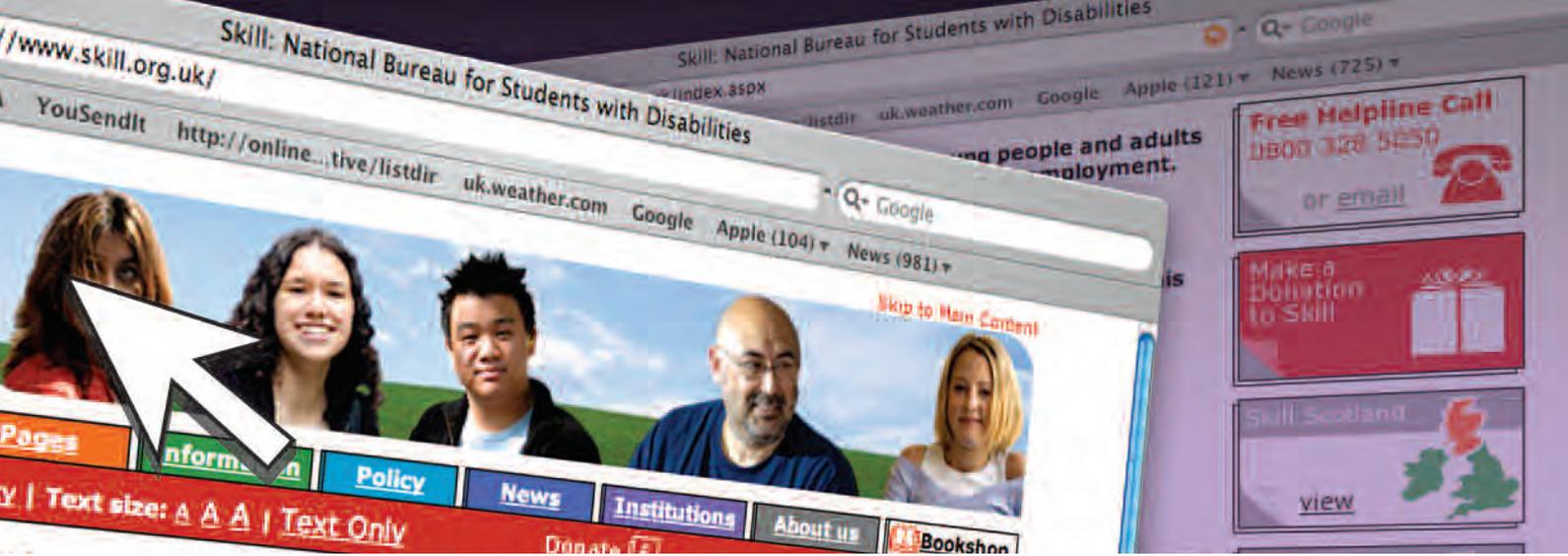
**Ethnicity:**

**Subject:** Facilities/Support

**Details:** I get some support at school for my learning. Will this stay the same when I leave?

**Referred by:** Friend





The Information Service staff meet with the Skill Policy team to discuss questions about the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and national policy. Although all names and personal details are kept confidential, this is also a way to pass on the experiences of disabled students. Skill uses anonymous case studies to tell the government how to make life better and more equal for disabled people.

Skill aims to answer all questions from students as quickly as possible. At busy times of the year it may take up to five working days (not including Saturday and Sunday).



Skill usually replies by email unless students ask for a letter or information to be sent in the post. Information Service staff can also phone you up if you prefer. Skill has lots of booklets on its website. These are free to download.

If you are a young person like Michael with additional support needs or disabilities, then the law says you should get support for your learning. Don't be put off by people assuming that you can't study certain subjects. Don't forget that:

- People with dyslexia become teachers
- D/deaf people study music
- People with visual impairments study graphic design

**Date:** Wed, 21 May 2009 09:04:52

**Subject:** Support at School

**From:** info@skill.org.uk

**To:** mturner@reallywant.co.uk

Dear Michael

Thank you for contacting Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities.

Your support might change when you leave school. It will depend on where you study and what your learning needs are.

If you are going to college or university, it is important to contact them before your course starts to explain how you learn best and what support you need. The earlier you do this, the better. It means that they will have time to get the support ready for you before you start.

If you go to a Further Education (FE) college, you can speak to the Learning Support team. If you go on to study at university, you can get help from the Disability Coordinator.

You can choose whether or not to tell your employer, college or university about your disability. This is sometimes called 'disclosing your disability'. The main advantage of telling them is that they can organise support for you. It also means you are protected under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

You can find out more from Skill's booklets which are free on our website.

#### **Adjustments for disabled students**

Page 5 has a section on adjustments for students who are D/deaf or hearing impaired

#### **Disclosing your disability**

#### **Applying to further education**

#### **Applying to higher education**

I hope this information is useful to you. Please let us know if you have any other questions.

Best regards

Hannah James  
Information and Research Worker

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities  
Chapter House, 18-20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW  
Information Service: 0800 328 5050 (voice),  
0800 068 2422 (text), info@skill.org.uk Tuesday 11.30am – 1.30pm,  
Thursday 1.30 – 3.30pm. Website: www.skill.org.uk

# Hillcrest School

## Valuing People Now – The vision can be a reality

Hillcrest School started with two person centred transition reviews in 2005. Now it offers every young person a person centred transition review. Jonathan Ralphs, PCP Coordinator, shares the school's three year journey.



### What is a person centred transition review?

The difference in person centred transition reviews is in its approach. The review is not chaired, it is facilitated, helping the young person to remain at the centre of their review. It starts with people at the review introducing themselves and saying what they like and admire about the young person. Information is then collected and recorded under a number of headings by a 'mingling time'. This is when people at the review, all at the same time, write on sheets of paper their thoughts and comments thinking about the young person. The information is discussed with the young person and those present to develop a transition action plan.

### A voice that is listened to

The review promotes the young person's voice throughout the process. One student said: "It was fantastic – everyone listened to me!"

At another review, Joe's teacher said: "It's so wonderful to see how Joe, a student who is deaf and doesn't speak, used a PowerPoint presentation to let people know what's important to him and the support he needs."

Parents have also given a positive feedback: "We didn't just talk about performance at school, we talk about everything – like home and how to get support to make positive changes."

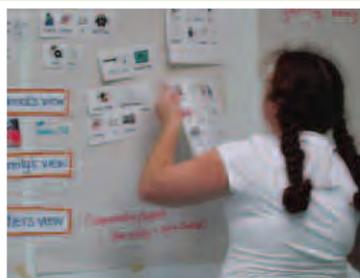
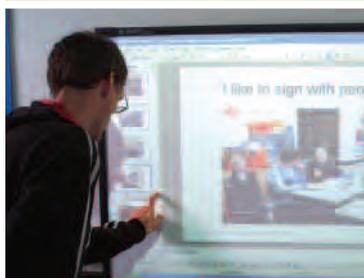
### Make it meaningful

Although the review has a process to follow, there are many ways that creativity has been used to engage the young person and make it have meaning. Using the white board connected to the internet, Richard showed what was important to him by accessing car related internet sites. Lisa played 'Jazz moods' music to help her relax in the mingling time.

### Top tips for growth

There are many reasons for the growth in numbers of person centred reviews at Hillcrest School. It started with finding champions – young people, family and staff members – who would embrace and positively communicate the review process. Being creative and having fun helped. Young people created a drama showing the differences between traditional and person centred reviews and showed this to the whole school.

The journey has taken three years; now every young person at Hillcrest School has a person centred transition review. Valuing People Now's vision states: "by 2011 every young people with a learning disability and with a 'statement' will have a person centred review from ages 14 –19." Is the three year vision in Valuing People Now just a dream? Hillcrest School proves it can be a reality; a school that has person centeredness at its heart.



### For further information, contact

Jonathan Ralphs, PCP Coordinator: 01582 818077  
jonathan.ralphs@bedscc.gov.uk

Hillcrest School: 01582 866972  
Hillcrest@deal.bedfordshire.gov.uk

# Ben's Story

## At a glance

Ben has Asperger syndrome. This is his experience of studying at university.

**Told by Lalli Howell, Head of the Autism Spectrum Condition Support Service in Brighton and Hove.**

Here in Brighton at the Autism Spectrum Condition Support Service (ASCSS) we put significant emphasis on transitions from nursery to primary, primary to secondary, and secondary to further or higher education. We firmly believe that a successful transition programme is key to the future academic path of a child. Many years ago, I used to work for a special provision for children on the autistic spectrum in Oxfordshire. One of the pupils at the school was Ben Delo, now a successful analyst for a hedge fund in the City, who told me that his job is 'writing computer programs that trade the stock market to make millions!'

Ben is great success story. From being labelled as 'impossible to educate' at the age of 10, he managed to achieve A\* GCSEs, A-levels, and a First from Oxford University. I interviewed him recently and the following is his account of his experience of his first year at university. Ben didn't benefit from a formal transition programme. He somehow managed, but with a few blips that could have been avoided with him having more support and knowing what to expect.

Ben told me that his school helped him with academic matters and with practising mock interviews, and his support teacher wrote a helpful letter to the university stating his main needs. Once at university, Ben wished he had an advocate, at least at the start to help him with his social needs. His tutor was aware of his diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome and he was sensitive to his academic needs, although Ben didn't need any specific academic support. Ben wished that there had been somebody he could have gone to when social situations became tricky.

He also wished that his statement could have been carried through his university years, so that people had an official document carrying the right information about him. He then gave me a wish list for a school to university transition that he hopes is going to be useful for other students with his condition.

## Ben's wish list:

- A person designated to support social and behavioural issues for students with Asperger syndrome.
- Better awareness about Asperger syndrome amongst university staff, and he added that knowledge gained from films in the 80s is not enough (referring to Rain Man and The Boy Who Could Fly).
- Leaflets about the condition to be left in common rooms, staff rooms, and canteens.
- Resources to go beyond aids such as laptops and extra time during exams. A Circle of Friends would have been so much better.
- A safe haven to go to when in social distress.

Ben ended by saying that he felt that due to his social difficulties, he didn't come across well in his first year at university, and relationships with peers were tricky and unsettling. He feels that if social support is not made available for students who experience social difficulties, students may drop out, and it is time to pay more attention to the social environment in university as well as looking at transitions and better communications between school and university. Ben survived because he had the confidence to disclose his difficulties and the ability to be introspective and make sense of what was going on. But some students may just abandon their studies simply because the social pressures are too high and help is not available.



# My dreams for the future

## Dinesh (19 years old)

### What are you doing at the moment?

I am in college doing a BTEC National Award in Media. I had a job in Sainsbury's for two months last year. I had applied for a part time position there two years ago. I sent in an application form. Then I had to chase them up a lot of times and finally, with some help from my mum, I got a temporary position. I worked on Wednesdays and Saturdays. I liked meeting new people, trying new things out, learning complicated tasks. My next plans are to get into performing arts, and to find another job. I am going to try to find some drama classes near me to gain some extra experience.

### What would you like to be doing in ten years time?

I would like to be in the acting industry. But as a back up plan, well, I need to discuss this with my Connexions PA, but maybe carpentry. I have done one day per week training course in this. I would like to buy a house one day and move my family in with me.

## Christian (18 years old)

### Do you go to college?

I go to college and go home at Easter and holidays. I do basically everything at college but I'm hardly there at the moment because I got work experience nearly all week. I've just done my NVQ1 in horsecare, and I've just passed it. Mondays I got lessons at college and then Tuesdays I got horse work experience at Westbury. Wednesdays I got my NVQ, Thursdays I got work experience, Fridays I got work experience again and Sundays I get paid work experience.

### Wow, you're very busy!

Yes, I'm a busy man!

### What would your dream job be?

My dream job would be working with horses. They need looking after 24/7 and they're nice to work with. I get to ride them. At the college I'm at now, I do my dressage and everything.

### What do you like to do in your freetime?

In my free time I do my shopping and just enjoying my time. I go to pubs and that with my mate Chris.

### What are your dreams for the future?

I'd like to have my own company and run my own race yard.

## Paul (28 years old)

### Tell us about yourself

I live in London. I have a girlfriend. She's a nice girl. I work in a pub by Stratford Station. I go up to the station in a bus to the pub. I collect the pint glasses and I get paid.

### Do you like earning your own money?

Yeah!

### What do you like to do in your spare time?

I have a friend called Scott. We go to the cinema and go clubbing and the gym.

### What do you want to do in the future?

Photography. I'd like to do photography as a business. (Paul did a media course at college and has done photography work for the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities and has been paid for these jobs). In the future, I'd like to get married and earn money with photography and learn new skills in the pub.

## Chris (18 years old)

### Do you go to college?

I live in Bristol and go to college. I stay at college in the house. There are five houses attached to the college.

### What else do you do?

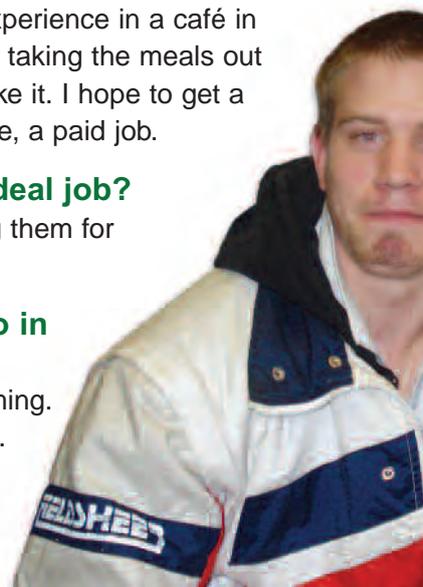
I do work experience. I did a catering NVQ last year and passed it. I do work experience in a café in Westbury. I do washing up, taking the meals out and clearing the tables. I like it. I hope to get a job at the end of the course, a paid job.

### What would be your ideal job?

Working with dogs – taking them for walks, washing them.

### What do you like to do in your freetime?

I watch TV, bowling, swimming. My hobby is model making.



# Policy update

## What are your dreams for the future?

I don't have many big dreams but one of my little dreams is to work with dogs.

## Arthur (22 years old)

### Tell us about yourself

I live in South Wales. I live with my family.

### Do you go to college?

I go to college and do stuff there like engineering and catering, horticulture, farming, and daily living skills. My favourite subject is horticulture. I go to Fairfield Farm College near Westbury in Wiltshire. I like going there and have friends there.

### Do you have a job as well?

I'm going for a job interview with Careers in Watford next week. I'm going there and then all the way back to Wales.

### What do you like to do in your freetime?

I like movies and I like going to the cinema. I go to pubs.

### What are your dreams for the future?

I'd like to work in a shop and do something with horticulture. In five years time, I'd like to be living with friends.



## Developments in education for 14 to 19 year-olds

There are a lot of developments happening in education for young people between 14 and 19 years of age. The Learning and Skills Council have produced a report called '**Learning for Living and Work**'. The report is about how they are going to make sure that young people with learning difficulties and learning disabilities have access to things they want to do.

They have an easy-read version of this report on their website:

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-learningforlivingandwork-easyread-jan07.pdf>

Or try: <http://snipurl.com/llwstrat>

The government has just published a strategy on how young people can study in different ways by doing a **Diploma**. The Diploma is a new qualification for 14 to 19 year-olds. It will start in September and is an alternative to GCSEs and A Levels.

You can find out more about the Diploma by going to this website for young people:

<http://yp.direct.gov.uk/diplomas/>

The government's Department for Children, Schools and Families has made a '14-19 website' that has information about all the policy developments in education for young people aged between 14 and 19 years old. <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/>

They also have a website for young people and parents.

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?go=site.home&sid=45>

For further information about policy developments in education, visit the TIN website:

[www.transitioninfonet.org.uk](http://www.transitioninfonet.org.uk)

# News

All the information on these pages, including links to websites and reports, are available on [www.transitioninfonet.org.uk](http://www.transitioninfonet.org.uk)

## Opportunities for young people

### Wanted – disabled models for Photosymbols

Photosymbols are pictures used by people with learning disabilities. They help make written information easier to understand. Photosymbols are working with the Council for Disabled Children to build up a bank of pictures of disabled children, disabled young people and their families. They are looking for parents, children and young people who would like to be models. **If you are interested, please get in touch with Photosymbols.**

**Tel: Pete Le Grys on 0117 959 4424 or 07976 740977**

**Email: [pete@photosymbols.com](mailto:pete@photosymbols.com)**

**Photosymbols Ltd, The Greenway Centre,  
Doncaster Road, Bristol BS10 5PY**

**You can find out more about photosymbols at  
<http://www.photosymbols.com>**

### Participants wanted for research project

Two researchers from the Centre for Disability Studies at the University of Leeds are doing a project about disabled people's life stories and about social changes over time. They would like to hear the stories of disabled people born in 1940s, 1960s and 1980s, and are particularly keen to hear from disabled women and men who grew up with physical or sensory impairments in the 1980s. **If you would like more information, contact Dr Sonali Shah:**

**Email: [s.i.shah@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:s.i.shah@leeds.ac.uk)**

**Tel: 01159 515413**

**Web: [www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/)**

## Campaigns and charity news

### More things to do and places to go for young disabled people – get involved!

Last summer Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) asked their young supporters "If you were Prime Minister for the day and could change one thing, what would it be?"

The top three things that disabled children and young people wanted to change were:

- Having more fun things to do and places to go
- More respect for disabled young people
- Getting a good education

This year EDCM are taking forward the priorities from the report and want to find out more about what 'more things to do and places to go' looks like for disabled children and young people locally.

EDCM want to know:

- What things disabled children and young people can do and what places they can go to in their local area?
- Are there places young people would like to go to but can't? If so, what are the barriers?
- What would they like to change locally?

They will publish the answers in a booklet that young people can show to their local councillors and local MPs, to help campaign for more things to do and places to go in their local area. They will also use this information to feed into the Government consultation on the Play strategy, and to campaign for the Government's 10-year youth strategy to work for disabled young people.

EDCM want to hear from disabled children and young people about the places they like to go and things they like to do.

Please make sure the young people you are in touch with get the chance to make their views known!

You could:

- Make 'places to go and things to do' the topic of one of your sessions, and find out young people's views.
- Work with your groups to write or draw their ideas about what a good place to go looks like, and what a bad place to go looks like.
- Ask young people to take photos of places they like to go, or would like to go but can't.

...or any other activities that help answer the questions above! Please send all responses to Pamela Shaw by the 30th June 2008. EDCM will publish as many as they can on their website and in the booklet.

There will be a £20 voucher for the first three entries they pick out of a hat after the closing date, as a 'thank you' for getting involved.

**For contact details and more information please go to [www.edcm.org.uk/goingplaces](http://www.edcm.org.uk/goingplaces) or email [pamela@edcm.org.uk](mailto:pamela@edcm.org.uk)**



### Face Equality

Changing Faces have launched their "Face equality" campaign, which aims to ensure that people with disfigurements are treated fairly and equally, irrespective of their facial appearance. **To find out what you can do to support the campaign, visit: [www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)**

## Mencap launches new website for young people

Mencap have launched a new website for young people with a learning disability called Young Mencap. It has sections on leisure and play, learning and work. It also has a survey asking young people to vote on issues that are important to them and has a Your Say section where young people can share pictures, upload videos and leave comments. **Web:** [www.mencap.org.uk/youngmencap](http://www.mencap.org.uk/youngmencap)



## Events

### 'Lost in transition? A Home of My Own'

26th November 2008, Inmarsat Business centre, London.

Leading learning difficulty support provider Dimensions is hosting its second national transitions conference on November 26th 2008, called 'Lost in transition? A home of my own'.

They would like to take this opportunity to invite housing, social work, voluntary and education professionals to contribute to the day's programme. The conference will be for transitions professionals and will share best practice about supporting young people with a learning difficulty to move into their own home; particularly around choice and planning. If your organisation has examples of best practice in this area that you think others could learn from, they'd like to hear from you.

**If you would like to discuss a proposal, or would like to find out more about the conference, please contact Hayley Carter on 0114 241 2112, or email [hayley.carter@dimensions-uk.org](mailto:hayley.carter@dimensions-uk.org) Web: [www.lostintransition.org](http://www.lostintransition.org)**

## Resources

### New guide: 'How to involve children and young people with communication impairments in decision-making'

CDC has teamed up with Participation Works to create a new guide called 'How to involve children and young people with communication impairments in decision-making'. The guide provides information and ideas about how you can enable children and young people with a range of communication impairments to participate in decisions about their lives. It also includes case studies to illustrate examples of good practice from different settings.

#### Download the guide:

[http://www.ncb.org.uk/dotpdf/open\\_access\\_2/how\\_to\\_involve\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_with\\_communication\\_impairments\\_in\\_decision\\_making.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/dotpdf/open_access_2/how_to_involve_children_and_young_people_with_communication_impairments_in_decision_making.pdf)

## The Children's Society Disability Toolkit

Are you looking for extra support to help you work with and involve disabled children and young people in participation and decision-making? The Children's Society has recently launched a brand new online resource for professionals, the Disability Toolkit website. **The website allows you to search for and add resources, practice and ideas that will help give disabled children and young people a voice.**

<http://sites.childrenssociety.org.uk/disabilitytoolkit/>

### Talk about Change

Talk about Change is a film based on conversations with children and young people with life threatening conditions, made at their homes and in children's hospices. It features their own video diaries that give real insight into their lives. It has been designed to stimulate discussion, communicate what young people really think and want, and to help professionals develop appropriate services and responses as children begin to make the leap from children's palliative care into adult services.

[www.talkaboutchange.co.uk](http://www.talkaboutchange.co.uk)

### Extending inclusion: access for disabled children and young people to extended schools and children's centres: a development manual

Philippa Stobbs, Council for Disabled Children

Funded by the DCSF, this guidance brings together learning and information for those who manage or work in children's centres and extended schools, and those in local authorities and voluntary organisations working with them. It identifies practice that promotes access to, and participation in, extended services for disabled children and young people, taking into account the views of those people and their families. It comes with a CD which includes case studies, training materials and resources.

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/CDC-00186-2008.pdf>



**Hard copies can be ordered through DCSF publications: Tel: 0845 60 222 60 Please quote ref: 00186-2008DOM-EN**

### Transition: moving on well

A good practice guide on effective transition from children's to adult services for young people with complex health needs has been published by the Department of Health and the Department for Schools, Children and Families. The guide will help ensure that the young person and their family is better prepared for the move to adult care and that the adult care team has been involved in planning for the transfer

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_083592](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_083592)

# Useful Organisations

## Organisations that make up the Transition Information Network

### Association for Real Change (ARC)

[www.arcuk.org.uk](http://www.arcuk.org.uk)

### Contact a Family

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

### Council for Disabled Children

[www.ncb.org.uk/cdc](http://www.ncb.org.uk/cdc)

### Dimensions

[www.dimensions-uk.org](http://www.dimensions-uk.org)

### Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

[www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk)

### Macintyre

[www.macintyrecharity.org](http://www.macintyrecharity.org)

### Mencap

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

### National Autistic Society

[www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk)

### National Development Team (NDT)

[www.ndt.org.uk](http://www.ndt.org.uk)

### Scope

[www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

### Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

[www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)

## Organisations who support the Transition Information Network

### Barnardo's

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

### British Institute of Learning Disabilities

[www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk)

### Children in Scotland

[www.childreninscotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk)

### The Children's Society

[www.childrensociety.org.uk](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

### Children in Wales

[www.childreninwales.org.uk](http://www.childreninwales.org.uk)

### Home Farm Trust

[www.hft.org.uk](http://www.hft.org.uk)

### Norah Fry Research Centre

[www.bristol.ac.uk/norahfry](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/norahfry)

### Paradigm

[www.paradigm-uk.org](http://www.paradigm-uk.org)

### Sense

[www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

### The Shaw Trust

[www.shaw-trust.org.uk](http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk)

### Speaking Up

[www.speakingup.org](http://www.speakingup.org)

### Valuing People

[www.valuingpeople.gov.uk](http://www.valuingpeople.gov.uk)

