

Education and Valuing People

People go to college and adult education classes for lots of different reasons. They may want to learn new skills so they can get



a job. They may want to learn skills so they can become more independent. They may just want to learn something new that they are interested in. Going to classes can also give people the chance to make new friends.

This paper does three things:

- It looks at the kind of education people with learning disabilities can go to after they have left school
- It looks at recent changes in the law and how they affect education
- It looks at how education could work more closely with the Learning Disability Partnership Boards

What this paper says

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Education and adults with learning disabilities

What courses can people go to at the moment?

1. School leavers



Many colleges run courses for people with learning disabilities when they leave school.

These usually last for two years and give people the chance to learn new skills and become more independent. Sometimes

people go to these courses when they are 16. Other people might stay at school until 19 and then go on to college.

2. What happens after these courses?

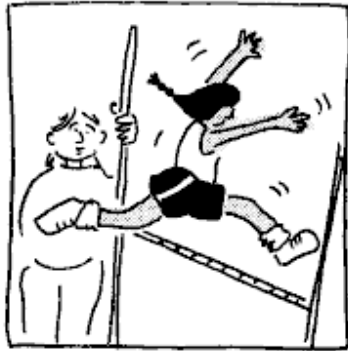
Sometimes people can move onto another course which helps them learn work skills and get ready for work. However, many people may have nowhere to go when they finish their two-year course.



3. Classes for adults

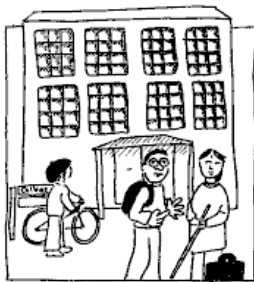


In some parts of the country adults with learning disabilities can attend part time classes. These might be for lots of different subjects – like, art, sport, reading and writing, cookery, self-advocacy etc. Sometimes these classes are especially set up for groups of people with a learning disability.



Other places may give support for people with learning disabilities to attend classes that are open to everyone. The chance to attend classes will depend very much on where you live.

4. Specialist residential colleges



Some school leavers will go to a specialist residential college for two or three years.

They live at the college during the term time.

You can only get money to go to a residential college if the college near where you live cannot offer you the right kind of course.





What are some of the things that need to change?

1. People who cannot get a place at college



There are some people with learning disabilities who do not get the chance to go to college. Many people with learning disabilities who

need a lot of support are told there is no place for them. Colleges don't always run courses that are interesting to people with learning disabilities who are from black, Asian or other different backgrounds.

2. Moving on from college



Many people go from one college course to another but do not feel they are learning things that are new and useful to help them move on. This is especially true for people who really want to get a job.

3. Courses which will only take learners who are likely to get a qualification



Many courses are only for people who are likely to get a qualification, for example an NVQ. There are many people with

learning disabilities who want to learn new skills but who cannot go to a particular class because they are not likely to get the qualification.

4. Teachers not talking with other staff



Teachers do not always have the time to talk to other staff, for example, Social Services staff or people who work in group homes. Of course if a person with a learning

difficulty does not want this to happen then that is fine. But there can be other times when it could help a learner to do better if staff

have time to talk to each other. For example:

A young man with a learning disability is learning how to use money at college. However,



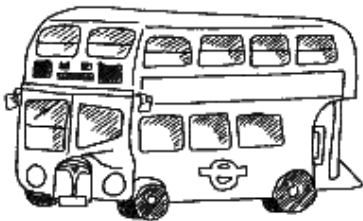
this is never been talked about with staff in his group home. This means the young man doesn't have the chance to use money in real life, only when he is in his class at college.

A woman who needs a lot of support has very little speech. However, staff in the home where she lives have worked out a way of understanding the sounds and signs she makes.



Her teacher at college has not been told about this and feels that the woman cannot understand things at all.

5. Transport



Some people with learning disabilities cannot go to classes because there is no transport to take them there. This can be a problem particularly for people who live in country areas.

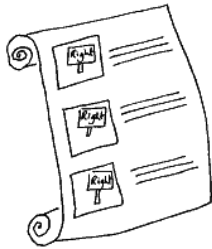


Some recent changes

1. Changes in the way education is organised



The Learning and Skills Council is an organisation that pays for all college and adult education and much work-based learning. The National Learning and Skills Council is based in Coventry and it has 47 Local Learning and Skills Councils in different areas across England. There will be a local Learning and Skills Council in the area where you live.



2. New laws

a. The Learning and Skills Act 2000



The Learning and Skills Act 2000 is a new government law. It says that the Learning and Skills Council must look at the learning and training needs of people with a learning disability.



The Learning and Skills Act set up the Connexions Service. People called Personal Advisors work for the Connexions Service. They help young people with a learning disability up to the

age of 25. They help them think about what learning, training and work they might like to do when they leave school. They give them information about learning and training. When people with a learning disability leaves school, the Personal Advisor has to write down the kind of support they think a person with a learning difficulty will need when they move on to college or training.

b The Disability Discrimination Act Part 4

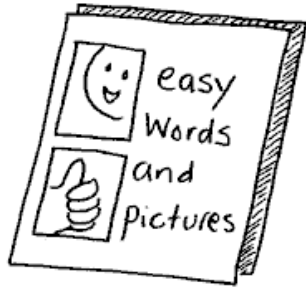


The Disability Discrimination Act Part 4 gives new rights to all disabled learners.

This means that colleges and adult education services:

- Cannot treat disabled learners less well than other learners because of their disability.



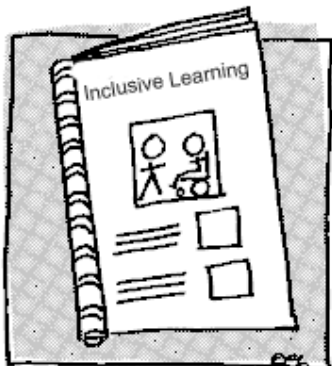


- Will have to give a disabled person extra support if they need it to help them learn for example; giving handouts in large print or easy

language, or making sure someone with a learning disability has a support worker if they need one.

3. Other recent changes

a. Inclusive Learning



In 1996 an important book was written called **Inclusive Learning**.

Inclusive Learning is about making sure that teachers help each learner learn in the way that it is best for them. This means

that all learners, including those with disabilities and learning disabilities, could be included in classes. Many colleges and adult education centres have changed a lot after thinking about Inclusive Learning. But others still have some way to go. Some places put on good special classes for people with learning disabilities but are less good at including them in all classes.

b. Basic Skills



Some people go to classes because they want to get better speaking, reading, writing and number skills. In the last two years there has been a lot of work to try and make sure that people with learning disabilities can be helped to improve these skills.

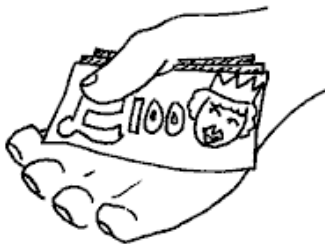
c. Individual Learning Plans



Every learner in college or adult education should now have an Individual Learning Plan. The plan should say what they want to get out of a class and what the teacher will do to help them.



d. Additional Learning Support Funding



Learners with disabilities at college can get money to pay for any extra support they might need. At the moment learners in adult education classes cannot always get this extra money. There are plans to change Additional Learning Support Funding in the future.



What are the good things about Learning Disability Partnership Boards and education working more closely together?

1. Person Centred Planning



Valuing People says how it is important that people's own wishes and hopes should be at the centre of everything they do. Education needs to learn from this. At the moment people with learning disabilities do not always have a say in what their local college offers. They just have to fit in with what is there. It is important that Learning Disability Partnership Boards and people with learning disabilities work with teachers to make sure that they have a say in what classes are offered.

2. Education and Social Services need to plan together



Valuing People says that people with learning disabilities need to be able to have better access to self-advocacy, health services and work. Classes can often help them to do this. Learning Disability Partnership Boards need to make sure that education and Social Services are working together so they make it easier for people with learning disabilities to do these things.

3. What about those who are not in education?



Some people do not receive any education after they leave school. This is especially true for people with who need a lot of support.



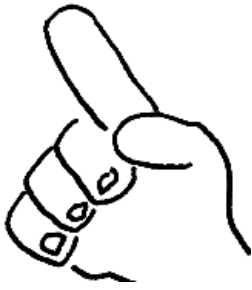
Often people who need a lot of support need classes which are run by education and Social Services together. The Learning Disability Partnership Board could work with both education and Social Services to see what needs to be done to make this happen more.

4. Supporting individual learners

We have seen above that often teachers and other workers do not have time to meet and talk together. This means that what people



learn in classes does not always help them in the rest of their life. The Learning Disability Partnership Boards could make sure that different workers are able to meet together.



The Way Forward

1. Education representation on Learning Disability

Partnership Boards



Learning Disability Partnership Boards need to make sure that someone from education comes regularly to their meetings.

2. Finding out what is going on now



Learning Disability Partnership Boards need to find out what education is available for people with learning disabilities in their area. They might want to set up a group to look at education.

3. Pilot projects



Learning Disability Partnership Boards might then want to set up a project which could try out ways in which people from education, people with learning disabilities and staff from other organisations could work together and find ways of making things better.



Useful Books and Resources

Living Our Lives

Life stories of ten people with learning difficulties which offer a resource for learners and tutors. Also on audio CD supplied with the books

(2001, DfES) Prolog reference: LOL

Making the Jump - We can do a good job

A pack for adults with learning difficulties who want to work

Also on audio CD supplied with the pack

Yola Jacobsen

(2002, NIACE)

Making the Jump – Transition to work

A guide to supporting adults with learning difficulties make the jump from education to employment

Yola Jacobsen

(2002, NIACE)

Making It Work

For people with a learning disability

A guide to help you find and keep a job

For Employers

A guide to employing people with a learning disability

For parents and carers

What you should know if the person you care for is considering employment

(2002, Mencap)

Our Right to Learn

A pack for people with learning difficulties and staff who work with them, based on the Charter for Learning by and for people with learning difficulties

Also on audio cassette supplied with the pack and includes a charter poster

Yola Jacobsen

(2000, NIACE)

Training for Change

A training pack to support adults with learning disabilities to become trainers

Also on audio cassette supplied with the pack. The pack also includes a video

CHANGE and NIACE

(1998, NIACE)

The Self-Advocacy Action Pack

A pack written for adults with learning difficulties on speaking up and self-advocacy. Also on audio CD supplied with the pack

(2001, DfES) Prolog reference: SAAP

Getting and Keeping a Job

How the job centre can help you if you have a learning disability

Published by the Employment Service

Ref: DS20 Also available on audio tape, Ref: DS20AT

Employment Disability Service

Communications Team, JDS2, Level 3, Rockingham House

123 West Street, Sheffield S1 4ER

Pictures provided by CHANGE Picture Bank