

“100 Voices on Young People”



A Report by Equal People
(March 2017)

Introduction

Equal People is an involvement group. Members wanted to find out the views of young people – especially around their hopes and dreams for the future.

Equal People members worked together to: -

- gather the views of young people with learning disabilities living in South Tyneside around employment – including their wider hopes and dreams for the future
- identify the barriers to employment for this sample group
- use this information to make recommendations that would improve employment outcomes for all young people with learning disabilities living in South Tyneside and help them achieve their wider hopes and dreams

Group members (Paula Lowson, Peter Gardiner, David Taylor and Shaun Armour) supported by Carole Watson (Involvement Worker), designed a short questionnaire. This questionnaire was completed by 100 young people aged 15 – 25 with learning disabilities from: -

Keelman's School

Bamburgh School

Jarrow School

South Tyneside College (3 groups)

Day Opportunities

Shared Lives

Activities Group

Arts 4 Wellbeing

Harton Action Stations

Tenants at Simonside Court

Autism Able

Remploy

Kayaks (Kids and Young Adults Club)

People attending the Thursday evening group at Jarrow Community Centre

Young mothers



Pictures were used to promote discussion.

What did we find out?

- Most young people wanted to work; 91 out of 100 said they wanted to get a paid job.
- Most young people hoped to gain qualifications to do this.
- Most young people wanted work experience to help them achieve their goals. 87 out of a hundred said they would like more support to do this.
- Young people wanted to try a wide variety of jobs. The 100 dream jobs were: - working in games shops (12) , designing computer games (10), sports coach (10), beautician (9) helping people (8), working in hospitals (6),cooking (6), working in an office (6),hairedresser(6), art /design (5) working with the police (5) gardening (4), fire service (2), working with children(2), working with trains (2), working with the elderly (2), working in museums (1), running a coffee shop (1), having my own business (1), to be a vet (1), to write stories (1)
- Young people said the main barriers to getting a job were: - lack of information in schools, not being able to read and write very well, needing more work experience, needing more support with job hunting.



What are your hopes and dreams for the future?



“Just to get a job!”

“Learn a trade”

“To gain skills and qualifications

“To work with computers”

“To get a job in a games shop”

“To learn about animation”

“To work in art and design

“To work with the elderly”

“To work with history getting a job in a museum would be great!”

“To become a gym instructor”

“To work in fashion and beauty”

“To set up in business on my own

“To run a coffee shop with a friend”

“To work with animals, be a vet maybe horses in the police force?”

“To work with trains ...”

“To write stories”

“To save the world!”

“Just to lead a happy life”

How does your school or college support you to make these dreams come true?

“I thought school was a waste of time”

“I didn’t do a lot, teachers just told me off a lot”

“When I was at school, there were no options very little work experience and advice about the future.”

“The college helps me with NVQs I might have to go to Gateshead College to do Level 2 in sport.”

“The school points me in the right direction. Staff tell me to dream high!”

“Encouraging me, making me more confident, giving me good advice about jobs.”

“Helping me get qualifications.”

“They got me a placement with horses it’s great!”

“The staff teach us coding and programming.... they’re kind and helpful”

“The college sets targets we get training with Project Choice.”

“We can try different courses, things I would never have thought of trying.”

“I’m a mother now ... the children’s centre has taught me a lot. My daughter is in the crèche there.”



How does your family or carers support you with your hopes and dreams?

“My family tells me to stick in and get qualifications”

“My parents know I like rugby. They say I should try to play for England!”

“I would like to coach children in sport I need more information on this.”

“They help me with homework.”

“My parents tell me not to put myself down they’ve always helped with my confidence.”

“They encourage me to keep going even when I get sad and want to give up.”

“My mam teaches me about looking after myself at home – like cooking and hoovering.”

“Mam and dad tell me just to go for it. They are helping me to become a nurse.”

“My mam’s great she tells me to try new things. I’m not good on the phone so she helps me when I need to make a phone call.”



What are you good at?

“Computers especially games”

“Sport”

“Talking to people”

“Helping others”

“Listening and remembering things “

“Art and crafts”

“Singing”

“Drama”

“Jigsaws and puzzles”

“Organisational skills”

“Horse riding”

“Cooking”

“Looking after my daughter.”

“Not sure”



What would you LIKE to do when you leave school or college?

“Work in a games shop ...”

“Work in IT”

“Design computer games”

“Work in sport – in a gym or as a coach.”

“Work with children”

“Train to be a nurse.”

“I like beauty maybe be a beautician?”

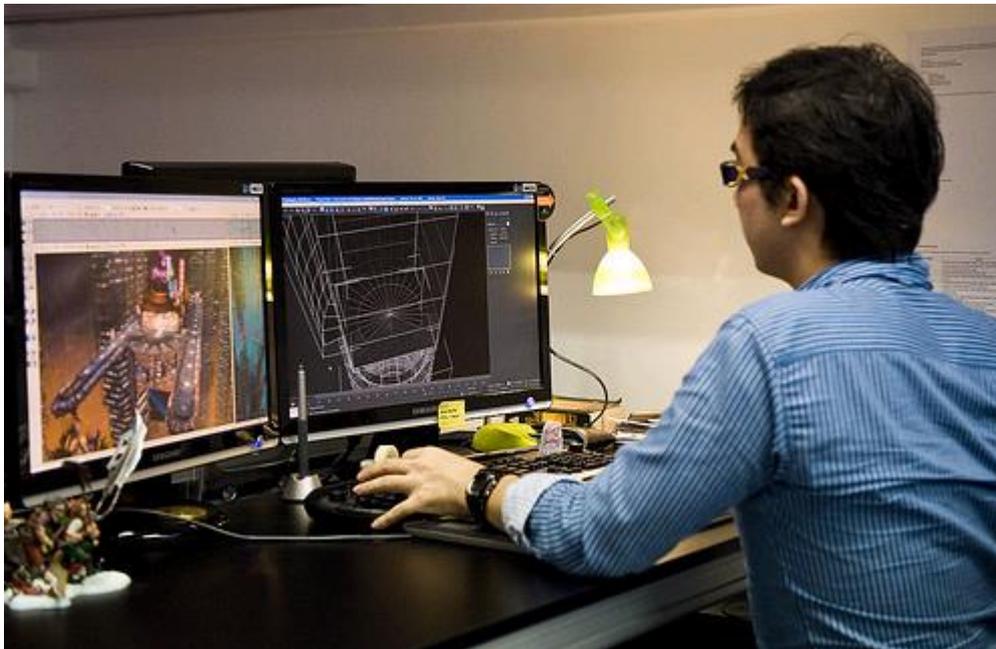
“Work in a cafe ...”

“Work in public transport”

“Be a dancer ...”

“Do photography ...”

“Do something that earns me LOTS of money!”



Can you travel one route independently?

Yes – 65

No – 35

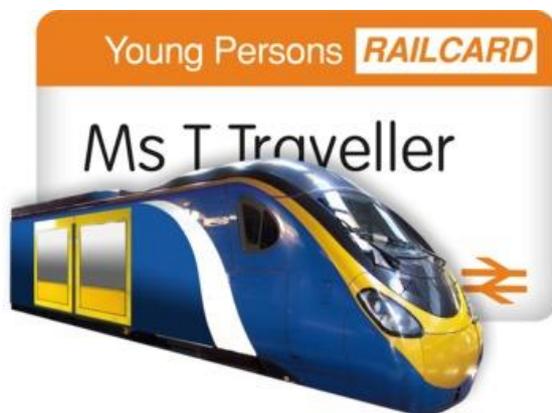
I would like a “travel buddy” or travel training - 15



Have you got a Gold Card or a bus pass?

Yes – 62

No - 38



What MORE could school or college do to help you?

“We need more support with travel training. A lecturer takes us on public transport and that helps but what happens when I leave college?”

“We need to learn more routes”

“I think keeping safe is important we get this training at college but there is a lot to think about.”

“Project Choice helps with travel training but not everyone gets a chance.”

“I think there should be a travel training course for everyone it would help us be more independent.”

“South Tyneside Council should train staff to understand more about autism especially social workers and Connexions staff.”

“Help us with words, reading, writing filling in forms.”

“There just isn’t enough choice. I sometimes had to repeat work placements because there wasn’t the choice of something new.”

“Listen to me and believe in me ...”

“College could do more to help with work experience I’d like to work with older people, or games shops. There should be more help on job hunting using the internet”



Do you meet up with friends at evenings and weekend?

Yes – 58

No – 25

Sometimes – 17

What makes this difficult?

“Getting a babysitter”

“Not having enough money”

“My parents worry I might get into bad company if I’m out at night.”

“I’m not confident on the Metro people are sometimes drunk.”

“There’s not a lot to do”

“I think there’s less to do for older kids I don’t like hanging around on the streets.”

“I go shopping with friends, sometimes ending up at McDonalds but I always get home before it gets dark.”

“Weekends and evenings are family time. I stay home with them. ”

“The weather I don’t like going out when there’s ice on the pavements.”



What do you LIKE to do with friends?

“Going to the cinema “

“Going to the gym “

“Bowling “

“Just hanging out at a friend’s house ...”

“I stay home and listen to music.”

“Playing computer games”

“ We go to the driving range or play pool”

“We play out on our scooters.”



Do you keep fit?

The most popular sport choices were: -

Walking (most popular)

Cycling

Swimming

Gym

Keep fit or dance class (least popular)

“I love cycling. I want to be the next Mark Cavendish!”

“We should have more information about sports clubs at college what is available and how much it costs to join.”



Do you feel confident cooking and looking after yourself?

Only 15 out of a 100 felt confident preparing a meal or doing basic household chores.



People said: -

“Reading instructions is difficult for me it makes cooking a real problem.”

“My mam takes far too much care of me she should let me do more things for myself, even if I mess it up sometimes.”

How many nights per week do you eat “take away” food?

For example: - fish and chips, McDonalds or pizza?

Most people (72) said they only ate take away food twice a week.



People said: -

“My mother does the cooking at home she’s a good cook.”

“I can’t cook very well. I need to learn “

“I worry about shopping and looking after myself in the future”

Do you use social media? For example: - phone apps, Facebook or Twitter?

Yes – 76

No - 24

Would you like more support with this?

25 people said they would like more support.



One person said; -

“There are some dangerous people on Facebook. Everyone should know this.”

What BIG change would make things better for young people going through transition?

“We need the chance to do more qualifications spend more time on life skills and confidence building.”

“We should be able to train as sport instructors “

“All council services should offer jobs for young people with learning disabilities”

“College and parents are too protective. They need to change or nothing will change for teenagers”

“There should be youth clubs and places to go in the evenings”

“Lots of shops are closing and this is going to make it harder for us to get work experience someone should think about that.”

“I like Project Choice but it should be available for more people.”

“I didn’t really have a plan when I left school. There should be more staff to help us plan, to listen and get us really good work experience.”

“The council says they want us to be more independent teach us cooking and life skills so we don’t have to rely on our parents as much.”

“Stagecoach and other transport companies don’t understand autism and there should be more support in schools for young people, too.”

“Some people with learning disabilities have mental health issues too council staff need more training on this.”

“We need more sex education so we know about the changes in our bodies, and we’re not just learning stuff from friends. It might not be true.”

“We need money management ”



Key Messages

- Young people with learning disabilities want to work and plan for the future.
- They want to learn new skills and gain a varied work experience
- Young people want work experience that reflects their interests eg learning more about designing computer games and placements in games shops
- They like the Project Choice model – and want it to be more widely available
- They want support around life skills, travel training, job hunting on line, sex education and internet safety
- They want statutory services ie council, health, fire and police to offer work experience - and real employment opportunities
- They want employers, council staff, transport companies and statutory services to receive more awareness training around autism and mental health issues
- They want parents and carers to be less protective
- They want more places to go at night
- They want more information on sport and leisure facilities across South Tyneside



Recommendations

- 1) Set up a Young People's Working Group (to include young people, parents, carers, council staff, health, transport and sports and leisure staff)
- 2) The working group would review current work experience opportunities – to ensure they are in line with the interests of young people.
- 3) Look at how South Tyneside Council could expand Project Choice as a training option (this was a popular choice with young people).
- 4) Look at how schools could increase their life skills courses - to include more cookery, health education, sex education, job hunting on line and internet safety.
- 5) Review how statutory services could offer work experience and real jobs ie council, health, fire and police.
- 6) Approach Autism Able about delivering a course on autism awareness and mental health awareness across South Tyneside
- 7) Develop a comprehensive travel training programme in South Tyneside.
- 8) Hold a carers forum to increase awareness around the F.A.N.E website, etc, - to increase parent /carer confidence.

Update 15.3.17

There were 82 people at the Working On a Dream" event at the Dunes (15.3.17). Paula gave feedback on "100 Voices on Young People". The group then watched the Employment DVD and then Kellie Woodley supported with group work.

Feedback from Group Work (the 2 most important issues for the group are *d)

“How are we going to get people ready for work?”

Work placements / school *

Independent travel training for all *

Apprenticeships

Sharing information across other services

Educate employers

Interview preparation

CV writing

Change the work culture

More disability employment advisors

Confidence building courses

Taster sessions in the workplace

Jobs and placements that match people’s aspirations

Commitment from large organisations, council, health and uniformed services

Flexible Hours

Job carving

Skills matching

“How can we make the employment process easier?”

- More opportunities – variety of sectors / businesses *
- Find more employers open to supporting people into work *
- Make more employers aware of the abilities and skills of people with learning disabilities
- More job coaches / mentors
- Easy read information
- More websites that people understand
- Alternative formats for info / ways to apply for jobs – not all written
- Speech program on computer
- Interview preparation / support sessions

“How can we support people in the workplace?”

- Find out the skills and interests of people at induction *
- Regular meetings between employer / work mentor / buddy *
- Develop a support plan / training plan / staff appraisals
- Set targets and review fortnightly
- Clear progression routes
- Risk assessments
- Make any necessary adjustments in the working environments
- Provide suitable resources
- Regular communication
- Have a job script / clear activities / visual prompts

“How can we help young people be more independent in the community?”

Travel training *

Companion travel passes *

Support when sorting benefits

Training for all employers on different disabilities – also carers

More independent living courses

More awareness of people who stock specialised equipment

More social opportunities (clubs / groups)

“What more could schools and colleges do to support people into employment?”

Provide more information about what opportunities there are ... in an accessible format *

Offer decent work placements where people are learning practical skills they can transfer to the workplace *

Make better links with employers and employment specialists inviting them into schools and colleges to give presentations to pupils

Mock interviews. Support with form filling and writing CVs

Form better links with the Job Centre – identify job opportunities

Build confidence

Promote employment positively

“ How can we improve outcomes for people with higher support needs?”

Make the buildings safer for wheelchairs and walkers *

Wider doors, lifts of an appropriate size *

Ramps. Clear walk ways for partially sighted people

Employers need to understand needs eg training around guide dogs

A good support plan

Employment in specific areas eg IT, working with animals

Opportunities to move into different areas

Support to access work

Support within work (1:1 all the time)

Travel buddies

Daily report back on how the day has gone

Be recognised as someone who wants to live independently

Staff training – on personal care, meds, meals, epilepsy, hearing impairment,

Feedback from the group work was fed back to a panel, namely; -

Tony Dailide (Head of Adult Social Care Improvement)

Michelle Sandberg (Project Lead, Adult Social Care)

John Moiser (Job Centre Plus)

Jackie Nolan (Manager of Local Safeguarding Children's Board)

Jon Laws (Manger of Shared Lives Scheme)

There were also questions from Talk 2 Us and the audience. The panel said they would speak to the Chief Exec of South Tyneside Council to move forward with issues raised - and contact Autism Able about delivering autism awareness training.

Carole Watson

Involvement Worker at Your Voice Counts (April 2017)

