

Our Mission and Vision

strengthening voice, championing rights, changing lives



Our vision is of a society in which everyone's voice, views and hopes can be heard loudly and clearly, in which our rights are understood and respected, and in which each of us is able to lead a full and enjoyable life.



Our Work

Advocacy

Statutory
Community
Citizen
Peer



Active Voices

Self Advocacy
Parliaments
Young People Speaking Up
Involvement & Participation



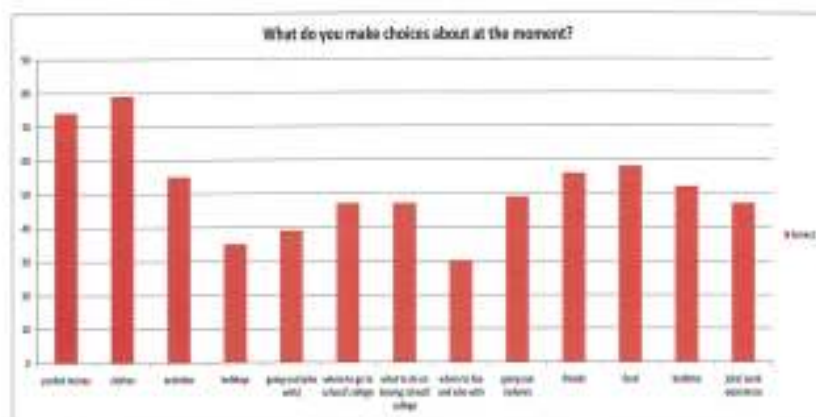
Consultancy and Training

Skills Coaching
Professionals
Self Advocates
Bespoke Consultancy





What do we make choices about at the moment?



Few people knew what plans had been made with them

- 11 out of the 106 people who completed questionnaires had heard of person centred plans and 5 said that they had done one.
- Most people said they attended annual reviews
- People reported little involvement in planning meetings and little choice over who came to them.
- Many people were confused by different meeting names and most said they did not know what the meetings were about



What people wanted to be changed?

- More information and advice to help us make decisions



- More work experience so that we can choose the jobs we want and have the right experience.



- More Advocates to help put our point of view across.
- More Person Centred Plans for young people and to look over them at every review in case our views have changed.



- Organisations to work together more such as Schools, Connexions, Transitions Team to make sure everyone knows what is happening.
- Have review meetings at a time when we want them and with who we want to invite.



- Better transport and access to get to places on our own and go to the places that we choose to.



- A better understanding of what our needs are and how you can help us to make choices.
- Use different ways of communicating to help us make choices. A better understanding when we find it difficult to communicate with our voices.



- More choices of housing and education for people with high support needs.



- More technology to help us to communicate (enough for everyone to have who needs it).



- Break tasks into smaller steps so that we can understand them better and make better choices.
- More one to one support to help us make choices and support afterwards to make our goals happen.



- Make sure we understand what a review is all about and remind us before the meeting and in the meeting.
- Tell us what a statement of education is and why it is important in reviews.
- Keep talking to us, don't just think that one or two meetings is enough. Come back and see us later on to see if our views have changed.



- Let us make our own choices, don't just make them for us!






Jenny


Different Directions

Jenny's story 1



Jenny is a young woman with learning disabilities.

At the age of 14 she had a review meeting, but she did not know what the meeting was for and found it difficult to understand what was happening





At the review meeting the professionals spoke to Jenny's mum but didn't ask Jenny what she wanted



At 18 Jenny left school. She had had no input into what would happen next and for a while she had nothing to do as she left children's services but was not picked up by adult services for a few months





When Jenny's mum was able to get a meeting with adult services, it was agreed that Jenny would go on to a residential college

Again no one asked Jenny what she wanted



When Jenny left the college she went on to attend the local day centre.

She was not given any other options

Jenny lived at home and stayed at the day centre for many years.



Jenny's story 2



At the age of 14 Jenny had her Review meeting
Before the meeting Jenny talked to her advocate, sometimes together with her Mum, Her advocate supported her to think about what she wanted to do with her life



Jenny attended the review meeting with support from her advocate and was able to tell the professionals what she wanted to do

Jenny said that she would like to work on her confidence and skills and that she would like to have a job in the future working with animals





When Jenny left school she attended some courses where she learnt the skills to work and to travel independently

Jenny was also supported to do some work placements



Jenny also decided that she would like to move out of home and was able to tell her Care Manager where she wanted to live and who she wanted to live with with support from her advocate





Jenny now lives in a house with her friend and is supported to maintain her tenancy there

She has a paid job at the local animal shelter which she loves!



Policy and practice: change is needed

- 6% of professionals and families say there is effective planning for young people with profound and multiple disabilities moving to adult services*
- 3% that there is sufficient service provision*
- Preparation starts too late.

*(PMLD Network 2006, cited Mansell 2010)



- Ofsted SEN and Disability review Sept 2010.
 - Recent improvements largely limited to under 16s.
 - Greater guidance services and increased professional knowledge and expertise in transition needed.
 - Aspirations need to be raised.
 - Possible over focus on qualification, failure to comply with DDA in methods of award,
- And unhelpful qualifications (Wolf Report 3/3/11)
- Preparation for transition starts too late- reviews at 14 not happening or not helping



Opportunities

- Personalisation and personal budgets
- Including some examples of personal educational budgets
- All young people should have person-centred transition reviews and plans (Valuing People Now)
- New Apprenticeship – with additional flexibilities for people with disabilities and care leavers



Opportunities

- Foundation learning up to 25 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment
- Academies Act - SEN obligations will apply to academies and LAs can top splice money for specialist services, whilst Academies could use their flexibilities to support attainment through better transition planning



But

- Set against a background of unprecedented cuts in public expenditure
- Squeeze as well as opportunities for organisations who can offer creative solutions



Key messages

- Young people with disabilities can be some of the most powerful advocates
- They need the support and resources individually and collectively to equip them to do this.
- The right support from the right people at the right time can save wasted resources and wasted lives.



Current policy environment

Opportunities for Jenny to have greater choice and control? Restrictions on Jenny?

Action that can be taken

- Individually; organisationally; influencing policy



Further information on our work with young people

www.voiceability.org

**What is Advocacy?: Children's Society and
VoiceAbility** (formerly Advocacy Partners Speaking Up)
2010

http://www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/PDF/what_is_advocacy_final.pdf



Thank you

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