



Green Paper: Children And Young People With Special Educational Needs And Disabilities - Call For Views

A response from Natspec

1. About Natspec

Natspec represents 70 independent specialist colleges (ISCs) making further education provision for learners with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose learning and support needs cannot be met through local general further education (GFE) or work based learning (WBL) providers. Nearly 4,000 learners are funded through the YPLA in 59 member colleges; other members include independent special school units and sixth forms. These colleges are not incorporated as FE colleges within existing legislation and they have a wide range of ownership and governance arrangements, including national and local charitable status and publicly or privately owned companies.

The national and regional networks of ISCs linked through Natspec are well placed to complement local GFE and WBL provision. These networks also promote sharing of practice, peer support, including peer review and development, and quality improvement through training and specific improvement projects. ISCs are regularly inspected by Ofsted against the common inspection framework and results during the last year demonstrate very good outcomes. DfE would be most welcome to visit member colleges and in particular the three recently judged to be outstanding, Beaumont, Ruskin Mill and Thornbeck. These three colleges represent a good sample of learner groups, size and governance.

Natspec welcomes the chance to respond to this request for views on SEN and disability and we support the principles outlined. We see this as an important opportunity to undertake a complete overhaul of a system which has developed very fast over the last few decades and which has consequently become muddled and difficult to navigate, by accident rather than design. Well intentioned legislation over time has built up into something that is increasingly unwieldy. Natspec is a member of the DfE LLDD Advisory Group, and has contributed to and supports the response submitted by Peter Little on behalf of that group.

Our response makes reference to the whole system, but has a greater focus on post-school provision and in particular the role and value of specialism within it. We recognise that these are difficult times and hope that our response is visionary but that our recommendations intend to reduce bureaucracy and complexity in the system and are therefore economically viable. We have used the term learners with LDD throughout our response for ease, apart from in the section on terminology.

2. Summary of main points

Natspec urges the Government to ensure that there is:

- **Access to knowledgeable and impartial information, advice and guidance about the full range of options that are suitable to meet an individual's needs, so that there is equitable access to the right provision for all**
- **Co-ordination across all services undertaken by an 'arm's length' advocate who maintains close links with the family, and who has both disability expertise and knowledge of the whole system; this advocate would report to the local authority, in order to inform its planning and commissioning roles. This role would subsume other 'brokerage' type roles already in the system which are agency specific**
- **Progress against learning plan(s) measured against agreed outcomes, linked to individual goals, and recognised in a number of ways**
- **Close involvement of the family and, as soon as possible, involvement of the young person in contributing their views and thinking about their own hopes for the future. This requires skilled advocates who are able to use a range of strategies to communicate effectively with young people.**

Furthermore:

- **We do not believe there is a need for additional organisations within the system, but we think that resources could be used more effectively across the existing organisations. There needs to be a range of provision so that different levels and types of need can be met**
- **Specialist colleges offer highly specialist teaching and support for those who are unable to access a mainstream setting. These colleges are predominantly residential, but are also able to offer specialist local provision. We strongly believe that ISCs should be included as a potential 'local' option to meet the needs of particular learners when considering local options.**
- **We believe that access to the teaching and support offered in specialist colleges is essential for young people who have more complex or dual disabilities; independent specialist colleges are at one end of a spectrum of provision, and as such are the first and right choice for a small number of learners, not a placement of last resort.**
- **The Association of Colleges has made a comprehensive response to**

this review, outlining the issues that affect their member colleges and Natspec supports the comments they have made.

- Until there is a pooling of budgets between the relevant agencies with an interest in a young person, the system is set up to fail, because no single agency is prepared to spend 'up front' in order to save money for another agency later on.
- We believe an approach whereby funding follows the learner is the right way to go; in particular, it would overcome the current difficulties linked to the range of funding streams in post-school provision.
- We support an inclusive learning approach to curriculum, in which the learning matches the needs of the individual.
- We have concerns about the extent to which the curriculum is driven by funding (for example, the link with the number of guided learning hours) and the expectation that a high proportion of a learning programme will be accredited.
- There are many good systems in place to track and record progress against learning goals, which are far more appropriate than working towards qualifications

3. Key factors for success

- Clarify the system and ensure that the routes through it are simplified and better signposted, including those that are funded through the Skills Funding Agency.
- Invest in the **co-ordination** of the whole system, preferably through an advocate working on behalf of the young person and their family
- Ensure access to knowledgeable and impartial information, advice and guidance about the full range of options that are suitable to meet an individual's needs, so that there is equitable access to the right provision for all
- Make timely decisions which are not funding driven, and are linked to need rather than age, and are therefore in the interests of the young person rather than institutions
- Do not set artificial, legislative barriers, but establish a system that prompts support across a full spectrum of needs, which can vary over time, in a range of settings
- Value the role of specialism and what it can contribute to the whole system

- Establish clear guidance about the sharing of information between the family and all relevant agencies at an early stage
- Make the best use of technology, not just to support independence and learning, but also to manage the system more effectively for individuals
- Make sure that transitions, at all stages in the system, become a cause for celebration, just as they are for other young people, rather than points of additional stress and anxiety

4. The purpose of the SEN/LLDD education system

Natspec agrees that the current SEN and LLDD systems are confusing for learners and their families/carers. Furthermore, they have the potential to become a battleground at key points along the way. Whilst all parents want the best for their children, some are much better placed than others to present their case effectively. As children get older, they may develop their own views, which will not always coincide with those of their parents, leading to further tensions. As a result of this, significant amounts of time, energy and resources are spent by families and professionals in an attempt to get things right . and when this fails, there is a move to litigation, which cannot be in the real interests of any party.

We believe that the aim of the system should be provide appropriate education and support that enables individuals to achieve their ambitions for a fulfilling adult life, characterised by:

- The highest level of economic independence possible
- Physical and mental wellbeing
- Opportunities to make meaningful relationships
- Timely access to support from a range of agencies and organisations as required

There is therefore a need to develop approaches to assessment of need and the provision of appropriate resources and support that are not legislatively divisive, in the way that the current statementing process is. This would require:

- **Early identification of needs** (although with the exception of specific disabilities or medical conditions, this may not happen for a few years and may not be apparent until puberty or even later)
- **A comprehensive, organic planning process** that would include education, care and medical assessment and planning as appropriate, and which promotes an inclusive approach to learning and an holistic approach to all the young person's needs
- **Co-ordination of the planning process by a single agency**, but with shared access by all agencies, and with early identification of agencies that will be needed in the longer term, such as housing. The need for information sharing should be agreed

with families and agencies at an early stage and guidance about this would be helpful.

- Ideally, the co-ordination would be undertaken by an **'arm's length' advocate** who will maintain close links with the family, and who has both disability expertise and knowledge of the whole system; this advocate would report to the local authority, in order to inform its planning and commissioning roles. This role would subsume other brokerage type roles already in the system which are agency specific
- **Access to impartial advice and guidance** about all the options that are available to meet a child or young person's needs. This should include information about specialist provision when this is appropriate, which is not always given to parents
- **Regular review and updating** of the plan(s) at intervals appropriate to the individual, reflecting their changing and developing needs and aspirations, and in order to plan and manage smooth transitions between phases
- **Progress against the plan(s) being measured against agreed outcomes**, linked to individual goals, but recognised in a number of ways (including, but not exclusively, achievement of qualifications and progress into employment).
- **Close involvement of the family** in this process and, as soon as possible, **involvement of the young person** in contributing their views and thinking about their own hopes for the future. This emphasises the need for skilled advocates who are able to use a range of strategies to communicate effectively with those who may find this difficult. Many ISCs have excellent skills in gathering and responding to the views of their learners, even when communication might be their greatest challenge and we would be happy to share these approaches with you

We believe that there are technological solutions available to managing this system effectively, ensuring the involvement of all relevant agencies

5. What would the system look like?

We do not believe there is a need for additional organisations within the system, but we think that resources could be used more effectively across the existing organisations. There needs to be a range of provision so that different levels and types of need can be met. This could be reflected as follows:

School options

- **In class support**, where teachers and teaching assistants have strategies to support learners with low level needs (this will require a good programme of initial teacher training and continuing professional development)
- **In school support**, where there is additional input on a school wide basis, including school staff who provide support and support staff brought in from outside

- Units attached to schools, where specific needs can be met through specialist teaching and support, but where some activities can be undertaken within the main school
- Local special schools, where there is specialist teaching and support, including a range of therapy and medical support if required
- Residential special schools, where highly specialist teaching and support can be made available to those with more complex levels of need

Post-school options

- Sixth forms, including special school sixth forms, which might be appropriate for some learners depending on their long term goals
- Work-based learning and apprenticeships for those who want to enter a vocational route
- General further education colleges, which are well placed to offer employment related opportunities and provide a more adult environment to support transition into independence
- Specialist colleges, which can offer highly specialist teaching and support for those who are unable to access a mainstream setting. These colleges are predominantly residential, but are also able to offer specialist local provision. We strongly believe that ISCs should be included as a potential local option to meet the needs of particular learners, but not all LAs take this approach and exclude ISCs from their thinking when considering local options.

6. Issues relating to post-school options

- a) The range of post-16 provision does not precisely mirror the options available for school provision.
- b) There is a real need for additional support to be made available in the vocational options outlined above. Funding for this is difficult to draw down in work-based learning settings, and apprenticeships often have entry requirements or content elements that exclude learners with LDD, particularly in relation to basic skills
- c) We agree that sixth form options work for many learners, but we are concerned that sometimes these are more in the interests of schools maintaining pupil numbers than in the interests of learners. The settings can often be over-protective and do not allow learners the opportunity to move into more adult and challenging environments.
- d) We agree that for most learners, their needs will be met through the local general further education colleges; over 290,000 learners with LDD currently attend these colleges. Many colleges have worked hard to increase their capacity and skills to meet the needs of a wide range of learners, including in some instances those with more complex needs. However, there is limited inspection of such provision to

ascertain its quality. The Association of Colleges has made a comprehensive response to this review, outlining the issues that affect their member colleges and Natspec supports the comments they have made.

- e) We note that the general FE College is in fact rarely truly local to the learner's home and that many young people have to make lengthy journeys at the beginning and end of each day, which can be very tiring for young people with disabilities. To add to this, there are varying approaches to transport across LAs, often leading to expensive and poorly co-ordinated transport solutions based solely on post-codes. A more integrated and therefore cost effective approach is urgently required.
- f) We are concerned that many general FE colleges are only funded to offer limited hours, sometimes as few as 16 a week, which we do not feel is adequate to enable many of these young people to achieve their goals. We feel an extended offer should be funded for these young people, in order to reflect the time they take to learn and consolidate their learning.
- g) We believe that access to the teaching and support offered in specialist colleges is essential for young people who have more complex or dual disabilities and who need a holistic approach to meeting their learning and other needs. Independent specialist colleges are at one end of a spectrum of provision, and as such are the first and right choice for a small number of learners, not a placement of last resort.
- h) The requirement for this level of specialist provision should be readily identified early on for many learners, and included in the planning as soon as possible. We believe that only a small number of learners will fall into the grey area when it is hard to be sure about the best provision, but early transition planning should help to clarify this, so that students can sample their local further education college early on. This moves away from the deficit model currently in use where learners are required to visit and fail at a number of FE colleges before they are allowed to consider specialist colleges.
- i) Specialist colleges offer personalised provision delivered through inter-disciplinary staff teams, which work together from day one to remove barriers to learning and find creative solutions for individuals. Skilled communication strategies and good use of assistive technologies enable students to set their own learning goals and monitor their progress. Specialist colleges use real life settings, including in most colleges residential provision, to enable young people to practise and improve their skills for living independently. They also offer a wide range of vocational opportunities both on site and in the local community, so that many learners leave specialist colleges ready to move into employment or voluntary work. Perhaps more importantly, they leave as mature, resourceful and empowered adults, ready to be effective citizens.
- j) We have included some examples at the end of this response to demonstrate how the holistic approach in independent specialist colleges can support the learner and their family to set and achieve positive goals and outcomes
- k) There will always be a need for highly specialist provision for a small number of young people, but Natspec believes that specialist colleges can also play an important role in working with other providers to develop an integrated approach to

meeting local needs. A recent Natspec survey, which we would be pleased to send you, found that most independent specialist colleges have fruitful partnerships with local colleges and schools, leading to innovative developments and enhanced opportunities for students across all organisations. Scope remains for extending these arrangements, although the complexity of funding streams can be a disincentive to making joint provision. Because of their lack of legal status, independent specialist colleges can be excluded from local planning meetings, such as 14-19 partnerships, when in fact they have a great deal to offer. One approach would be to broaden the ownership and remit of these partnerships and encourage greater sharing of practice across boundaries.

- l) We note that when cost comparisons are made between specialist colleges and general further education colleges, the additional costs of supporting young people on limited hour general college course are not taken into account. These costs can include day care support for the days when students do not attend college, or the cost of a parent remaining unemployed in order to stay at home and provide care. The costs of a specialist college residential placement are comprehensive across the full week.
- m) We fully support and share the aspiration to employment for many more disabled young people, whose skills and talents are currently wasted. This is a loss to them personally and to society both immediately and in the longer term. ISCs offer a wide range of work experience, vocational training, social enterprises and supported employment as routes that can support people into employment, and work closely with agencies in their home towns to help them seek work. However, the aspiration to work is not realistic for some young people with more complex LDD; they may aspire to other community based goals, or to work as a much longer term ambition, and these are equally valuable outcomes for these individuals. We would therefore seek a wider range of possible outcomes recognised as measures of success. These would include moving into work before completing the course, becoming a volunteer, and developing the skills to manage your own care. The outcomes must link to the learner's aspirations and goals as identified through the planning process.
- n) The transition out of college is an especially important one, as for many learners this signifies their move into the adult world of work, independent living and adult services. It is rarely straightforward, and is the stage at which a number of agencies may be called upon to contribute and support. Learners may wish to sort these different aspects of their lives in stages rather than all at once, because there are so many other agencies involved and a wide range of factors, so for example may choose to establish their home before thinking about work or further training. The role of colleges is to get people prepared for independent living, or work-ready, in line with their individual goals and to support their transition as far as possible. Some ISCs which operate within larger organisations are able to offer additional opportunities such as housing or supported employment to support transition.
- o) When learners move into SFA funded provision, they have to negotiate a new set of funding and access criteria, which is potentially confusing and stressful. The split between departments and agencies at this stage is therefore not helpful. Natspec

raised these concerns in our response to the BIS Skills for sustainable growth consultation, which we would be happy to share with you.

7. Funding

- a) Until there is a pooling of budgets between the relevant agencies with an interest in a young person, the system is set up to fail, because no single agency is prepared to spend up front in order to save money for another agency later on. So spending on higher cost education to promote greater independence, thereby saving social services budgets in the future, is currently a difficult option but one which would save in the long term.
- b) We note the recent report evaluating the first year pilot of individual budgets, which suggests that we are a long way from finding a successful approach. In particular, there does not seem to be a resource allocation system that works for all, and the different approaches are all flawed in some way, so considerable work remains to be done. Natspec is also aware of research undertaken by LAs and ISCs indicating that few parents want to have the additional burden of managing a complex budget, when they are already under stress.
- c) However, we believe an approach whereby funding follows the learner is the right way to go; in particular, it would overcome the current difficulties linked to the range of funding streams in post-school provision. We would suggest that the advocate mentioned previously should manage the budget on behalf of young people and families.

8. The curriculum post-16

- a) We support an inclusive learning approach to curriculum, in which the learning matches the needs of the individual. We believe that the curriculum should enable young people to achieve a range of learning outcomes related to their aspirations around work and living. Wherever it is appropriate, aspects of their learning can be accredited through nationally recognised qualifications; for many learners with learning difficulties, this will be at Foundation Learning levels.
- b) However, we have concerns about the extent to which the curriculum is driven by funding (for example, the link with the number of guided learning hours) and the expectation that a high proportion of a learning programme will be accredited. This is not realistic or appropriate for many with the most significant levels of learning difficulty, nor for those who need high levels of support to manage their behaviour or mental health needs before they can effectively engage in a more formal learning programme.
- c) We are concerned at some of the qualifications available on the Qualification Curriculum Framework (QCF), for example for sex education and daily living skills;

these are not areas in which the rest of the population achieve certification, nor should it be deemed appropriate for people with learning difficulties to do so.

- d) There are many good systems in place to track and record progress against learning goals, which are far more appropriate than working towards qualifications. Specialist colleges make good use of a range of data systems which enable them to integrate learning across the extended curriculum. They also celebrate learners' achievements through tools such as In-Folio, an on line e-portfolio of achievement which learners can use in a variety of settings including reviews, and as a CV for potential employers.
- e) Many learners take a long time to achieve even quite simple goals, and may not be ready to do this at a specific chronological age. We would therefore wish to see a system which allowed more flexible approaches to when learning can take place, based on need and readiness rather than age.

9. The post school workforce

- a) Central to a quality system for children and young people with SEN/LLDD is the need for a well-qualified workforce with a range of specialist skills and expertise. Natspec was pleased to contribute to the development of the recent specialist teaching and learning support standards published by Lifelong Learning UK, but we feel they need to be given much greater prominence within ITT and CPD if they are to impact across all providers. We note that IfL response to this call for views and their offer to undertake a survey of specialist teachers, which we think would offer some additional evidence to the green paper.
- b) Natspec is currently leading a national project, the Enhancement of learning Support, in partnership with AoC and funded through LSIS. We have already published some early findings, based on the views of LSAs, their managers and learners, about the important role of LSAs, the need for creative approaches to training and the most effective approaches to deployment. Further information about this project and the early publications can be found on the Natspec website at:
<http://www.natspec.org.uk/enhancement-of-learning-support.html>
- c) As well as highly skilled classroom staff, those involved in advocacy and offering IAG must be knowledgeable and experienced. We also welcome the developments underway to define job coaching roles and standards.

10. Terminology

- a) We recognise that one of the key issues that must be addressed is that of terminology, which so often hinders good inter-agency work. We have left it to the end not because it is unimportant, but because it is so difficult to address. Our key suggestion is that the concept of support is central to the needs of the young people currently in the SEN/LLDD systems; it is support for learning, for social care, for

medical intervention etc. One term which could go across all agencies would be additional support needs and this term could be used by a range of professionals.

- b) However, we also know that individuals will still choose to define themselves using their own preferred term (or no term at all) and this preference must also be respected.

We wish to leave the last word to a learner from one of our member colleges who said:

"Skills are things you learn through school and college and qualities are what you learn through life".

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All the examples are taken from case studies submitted for publication by member colleges and used with their permission and the permission of the learners.

Annex 1

Case studies demonstrating the importance of specialist approaches to learning and support in achieving successful outcomes for young people with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities at ISCs

1. Living in the community

Adam has Cerebral Palsy and uses a wheelchair for long distances. He has severe learning & communication and behaviour difficulties.

Adam's inter-disciplinary learning support A behaviour specialist worked closely with Adam's key-worker, parents and speech and language therapist before he started college.

Adam's initial assessment was based on information drawn from Student Support, interviews, documentation and observation. At his Person Centred Planning meeting it was agreed that his main learning aim would be to accept change both in and out of college, in order to access the wider community. The following strategies were devised:

- Adam to communicate his needs and wants using signing and single words
- All environments would meet his needs initially and thus reduce his anxiety, with variations to each environment introduced carefully
- Support staff to be limited to key members of the team, with other staff introduced for short periods
- Items which calmed Adam, such as his Elvis mask and guitar would be freely available, and at times of high stress he could seek them out. Staff would use them in sessions to support him to stay calm.
- An increased choice of activities within college and then in the community.

Adam's transition

The College supported Adam to move successfully into his new home. He visited with key college staff and prospective support staff from his new home came to meet him at College. A full transition pack was put together and the behaviour specialist liaised with the new staff for 3 months after his move. Adam now lives with 2 other young men, attends a Creative Arts course at college with one to one support, and has joined a drama club. His separation anxiety has dissipated, and he copes well with non-familiar people and places. He signs more and his speech is clearer, improving his quality of life, and he is happy and settled in his home.

2. Managing carers

Andrew was 19 when he enrolled at College. He has Cerebral Palsy and associated learning difficulties and disabilities, uses an electric wheelchair for mobility and communicates verbally, but also uses a communication aid if required. He has limited motor skills in both hands. Andrew's long term ambition was to live independently in his local community.

Andrew's learning programme He worked with 4 other learners with similar aspirations. His personal tutor and care tutor were in regular contact with his family, who reinforced the skills being developed at college. Specialist support included speech therapy to assist his communication, and physiotherapy and occupational therapy to meet his postural and future living needs. This joined up, multi-disciplinary approach to his personalised programme enabled Andrew to achieve his goals through practical application, reinforcement and accreditation.

Andrew progressed from living on site to living with friends in a communal apartment. This is testament to his personal development; he acquired the skills during his time at college to work with others and resolve conflicts, make his own choices, conduct his life and direct others to meet his needs effectively.

Andrew's achievements Andrew achieved all his targets around assertiveness and directive and decision making skills, along with his academic aims of achieving OCR - all at First Grade - which enabled him to practise and demonstrate his independence skills. He was a role model to other learners and was awarded the Student of the Year at the annual awards ceremony. Andrew now lives in his own apartment and manages and directs three care support staff who work with him throughout the day to meet his needs. This enables him to use the community and study at two local colleges, and he has the confidence and ability to choose how he spends his leisure time.

3. Employability skills

John is an adult with an autism spectrum condition, who experiences impairments of social interaction, social communication, imagination and social understanding. He also has dyslexia, learning difficulties, diabetes and epilepsy, which can be barriers to learning. John created an electronic person centred learning plan to identify his aspirations, which allowed him to imagine his future and communicate his long term goals through a visual rather than a verbal approach. He wanted to gain confidence handling money, be able to make himself snacks, learn how to travel using public transport and improve his reading, writing and IT skills. He also wanted to develop skills and a qualification in retail to gain open employment. He received support from a multidisciplinary team including his parents, key tutors, learning support assistants, connexions, employers and a speech and language therapist. A personalised programme was devised, with tailored support and clear targets linked to John's goals and aspirations.

John's employment John worked in a city centre shop owned by the college, a sheltered employment environment where he gained vocational knowledge and retail skills such as greeting and serving customers, handling money, maintaining stock levels and dressing the shop window. He then moved into supported employment at a local supermarket one day a week, with job coaching from his tutor to transfer his skills into this new environment; this support was gradually reduced as he gained confidence.

During tutorials, John received careers information, advice and guidance to develop employability skills such as timekeeping and attendance, dressing appropriately, working as part of a team, applying for jobs and interview techniques. He is currently learning how to use public transport to travel to the supermarket independently and safely.

John's achievements

Two years ago John was a young man did not have the confidence to go to the local shop to buy a pint of milk. Now his independence, social interaction and communication skills have greatly improved, he has the confidence to try independent travelling, and hopes to get paid work in the future. He has achieved a BTEC Entry Level 2 Certificate in Retail and has now progressed onto Entry Level 3.

4. Developing self-esteem

Claire

Has congenital cataracts, learning difficulties and is diabetic.

Learning support

Claire required intensive mobility training, support and training to manage her diabetes and diet, some adaptation of materials, study and work presentation skills and strategies for using distance vision.

Learning programme

Claire's main goals were to live independently with friends, to achieve qualifications and find employment in her chosen field.

At college, Claire worked on a 3-year independent living programme, learning skills which she was able to transfer to a study bedroom, a flat and in her third year a small independent house on campus. A social communication programme helped to build up her confidence and self-esteem.

Claire undertook work experience at a local construction company. As well as gaining office skills, the placement gave her an insight into the world of work and encouraged her to develop her administration skills upon leaving college. She developed confidence in using the phone and talking to other staff. Claire achieved a number of CLAIT modules at the local college.

Her confidence in crossing roads and using public transport increased significantly and she became an independent traveller, able to make her own way to her work placements and successfully learning to use 8x binoculars to identify bus numbers. Claire competed in the Special Olympics for athletics and swimming, gaining several medals in both disciplines.

5. Gaining qualifications and employment

Peter has Down's Syndrome with severe learning difficulties, visual and hearing impairments and hypothyroidism. He has communication difficulties and presented challenging behaviours, in particular, very poor impulse control. Peter wanted to live in the community and work in supported employment, and gain vocational qualifications to support this. He started with a highly structured timetable, working in small groups and where necessary on a 1:2 basis. Staff used makaton signing and he had regular support from speech and language therapists, which reduced as Peter's need declined. He attended behaviour therapy sessions and regularly met with his counsellor to help him manage his behaviour and aid his learning.

Peter's employability programme After his initial assessment term, Peter chose to work in the Hospitality department. Assessment showed him working at Entry Level 1 in literacy and numeracy but at a higher level in vocational tasks. Peter often demonstrated immature and challenging behaviours, including aggression towards his peers and lack of motivation. These difficulties were resolved through careful collaboration between staff in the department and across college, as well as with Peter and his parents.

Peter began working in the college meeting rooms, with close supervision and regular routines. He developed skills in cleaning tasks and health and safety, and positive behaviour through teamwork and independent activities. He asked to concentrate on food and drink service, and moved to the college restaurant, working towards Level 1 NVQ units. A year later, Peter began work experience at a local bar and restaurant, where he developed food handling skills and gained greater confidence and maturity when working with others. He successfully completed a Foundation Certificate of Health and Safety in the Workplace, Welcome Host Award

and Certificate in Basic Food Safety.

Peter's achievements Peter left college with industry recognised qualifications, including an NVQ in Food and Drink Service at Level 1, and a CV that demonstrated sound skills and knowledge, backed up with real work experience. He is now happily working part-time in a hotel in his home area, undertaking evening shifts in the kitchen.

6. Relationships and independent living

Gemma

Has severe learning difficulties and mobility problems linked to rheumatoid arthritis

Kevin

Has severe learning difficulties

Learning support

Both required 1:4 learning support and immediate access to emotional support

Main goals and achievements

Gemma and Kevin worked towards improving their independent living and travel skills; they moved from fully supported on-site accommodation to community based housing. They both achieved entry level accreditation in literacy and numeracy, and their English Speaking Board certificate.

Gemma was keen to work in catering and achieved 2 elements of the Edexcel Skills for Working Life catering qualification at Entry level 3. However, following a successful work experience with young children, Gemma decided she would like to work with children on leaving college.

Kevin always wanted practical, outdoor work. He achieved an entry level 2 qualification in land based skills.

Beyond college

Gemma is now with Mencap Employment services and with their support is moving closer to her goal of working with children.

Kevin attends a local agricultural college and works as a local conservation volunteer.

Most importantly for Gemma and Kevin, they have moved into a house together and live very independently with minimal support.