

'Beaumont College In Carlisle' Satellite, local community based Provision for people with complex needs



Summary

This case study looks at the development of post 19 further education provision for learners with complex physical and learning disabilities in Cumbria. The outcome of the project is Beaumont College in Carlisle - a satellite college of the Beaumont College in Lancaster - a specialist college owned by Scope a leading national disability charity. The notion of providing specialist Further Education (FE) provision in Carlisle was conceived via a person centred planning approach: at the bidding of one student and his Inspira officer, the Principal of Beaumont College and Head Teacher of James Rennie School began to consider possible solutions to providing one young man with specialist education designed meet to his future life aims within his local community.

Main drivers included:

- Response to the White Paper Support and Aspiration – establishing a local offer
- Principles of person centred planning
- Changes in funding from YPLA to local authorities
- Partnership working

Key lessons learned

- Development of a transferable educational design system
- Sharing of resources between different educational organisations
- Development of different staffing models to fit a new model
- Development of new training packages for outreach work/satellite provision
- Development of different management models to fit the new provision
- Ensuring that College provision is constantly 'Ofsted ready' throughout the development
- Maintaining an Outstanding Ofsted grade whilst developing new provision
- Ensuring clear lines of communication between all partners throughout the process, through robust systems and a person centred approach
- Valuing and developing partnerships
- Ensuring a high level of Health and Safety underpins the project
- Ensuring high level Risk Assessments are carried out throughout the project
- A strong belief in the need to provide new high quality educational experiences for young people with complex needs within their own community held by all participants
- Ensuring a high value is placed on the contributions that young adults with complex needs can make to their local community through a teaching and learning programme that promotes their development to become active citizenship through a variety of forms.

Introduction

This case study sets out to provide an overview of the development of satellite specialist college provision for young adults with complex needs in Carlisle in response to a parental request. The provision developed through partnership working between the young man's specialist school

and his preferred choice of Specialist College. Person centred planning tools were used to design a curriculum offer to match the learners needs. The project is an example of services working together for families; by providing specialist further education provision for young adults with complex needs within their local community in preparation for adulthood.

About us

James Rennie is a specialist school in Carlisle, Cumbria for children aged 3 to 19 with physical and learning disabilities. James Rennie School is owned by Cumbria County Council. Students studying at James Rennie School are from North Cumbria. The school is Ofsted graded 'Outstanding'

Beaumont College is a specialist college in Lancaster, Lancashire for young adults aged 19 to 24yrs with physical and learning disabilities. Beaumont College is owned by Scope a leading national disability charity. The college has term time residential provision for 45 students and Day provision for 45 students who travel from as far as 35 miles to college. Students studying at Beaumont College are mainly from North West England although a few students travel from the south and one student comes from Northern Ireland. College places are funded by local authorities providing that general further education courses in their local area cannot meet their needs. The college was judged as Outstanding in their latest Ofsted Inspection of December 2009

What we wanted to achieve

The project set out to explore the possible options for a young man with complex physical and learning disabilities who had an interest in pursuing further education but did not wish to take up a residential place at a specialist college. The local general further education college were unable to meet this young man's communication and support needs therefore the college principal and school head teacher worked in partnership with the local transitions support team 'Inspira' and the commissioner for post 16 provision to find an effective solution.

Implementation

The college put together a project management team who planned and implemented a person-centred further education curriculum to meet the future life aspirations of the young man. Initial funding was granted for 1 academic year beginning September 2012.

Planning our approach

- Initial conversations between the parents of the young man, Transitions officer from 'Inspira', school head teacher and college principal led to the scoping of the project
- All stakeholders were engaged in the pursuit of the best options for this young man
- The project manager established the requirements of the project, the building, the management of the provision, staffing structure, budget and transport.
- The management of the process of setting up provision took 6 months, from final year review to next academic year.
- Resources were sought and secured from the college and school: the school was able to provide a state of the art learning environment and seconded a Higher Level Teaching Assistant, the college provided the management, infra-structure, staffing and curriculum.
- The project was funded for one academic year.

What we did

- The project team worked towards to requirements of the young man; to move teaching and learning from Beaumont College in Lancaster to a smaller campus in Carlisle. In effect to design a transportable curriculum that could meet the needs of young adults in their home or local community.
- Once the learning space had been identified, the project manager recruited staff from the local community and set out to adapt the college transitions approach to the satellite provision.
- The project demanded a high level of trust in the person centred planning approach, and imagination on behalf of all the stakeholders as all the participants were navigating new routes to teaching and learning

Outcomes and impacts

What we achieved

Please refer to First Term Evaluation of Scope Community College Carlisle which follows in the Annex below.

What we learned

The First Term Evaluation provided Blackpool Local Authority with a model for provision for young adults with complex needs in their local area. We learned that this was a model that interested others seeking similar solutions within local communities

What we are taking forward

A new Scope Community College in Blackpool is due to start in September 2013.
A new Scope Community College in Barrow in Furnace is planned for September 2014

How we are sharing it

The project has been shared with the North West LSIS Clusters and the Natspec Colleges at their Annual Conference.

Pathfinder from North Yorkshire has made a visit to the Carlisle project to inform FE provision for learners with complex needs in North Allerton.

What advice we would give to others

- Discover what the learners' and their parents want and need within the context of changing specialist education provision (White Paper Support and Aspiration)
- Define a the project in response to the learners' and parents wants and needs with an overview of the changes in funding
- Develop the project using person-centred approaches throughout taking into account new directives from Department of Education and financial constraints
- Deliver what the learners want and need with the permitted scope.
- Ensure all stakeholders are invited to reflect, review and evaluate the project at regular intervals, change in response to information collected and move forward.

Annex 1

First Term Evaluation Of Beaumont College in Carlisle

Contents

- Background
- Overview Of Project
- Evaluation Results / Key Learning

Background

Historically Beaumont College has enjoyed good relations with the specialist schools in Cumbria by providing both residential and day further education provision for learners with complex needs from South Cumbria, and due to the travel distance residential provision only for learners from North and West Cumbria.

Overview Of Project

Project Initiative:

This project grew from one learner's engagement with the college during his initial assessment, during which he clearly indicated that he liked the college and had enjoyed all the sessions that he had attended; but he emphatically did not want to stay overnight. The assessment teams from both school and college and the learner's parents recognised that a place at Beaumont College would fully support his educational and communication needs towards his future life plans, but a residential placement was out of the question.

Rationale:

To support the learner further the Head Teacher from James Rennie School and the Principal from Beaumont College began to look for possible ways that they could work together to provide him with a college experience that would meet his complexity of need within the Carlisle area.

Purpose:

Beaumont College is a Beacon College and was awarded Outstanding across all areas in the Ofsted Inspection of 2009. The learners determine their own individual programme of learning via a person-centred PATH which focuses on the individual learner's future life ambitions and from this their aim of placement and from this an individual learning programme is devised. This ensures all of their learning, which is accurately evaluated and documented through a series of annual objectives, goals and targets and feeds into their personal future life plans.

The learner's PATH indicated that he had an interest in undertaking some work experience, community access and social leisure activities, so an educational programme manager began to put together a programme that would match his interests and learning abilities within his home area of Carlisle and a funding application was submitted to Cumbria.

During this time period another student from James Rennie School heard about the project and made an application to join. There are now 2 students involved in the project.

Aim:

The project was agreed by Cumbria and the learners have been funded for one year, during this time the learners will follow an individual curriculum programme that mirrors the educational and personal development studies of the day students at Beaumont College in Lancaster, with therapeutic support provided by the local adult learning disabilities team in Carlisle.

Location:

The project is based at the Kingstown Applied Learning Centre within the grounds of James Rennie School; this is a new building which has been purpose built for people with complex needs.

Facilities:

The college rents the space from the school and this new build offers the learners 3 large spaces for sessions involving ICT, Art and Cooking. The learners are also able to use James Rennie's newly refurbished accessible performance space and the hydrotherapy pool for one session each week.

The college provides a minibus for the project; this is based at the James Rennie School during term time and provides transport for the community access projects.

The great advantage of this space is that it allows the learners to have a timetable that naturally integrates personal development alongside subject specific learning, for example the learners are able to prepare their own simple lunch each day. Therefore they are undertaking a wide range of independence skill building tasks in real time, real life situations within their own community and using the local supermarkets to purchase their goods during a weekly shop on Mondays.

Learners:

Presently there are 2 learners with different learning needs, and due to their personal interests and the logistics of such a small cohort they are following a similar timetable with differentiated learning outcomes.

Delivery:

The college provision is currently delivered by a team that include 1 Programme Manager, 1 Tutor, 1 Learning Support and 1 Student Support. The Learning Support have been seconded from the school to ensure a level of consistency and partnership, the tutor and student support are newly employed by Scope from the Carlisle area and the Programme Manager is an experienced curriculum manager based at the college in Lancaster.

The project team is large in relation to the number of students, but this allows for all the training and skill building that needs to take place in order to provide an outstanding service. All the staff follow an intensive training programme which leads into regular practice checks followed by Observations of Teaching and Learning which are carried out in the same manner and time frames as in Lancaster.

Sessions are planned, organised and delivered using the same format as Beaumont College in Lancaster and all the data is stored within the same Management Information System to ensure consistency of standards. The learners have a well-populated e-portfolio which demonstrates progress against targets via photographs and video footage that can be accessed from both Lancaster and Carlisle and will be used by the learners during their annual review to share their own story of their college experience. The Head of Education based in Lancaster has the responsibility of ensuring the educational delivery is to the expected standard and in line with the provision in Lancaster.

Learning:

The person centred curriculum begins with the learner making their own PATH during their initial assessment which informs their Aim of Placement, Annual Objectives, Goals and Targets; these are all threaded through a personal programme of learning that reflects the learner's interests. Each learner has a personal timetable of subjects that they have chosen; through which literacy, numeracy, ICT, communication and therapy goals and targets are set, this aims to support the development of the whole person in subjects which they can naturally achieve and find success.

Much of the work is undertaken in the community, many links across Carlisle have already been made and these are expected to increase as the project grows. The learners are now regularly using the library, art gallery, leisure centre, museum, local supermarkets and local areas of environmental interest to inform their learning.

Both learners have applied for 'Now' Cards so that they will be able to use the local bus services and increase their community access in the New Year.

Learners' using local community venues during their time at college has increased the community presence of young people with complex needs in Carlisle. One of the aims of the project is to support the learners to find their voice and become active citizens within their local community. In the longer term they may be invited to contribute to any capacity building plans that Carlisle considers for people young adults with disabilities in the future.

Therapeutic support:

This project works in partnership with the local providers of Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy through a referral system; effective links have been made with all these professionals which has ensured that their input can be maximised through the learners individual learning programmes, and will naturally inform any future life decisions after college. The therapeutic team carry out their assessments with the college staff team so that their recommendations can be set as goals and become part of each learner's targeted learning within session plans.

Communication:

Communication has been the key element within this project; over the first term the project has been carefully nurtured by listening to all the stakeholders and seeking out the best ways to meet the learners' needs within the Carlisle area. The project team have spent time successfully developing good relations and clear lines of communication with parents, social workers, the learning disabilities team, staff from James Rennie School, Carlisle College and local community agencies.

The team have been keen to recognise that this project has derived from the needs of a local student and this central to the development of the project, all the teaching is project based which means each project is devised around the learner's interests and abilities within his own community: different learners in different locations would inspire different projects according to the specific learner requirements.

The team also spent time getting to know the best spaces to use for external learning environments, and undertaking extensive risk assessments.

In order to support the development of this project further the college has sort and received funding from LSIS (Learning Skills Improvement Service), which has promoted engagement with partners in Cumbria and Lancashire who are interested in researching effective transition planning for 18+learners to meet as a cluster group, devise

mutually beneficial research projects and share their findings. The results from this work should be ready to submit to the LSIS Excellence Gateway in July 2013.

Open Day:

To inform the team's practice and share the project with others an Open Day was held on 6th November 2012 for potential students, parents and professionals within Cumbria. The project team were able to demonstrate clear and effective learner progress against their individual PATH's, and parents and the learners were invited to tell of their experience of the project.

Evaluation Results / Key Learning:

Learner 1 – C

C has increased communication through a comprehensive plan produced in conjunction with a Speech and Language Therapist. C has demonstrated improved vocalisation. Staff have worked hard with C to enable her to extend her spoken vocabulary and therefore her ability to make choices and control decisions in her life. C is now trialling the use of an iPad to increase her wider communication ability using specific applications for communication.

C has increased her decision making capability which has led to taking full part in her own health review, expressing her wish for a shower changing table for the facility, and organising her own appointments.

C has increased her independent living skills and with appropriate support is now able to purchase her own clothes, plan her own menus, and shop for ingredients to make her own meals.

Access to a rich curriculum using community facilities supports C to increase participation and develop her mobility and physical wellbeing, using environmental art, hydrotherapy, community arts projects and attending community aerobics sessions has enabled C to significantly increase the use of her arms. One example of this is from only being able to paint by holding a brush in her mouth she now holds a paintbrush in her hand to produce her work.

We have recently begun a continence improvement programme with C in collaboration with the Community Occupational Therapist to trial a toilet chair in an attempt to reduce or eliminate C's need to use continence pads.

Learner 2 - R

R has extensively improved in confidence. Initially he would not leave the teacher's side. Careful curriculum planning and a symbolised timetable has given R clear direction to take the initiative in independent living skills such as cooking and clearing up. R has demonstrated through a work experience placement his strength in practical learning situations. Though he has no conventional voice R communicates with increased confidence to direct the driver to his work placement and is beginning to attempt some vocalisation in line with early speech.

At the outset of his placement R had little sense of danger and has been working on improving his understanding, an example of this is he takes the initiative to indicate to the driver when he is safely strapped in a comfortable in the transport.

R is increasing his spatial awareness through community golf activities, building sculptures and taking the opportunity to move freely in community spaces where previously he would have stayed particularly close to his teacher. This has empowered him to take part in a community graffiti arts project making a valued contribution.

Quotes From Key Stakeholders:

- One parent described the project as “Inspirational”.
- Two transitions officers wanted to know whether the college could accommodate learners from Whitehaven and Penrith in 2014.
- The Head Teacher said that he could see a huge increase in ability of both young people, they were thriving and he could see them becoming confident young adults.

Next Steps For The Project :

The impact of the project has been incredibly positive for the two learners currently accessing the service. They will continue until July and will seek funding for another year with the support of Inspira and the local authority.

The success of the project has also been very welcome by Cumbria County Council. This project contributes to their aims of providing effective high quality services to disabled people in their own communities. This has attracted interest from five other young people who wish to access the service and have applied through the College admission process.

Date published: July 2013

Provider name(s): Beaumont College Lancaster (Scope) & James Rennie School Carlisle

Sector coverage:

FE colleges
Specialist Colleges
Specialist Schools
General Further Education Colleges
Mainstream schools

Contact information [r]:

Sue Beresford
Beaumont College
Lancaster
LA2 6AP