

Gathering Baseline Data for Supported Employment

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Summary

Broomfield South Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC), with partners from Further Education, Independent Specialist Provider, employers and partner agencies, undertook to review the current progression of young people into Supported Employment, to provide baseline data against which to review future progress and inform curriculum delivery.

Introduction

What we wanted to achieve

The purpose of this study was to review the destination of students in 2011/12 and 2012/13 from Leeds City College, Henshaws College and each of the SILCs in Leeds in order to find out where learners go after they leave and how many progress into supported employment.

Implementation

Students were selected from the 6 Leeds SILCs. 5 SILCs are generic and cater for students with a range of learning and physical disabilities including Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Complex/Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (CMLD/PMLD) and across the Autistic Spectrum (ASC). 1 SILC caters for students with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). All students have a Statement. We then analysed the destination data for these learners in order to find out where they progress to.

What did the data tell us?

In 2011-12 information from North West, West, South and East SILCs revealed a total of 57 leavers (36 male / 21 Female) with a range of destinations mainly according to their level of ability, including specialist provisions such as Henshaws College and the Vine. The majority (68%) opted for courses at Leeds City College. Only 1 student took up an apprenticeship.

In 2012-13, information from North West, North East, West, South and East SILCs predicts a total of 63 leavers (39 male / 24 female) with a range of disabilities and relevant destinations as above. Again Leeds City College was by far the most popular destination (54%) with a much higher percentage than previously destined for the specialist provision at the Vine. No apprenticeships have been arranged.

Leeds City College data, shows 109 students (74 male, 25 female) attending from the SILCs and leaving in 2010-11 having followed a range of courses. Only 1 student (from the BESD) remained in employment with enhanced career progression following the Hair & Media make-up course. All the other students remained in some form of further education.

Information from 2011-12 data showed 103 students (72 male, 31 female) attending Leeds City College from the SILCs. 4 students from BESD and West SILC following Applied IT and NVQ Sport found employment not related to their programme of study and 1 student from NW SILC following NVQ Sport found employment related to the programme of study. All the remaining students continued in some form of further or higher education.

Information from Henshaws College shows that their students from 2010-11 and 2011-12 mainly returned home following their time at College with some students able to manage supported independent living. No-one secured employment, but many continued to access Henshaws Arts & Crafts Workshops.

Outcomes and impacts

What we learned

Key lessons learned

- Very few young people progress into employment.
- Even fewer progress into an apprenticeship.
- Most Colleges, Independent Specialist Providers (ISPs) SILCs, provide employability programmes but few result in sustained employment outcomes.
- There are very good examples of young people progressing into employment, usually where agencies have worked together closely to provide that pathway into Supported Employment.

This exercise has been invaluable in helping us to review the impact of the current offer on outcomes. The data clearly shows that the vast majority of SILC pupils leave to go on to some form of further education but despite the range of courses on offer very few are successful in gaining employment at the end of this period.

There have however, been some success stories and we need to draw on these to help us shape our offer for young people in the future. The Case Studies provided by Leeds City College and MENCAP Employment Service which can be found in “Getting People into work” describe these in more detail. MENCAP provide mentoring to students with a learning disability to help them find jobs and develop their interview technique. For example, 1 student was employed full time by McDonalds and another gained a 16 hour employment at Wetherspoon’s.

There have been other examples of students gaining full-time employment such as one learner who now works at Marks & Spencer's and another young person with a disability who with assistance set up her own internet business. A number of these successes were shared at a Business Breakfast Meeting organised by MENCAP and Henshaws.

What we are taking forward

Leeds City College have reviewed their work experience placements and in their Case Study examples quote a number of lessons to be learned in order to improve the success rate and experiences of young people in the future. We are now focussing much more sharply on destination led planning, and providers across the city are considering the implications of this study for future curriculum in order to improve Supported Employment outcomes for our young people.

What advice we would give to others

The points below are drawn from the success stories within the cluster who have been successful in improving outcomes for the young people they support. Amongst the key points were recommendations for;

- small group sizes
- suitably trained support workers using a multi-team approach
- good preparation time
- a placement the student is happy to be in
- a work placement coordinator is essential to lead on liaison with possible employer placements and to complete risk assessments

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Sector coverage: Special Schools, FE Colleges, Independent Specialist Providers and other agencies want to engage young people into Support Employment opportunities.

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