



Video 2 Learning Support: Learner

I am a HE student at Weston College, I study Music Production at Bath Spa University and, by the way, I am autistic.

The specialist team work with learners on the autistic spectrum. I believe that this specialist support has changed my future and has helped me to get to where I am today. Having specialist staff that are trained in autism is really important. This is because specialist staff understand how autism impacts people's lives and also the importance of getting to know me as an individual.

Well, I have found that one issue in my education is that I needed more time to progress through College compared to my peer group. I feel that this does not reflect on my ability but rather reflects the education system which leaves no room for people who, although they may have great strength in some areas, need more time to develop other skills and I feel that in order to overcome this, it is vital that educators understand the complexities of autism so that they can accommodate the needs of people on the autistic spectrum within the education system.

For me, this has meant that I have worked with the specialist team when considering course choices, meaning that I was able to progress at a rate which suited me. Also, I receive 1:1 tutorial time with my specialist support instructor and this is focused on building the skills one needs to become more independent. Throughout one's education there are many different options, opportunities and choices to be considered and for somebody with autism this amount of information can be overwhelming and difficult to understand and having a trusted person to help you decipher this information is vital for somebody with autism. The specialist team have supported me in this area, for example, when going through the UCAS system and also in applying for student finance.

Another area where specialist support has helped me is that there are many tutors who are specialists and experts in their subjects and are great teachers but they do not have any understanding of autism and this means that they do not know how to create a curriculum that is really accessible to autism and specialist staff work with my tutors to help them adapt tasks, assignments and the environment so that they are suited to my individual needs and this has enabled me to progress through College and become a more independent individual.

I think that there is a lot to be done which could help to improve the lives of young people with autism in education, for example, I think that more specialist support should be provided for people with autism both in education and in the community, for example, specialist support should be provided in junior and secondary schools as well as in College and University. I also think that it is very important that support is available to young people with autism throughout their lives, for example, to help with legal, financial or social support.

What I would like to say that having spoken to other people around the Country, they have not received the level of specialist support that I have at Weston College. I strongly believe that people with autism have a lot to offer society but we need more trained, experienced professionals working in education and other sectors to ensure that their needs are recognised, respected and met.