

Person-centred planning and post-16 Education

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Leading learning and skills



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Person-centred planning and post-16 Education

Introduction

The starting point of the project that this report is based on, was that on the whole, post-16 education and training providers are not well informed about person-centred planning and the implications it has for their work. Many working in post-16 education know that they need to find out more about person-centred planning but are unsure about where to start. Working from a position of such uncertainty is not acceptable if relevant and appropriate education services for people with learning difficulties are to be developed. Moreover, those working in education will have to work in partnership with learners and with other services to do this.

Person-centred planning for people with learning difficulties has been identified as one of the key areas of focus for the national programme of joint work between the Learning and Skills Council and the Valuing People Support Team. This report is based on the findings of a short project that examined the ways in which staff in post-16 education are engaging with person-centred planning. It is hoped that the report will support and inform the joint working between the national LSC and the Valuing People Support Team.

Background

Evidence from a survey of Learning Disability Partnership Boards and local Learning and Skills Councils (Valuing People Support team, 2003)ⁱ and a recent survey on achievements in non-accredited learningⁱⁱ (NIACE, 2004) found that:

- The process of person-centred planning is often poorly understood by post-16 learning providers
- There is little joint working between post-16 education, Learning Disability Partnership Boards and other services

Further weight was given to these findings in feedback from a series of regional seminars run jointly by the national LSC and the Valuing People support team in 2004. Education staff attending the seminars wanted more information about person-centred planning in order to:

- Raise their awareness and understanding of person-centred planning and how they might be involved in the process
- Explore how person-centred approaches could be incorporated into the way provision is developed in post-16 education and training

Methodology

The original proposed project methodology was for the project co-ordinator to attend person-centred planning training and design and deliver an input on the role of post-16 education. This was adapted to utilise what proved possible to cover in the time allocated. The experience of one of the Development Officers involved in the project research is particularly relevant as she is a trained person-centred planning Facilitator and has acted as a Facilitator for an individual with learning difficulties. This experience has been key to informing the work of the project.

Four fieldwork visits were made. Fieldwork sites were selected on the basis that they were engaged in work that supported the development of person-centred approaches in post-16 education for people with learning difficulties. Two visits were to education providers:

- An Adult Education College working in partnership with a social services day centre to develop person-centred approaches to supporting people with learning difficulties to access college.
- An Adult Education college with strong involvement in the local partnership board which is developing person-centred approaches in their IAG services, in the development of their curriculum and by supporting a group of people with learning difficulties as trainers on the local person-centred awareness training programme. On this visit, the project worker met with the Learning Support Manager, a member of her team who is a person-centred planning Facilitator and the person from the local Primary Care Trust with responsibility for organising the local partnership board's training courses.

The third visit was to a meeting of a countywide Person-Centred Approaches Working Group and the final visit was to interview a Social Services based person-centred planning co-ordinator and her colleague who was working on Day Services modernisation.

The semi-structured interviews with education staff focussed on how they had become engaged with the issues around person-centred planning and had gone on to develop person-centred approaches in their work. Involvement in the local Learning Disability Partnership Board and key local networks were discussed, as were the importance of working with other agencies. Barriers to and successful strategies for developing person-centred approaches were identified.

Interviews with person-centred training co-ordinators from Social Services and Primary Care Trusts focussed on their current strategies to engage post-16 education providers in the training. How successful the strategies were, any ideas on improving them and what would help the partnership boards engage post-16 education in the person-centred planning were included in the agenda. In addition to the fieldwork, telephone interviews, email exchanges and desk research provided material that informed the work of the project.

Report Outline

The first section of the report gives an outline of the principles of person-centred planning. It continues by discussing the role of post-16 education in supporting person-centred planning and highlights some of the challenges this offers to established ways of working. It then discusses person-centred approaches and their relevance in the context of post-16 education and training. This section ends by describing how education staff can access training about person-centred planning.

Section two describes current examples of interesting practice where post-16 education providers are engaging with the person-centred planning agenda and developing person-centred approaches in their work.

The third section offers a model for supporting person-centred planning in Further and Adult and Community Learning as a basis for taking this work forward.

The report ends with some recommendations that contribute to the areas of the current LSC review of funding and provision for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:

1. What practices should be kept and built upon in developing LDD provision?
2. What barriers and gaps are currently present in LDD provision?
3. What solutions/plans are required to address these problems or to more widely implement successful practice?

Section One

Person-centred Planning and the Role of Post-16 Education

Person-centred planning

Valuing People (DOH, 2001)ⁱⁱⁱ is the cross Government Framework for improving services for people with learning difficulties. Person-centred planning is a key principle of the *Valuing People* White paper. It is a planning process that places the individual at the centre and focuses on what is important to them from their own perspective. It has a non-deficit approach that is; it does not focus on an individual's disability or impairment but looks at what they want to do with their lives and then works out how they can be supported to achieve this.

"In its fundamentals, person-centred planning is a way of helping people work out what they want, what support they require and then helping them to work out how to get it. It is about life not just services."^{iv} (Sanderson, 2003)

There are five features that single out person-centred planning as different from other types of planning:

1. The person is at the centre
2. Family members and friends are full partners
3. Planning reflects the person's capacities, what is important to the person now and for the future and specifies the support they require to make a valued contribution to their community
4. Planning builds a shared commitment to action that will uphold the person's rights
5. Planning leads to continual listening, learning and action and helps the person to get what they want out of life^v (Routledge et al, 2002)

On hearing the term person-centred planning the reaction of many education staff is one of, *"We are already doing that."* Person-centred planning is often mistakenly identified as the same as Individual Learning Plans or one to one tutorials to discuss what an individual wants to learn. As one adult education Lecturer interview for this project aptly commented:

"The perception of people as to what it is varies enormously. This is mainly due to person-centred planning being a new concept from our perspective and not fully grasping the implications. Person-centred planning moves beyond self-advocacy and making choices, though it includes these areas, to involving key people in a person's life, seeing their life holistically and making sustainable changes in their lives."

In person-centred planning there is a fundamental power shift away from the professionals to the individual and their friends and family who support them. There is a move:

“..from the role of passive recipient of professionally controlled and controlling services to active chooser of a personal path to inclusion...”^{vi} (Valuing People, 2005)

Person-centred planning is not a particular decision making process carried out in one service in isolation from other services that an individual might use:

“In person centred planning the process, as well as the product, is owned and controlled by the person (and sometimes their closest family and friends). As there are no prescribed forms, tick boxes or checklists, the resulting plan of support is totally individual. It creates a comprehensive portrait of who the person is and what they want to do with their life and brings together all of the people who are important to the person including family, friends, neighbours, support workers and other professionals involved in their lives.” (Circles network website)

Services have to work in partnership with each other in order to support aspects of an individual's person-centred plan. It is a way of planning that takes account of all aspects of an individual's life and education may be one of the services that they use: (see appendix 1)

Person-Centred Approaches

Many working in post-16 education as yet, do not readily understand the important role that education has in supporting person-centred planning. In order for staff to understand their role in the process, it is crucial that the distinction between person-centred planning and person-centred approaches is clear. Rather than being involved in the actual process of developing person-centred plans, the focus of the work of services, including post-16 education has to be on developing person-centred approaches to support the implementation of the plans. Person-centred approaches support the values that underpin person-centred planning. Such approaches will change the way services are organised and delivered:

“While individual plans are drawn up based on what is important to an individual, the term ‘person-centred approaches’ defines the approaches which need to inform the design and delivery of services in order for individual plans to be fulfilled.”^{vii}

Developing person-centred approaches in the way services are organised and delivered can be a quite a challenge to established ways of working as the person-planning guidance points out that:

“People are not simply placed in pre-existing services and expected to adjust, rather the service strives to adjust to the person.”^{viii}

Such thinking is not new to post-16 education as there is clear overlap here with the principles of *Inclusive Learning*^{ix} (FEFC, 1996):

“In many respects the philosophy underpinning person-centred planning is similar to that of ‘personalised learning’ or ‘inclusive learning’, with their emphasis on listening to learners and establishing a match between their aspirations, needs and interests in order to plan and implement teaching programmes.”^x (LSDA, 2004)

Although the ideas of placing people at the heart of provision are not new, considerable challenges still remain not least in understanding how post-16 education can engage with person-centred planning in its practice. One example of this is the belief that in order to develop person-centred approaches you must already be working with an individual who has a person-centred plan. The number of individuals who currently have person-centred plans varies from area to area. It is important to note that having a person-centred plan is not a necessary precursor to prompt services into developing person-centred approaches in their work with an individual or in planning and organising services:

“The shift to person-centred approaches should be aided by person-centred planning not dependent upon it.”^{xi}

The project fieldwork sites that are described in more detail in section two of this report are all developing person-centred approaches in their work. In some instances they may be responding to individual person-centred plans. However, they are also using the principles of person-centred planning to develop person-centred ways of working. This is in response to what people with learning difficulties are saying they want from the service, regardless of whether they have a plan or not. In other words they are developing person-centred approaches across their provision so it can be more responsive to all learners with learning difficulties by:

- Working in partnership with other organisations
- Raising awareness of person-centred planning at a regional level
- Developing Information, Advice and Guidance services to help co-ordinate the choices learners are making as part of person-centred plans but also choices of learners who don't have plans
- Listening to and involving learners in how provision is developed
- Supporting people with learning difficulties to access college

Person-centred approaches can include:

- The development of personal portfolios to collect information about someone's life using objects, photos, scrapbooks, video, tapes, a diary. They provide information about the individual's life and hopes for the future.
- Exploring the skills and interests of an individual, what they are interested in, what they are good at, what do they want to do more of, what can they contribute. Building on a person's strengths is an approach that many in education are familiar with. It is a good place to

start when identifying learning goals and developing Individual Learning Plans.

- Providing good support - asking the individual what they think is good support and what workers must do to provide this. Finding out what kinds of support motivates an individual and how they can be supported to be more independent.

Each of these ways of working is extremely relevant to practitioners in post-16 education and training. The fieldwork sites for this project are working with a range of these approaches.

Learning about person-centred planning

Education staff can learn about person-centred planning in a number of ways. Contacting the local Learning Disability Partnership Board through Social Services is a good place to start. The Learning Disability Partnership Boards are the main drivers for the implementation of 'Valuing People'. In every local authority area, partnership boards have developed person-centred planning frameworks. The partnership boards are planning or already running programmes of person-centred awareness training for all services that work with people with learning difficulties, including post-16 education and training. There is anecdotal evidence from discussions at a national conference and from the Valuing People/Learning and Skills Council regional seminars that indicate that the level of take up of this training by staff in post-16 education and training is low.

Most partnership boards are running two kinds of training courses on person-centred planning. Breadth training is a good basic introduction to person-centred planning. One Adult Education Lecturer interviewed for this project felt that the person-centred planning awareness training he attended:

"..gave a good handle on the ideas around person-centred planning and plans. It covered different planning tools and I had an opportunity to meet others - they all worked in day services."

Staff interviewed for this project commented that the awareness training gave them an overview of the process of person-centred planning which was important in order to understand how they could develop person-centred approaches in their work. A discussion about MAP, which is a visual planning tool, helped one practitioner focus on the use of multi-media as a way of working. In his work with a colleague from a day centre, he is using this approach in his teaching. This has proved to be an extremely appropriate and successful way of working with the learners with complex needs. With hindsight he felt that this had been the most useful thing about the training.

The other kind of training available is facilitator training. This is more in-depth and as one tutor explained it:

"...challenges your perceptions of things."

One of the Development Officers working on this project attended a three-day Essential Lifestyle Planning programme. She reported that:

“As part of the process I had to put my own person-centred plan together. Essential Lifestyle Planning concentrates on the here and now. It really made me think. When I did the Relationship Circle I could see how rich my life was with family and friends. This is so often not the case for our learners.

Another exercise that challenged me was when I had to list the most important things to me e.g. “It is important that I live with my husband and two children”. Simple, yet powerful, exercises like this brought home to me the fact of just how little we know about our learners. Unfortunately in education very little time is given to finding out about our customers.

From the point of view of my role as a manager it made me question just how person centred we were as an organisation. We listened but did we hear? I thought we were person centred but (and this is the hard part) I had to admit that what we were doing was only the tip of the iceberg. We had so much more to do. Involving learners in a very real way is time consuming and it means that managers and organisations must relinquish the power they have over these learners and sit at the table as equals. My way of doing this was to employ an advocacy organisation to support a group of learners with moving on. In the 12 years I have been in education it was the most challenging and soul-searching project I undertook. However the benefit is that learners are now enrolled on courses they want to be on and not on a course just because it is a Wednesday evening and that is what they have always done on a Wednesday evening.” (NIACE Development Officer, March 2005)

In one of the project sites where the Lecturer had not been able to access training run by the local partnership board, he attended training run by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities. There are a number of organisations running person-centred planning training. The Valuing People website is a good place to find information about such courses.

Where some staff have been on the person-centred planning awareness training, they have cascaded the training to give other colleagues an introduction to person-centred planning. One manager wanted to see training made available to all staff to support the ‘whole college approach’ to working with people with learning difficulties. She had submitted a proposal to run training session on person-centred planning for tutors and learning support tutors during staff development week. This is so that they can be aware of the issues when working with learners on Individual Learning Plans and setting learning goals. The importance of this approach was highlighted by the experience of a student in a pottery class. Her experience also shows that one class can cater for a wide range of different needs of learners and that offering more choice to learners does not always translate into having to provide more subjects.

Case study

A student with profound and multiple learning difficulties was attending a pottery class. Her learning goal was to experience the environment of the class with other learners there and to explore things around her through tactile and sensory means. This involved the learner smelling, feeling and in one instance tasting the clay. This alarmed the tutor who felt the class was inappropriate for the student. The class tutor could not understand what the learner was gaining from the class and therefore struggled to work with the learner and her support worker appropriately.

The next section of the report looks in more detail at the work of the project fieldwork sites.

Section Two

Current Examples of Interesting Practice

Developing person-centred approaches in post-16 education

This section outlines some examples of practice that are developing around person-centred approaches in post-16 education. Writing about the principles that inform person-centred approaches can become rather abstract after a while. The purpose of these examples is to capture the creative and in some cases exploratory pieces of work that are going on to illustrate how person-centred approaches are being developed.

Partnership Working

The link between post-16 education and training providers and the local Learning Disability Partnership Board is crucial if education is to be an active partner in the local work around 'Valuing People'. An Education sub-group for one Partnership Board has representatives from Social Services, Connexions, the Health Authority, Special Schools, College, Independent sector training providers, the voluntary sector and LEA Education Services as members. Where post-16 education and training is represented on the partnership board, there is direct access to any available training but also to other service providers with whom it will be essential to work, in order to support the development of person-centred approaches in education. Each partnership board also has people with learning difficulties and carers as members. All of the project sites were involved in some form of partnership working.

Case Study

The Learning Support manager at one Adult College is the Learning Champion on the education sub-group of the local partnership board. There is a service users network that reports back to the partnership board with issues, as do the provider network and parent/carers network. Issues raised by these groups provide useful information for the college when developing person-centred approaches in their work.

Although the local Learning and Skills Council was not on the partnership board the college Principal had a very good working relationship with the council on a local strategic partnership group. As the Learning Support manager felt the Principal was very committed to developing person-centred approaches, she was working at using this link as a way to involving the local Learning and Skills Council.

The issue of post-16 education representation on partnership boards was raised by several person-centred planning training co-ordinators interviewed as part of the project. Good representation on the partnership boards from Connexions and schools in contrast to no or partial representation from post-16 education and training, with FE in particular absent, was mentioned more

than once. If education is not on the partnership board it is more difficult to involve staff in the training and in the development of partnership working.

A person-centred planning training co-ordinator interviewed for this project commented:

“ I wanted to offer training opportunities free to all services providers but as the FE College was not on the partnership board and not visible, they slipped through the net. We need a proactive person, a named contact.”

In areas where take up of person-centred planning training by post-16 education organisations has been low, several training co-ordinators mentioned the idea of going directly to the local college and offering *“tailored-made sessions on person-centred planning.”*

In one London borough the person-centred planning co-ordinator, in partnership with the local FE College, has developed a particularly proactive and accessible strategy to support person-centred planning and the development of person-centred approaches in post-16 education. This is described in the case study below.

Case Study

Lambeth Social Services works closely with education providers to promote and support person-centred planning (PCP) and the use of person-centred approaches (PCA). Both the college in the area and the Lifelong Learning are represented on the Learning Disability Partnership Board and on various sub-groups. The education representatives have been asked to write a statement as to how they will introduce and support PCP/PCA in their organisations.

The Person Centred Co-ordinator for Social services:

- Addressed the college staff about the issues surrounding using PCA/PCP.
- Offers, on a monthly basis, a one-day awareness raising session, which is open to education staff.
- Makes herself available to the college staff for advice and guidance. In turn the local college:
- Hold open days run by People First. This enables potential learners to have access to information, advice and guidance. Accessible leaflets on PCP are made available to anyone attending these open days.
- Has supported a stakeholder's day.

Young people are identified as a priority group for person-centred planning by the *Valuing People* White paper. The 2003 Valuing People survey of partnership boards and local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) showed that local LSCs were most frequently involved in work with partnership boards around supporting transition for young people with learning difficulties from 14-18. One local authority area, contacted during this project, was in the process of developing a service to support people with learning difficulties

between the ages of 16-18 make the transition to adult services. There was concern that some of these young people were finding it difficult to access college. The proposal was to be submitted to the local LSC for support and funding. Local LSCs have a key strategic role to play in supporting person-centred planning and the development of person-centred approaches in post-16 education for young people in transition. The support for this work needs to be in place for adults too.

Raising Awareness

In Northamptonshire the Inclusive Learning Manager of the Adult and Community Learning service attends the county-wide Person-centred approaches working group. This group includes representatives from a range of services including housing, advocacy, day services, health and social care, Mencap, a parents group and a services users group.

As part of the work of this group a stakeholder's day was being planned for the summer. At different venues around the county a variety of activities are to take place including a dance and drama performance to celebrate the lives of people with learning difficulties, a Question Time to a panel of MP's, workshops on advocacy, communication and expression through movement.

The Adult and Community Learning Service had taken the lead on supporting a group of people with learning difficulties to present a dance and drama performance that will raise awareness of person-centred planning. The service was also planning to run a course "All About Me". The intention is that the information that the learners collate when on the course will be useful in feeding into their Person-Centred Plans. Possible funding sources for this course were being explored.

Information advice and guidance

This year, staff from the Learning Support team at Lancaster Adult College are piloting a pre-interview advice and guidance form for people with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Towards the end of summer term, college staff carry out visits to schools and talk 1:1 with students who plan to come to college the following term. The pre-interview form is to be sent prior to this visit. It asks for information about the individuals' likes and dislikes, how they communicate and any tools needed to support communication and preferred learning styles. This information is put in to context with any person-centred plan and informs the information advice and guidance (IAG) process at the college. When learners come to enrol they are asked to bring a copy of their person-centred plan. A different provider who came to the attention of the project, has a paragraph in the prospectus which encourages potential students to bring their person-centred plans and offers support for the development of the plans.

Existing learners at Lancaster Adult College are sent a questionnaire about how they are getting on courses and their plans for next year. Where students are living in supported housing staff go to visit and discuss the completed forms with them and support staff. The instructions for filling in the questionnaires are very specific and instruct staff to talk to the learner about

what they want to do and how this fits in with their overall plans. For instance, a support worker maybe able to say that an individual is now happy to come out in the evening and this will inform the IAG process. Where possible this ties in with person-centred plans.

Learner Involvement

In each of the four examples that follow, the involvement and influence of a learner or learners has been a key influence on the development of the projects.

1. Developing courses

As a result of a direct request from learners, Lancaster Adult College is running a Body Talk course with colleagues from Health and Social Services. The course will be marketed through the Partnership Board where it is hoped that Social Workers and Occupational Therapists will refer people to the course.

2. Supporting learner aspirations

The case study below is an example of how one education manager used person-centred approaches to support a learner to pursue her interest in science.

Case study

Lorraine harboured a life long ambition to be a Forensic Scientist. She told this to the new Adult and Community Learning Supported Learning Manager when she came to the Day Centre to talk to the learners who accessed their provision.

Lorraine attended discrete classes for people with learning difficulties. When the manager organised a science group she remembered Lorraine's ambition and asked Lorraine if she would like to join the group. Lorraine attended the group for two years. Her tutor was amazed at how well Lorraine progressed and how her behaviour changed – Lorraine was self directed in her work and continually asked for additional homework, which she always completed.

At the end of the two years the science teacher approached the Supported Learning Manager and said she believed that Lorraine would be able to access the mainstream GCSE Human Biology class.

The manager first spoke with Lorraine. A small case conference was organised whereby the manager got Lorraine, her mum, her key worker and the day centre manager together. It was important that Lorraine knew what she was taking on as it meant that she would have to cut down on her hectic week to accommodate study time. Using a flipchart the manager encouraged Lorraine to record in order of preference all her favourite activities. By a process of elimination and group discussion Lorraine decided for herself what it was she needed to cut out of her timetable to accommodate her GCSE class. By the end of the case conference everyone knew what it was that they needed to do to support

Lorraine.

A year on Lorraine is just about to take her GCSE examination and is predicted a D grade.

3. People with learning difficulties as trainers

The 'Learning Together' group at Lancaster Adult College consists of 8 learners with learning difficulties who work on a rolling basis to deliver a part of the breadth training for Person Centre Planning to all staff across the district. The group has a two-year contract for this work and is paid by the Partnership Board. The group originally trained as trainers on a course run by the Adult College. They remain part of a course through the College and are supported by a member of a local advocacy organisation. The advocacy worker is paid for through the Learning Disability Development Fund via the Partnership Board. Learning Together also works on other training such as Disability Awareness training. Being in the group has had many positive outcomes for the individuals involved. In one case a member of the group has had the confidence to challenge aspects of her residential service and has succeeded in making changes to the support she receives. In another case a group member has found part-time paid work as a trainer with a local self-advocacy organisation.

4. Learner consultation

The following case study illustrates how one Adult Learning service involved students with learning difficulties in shaping the development of provision.

Case Study

Coventry Adult Education ran a “Have your say for a day” event in May 2004. This student conference was an opportunity for students with learning difficulties on the ‘Active Learning’ courses to:

- Talk about their experiences
- Say where improvements to courses, programmes and venues were needed
- Say what is successful about the provision
- Talk about their future as a whole
- Meet other learners from across the City
- Be directly involved in future planning for Active Learning courses

The students were involved in designing the day’s activities, enrolling other students and supporting the workshops. An ex-student who now works for the campaigning organisation Values into Action introduced the day. Feedback from the sessions was recorded pictorially (-see appendix 2). This technique is commonly used when recording notes at person-centred planning meetings.

Since the event Coventry Adult Education made a number of changes to their provision; improving and using better venues; updating computer equipment; running taster courses and new courses that had been requested.

Supporting people with learning difficulties to access college

The Adult Education provider working in partnership with two neighbouring local authorities is developing a course to support people to have experience of going to college. The original aim had been to run a course to support people to develop their person-centred plans. However, in response to the needs and interests of the learners:

“As the course has evolved it could more accurately be called a person-centred approach to accessing college.”

Some of the learners have complex and profound needs. The course takes place at a Community Arts Centre and is led by a senior adult education tutor and Link worker from the Arts Centre. In order to be as responsive as possible to what learners want to do, learners and support staff plan lessons together. The session runs for three hours and there is a 30 min slot at the start where the planning happens and 30 minutes at the end for evaluation.

One of the aims of the course is to expand peoples’ horizons. One learner, is autistic and has barriers to meeting new people so doesn’t, as yet, come to the sessions. The group do multi-media work which is burnt on to CD and sent to this learner. The tutor receives responses to what has been sent and a key worker is helping the student with this process.

Each month students from the college and users of the day centre are invited to come and see what the group has done. The learners are supported to present and share things about themselves. At one such session the group projected photos and video that they had made, on to a large screen. In the summer term there are plans to visit a class at the college with another visit by the end of term. The eventual aim is for the course to run at the college. Next term they will be working towards this.

The tutor who co-ordinated this course made the following points:

- It took a lot of development time to plan the learning programme. This included the development of specialised resources and meeting individual's communication needs. This was very time consuming and this time requirement should not be underestimated.
- There was a lot of work on the structure of the course as well as on support, to make sure it was appropriate for the learners
- It has been important to take time to develop trust, confidence and good communication with day services staff. Face to face meetings are essential
- The Lecturer responsible for developing the course commented that: *"Any paper-based activities didn't work. If you have good multi-media skills, they are good for working with people with complex needs."*
- The residential services and families need to be involved in the planning process for the course, as they will be supporting learners to get to the course.
- The experience of this project has made the tutor feel that at the college *"...nothing is joined up, we need to get out and speak to key workers and referral agencies much more."*
- An unexpected outcome was that some of the college students who have attended the group presentations have expressed an interest in being involved in person-centred planning process for themselves

Advice to staff developing person-centred approaches

During the fieldwork visits education managers and practitioners were asked what their advice would be to post-16 education and training staff who want to develop person-centred approaches in their work. Their responses included;

- Get in touch with the partnership boards and ask for their advice to access training.
- Put together a convincing case to senior management as to why it is beneficial to them for staff to spend time on person-centred planning.
- Colleges need to have an agreement to release staff to attend meetings and be involved in person-centred planning training.
- Look at Information, Advice and Guidance systems and create an infrastructure to link person-centred plans to individual learning plans. To do this staff would need to link with other agencies.
- When using person-centred approaches to developing courses, you need a lot of time to plan, it is not a traditional teaching role and you need to establish good links with other services.
- The college strategy on how it will address the issues in *Valuing People* should be linked to the college DDA action plan.

In order for post-16 education and training to support person-centred planning it was felt that the national Learning and Skills Council needed to realise:

- the importance of multi-agency work and the fact that it will cost money and time for organisations to work together.
- the need for there to be people who have responsibility for Valuing People in each agency, especially local Learning and Skills Councils
- the need for more of an onus on education and training providers to sign up to Valuing People. This commitment should be part of strategic planning that is linked into national agendas, just as it is with the Skills agenda, and therefore there should be funding for this work.

Section Three

Supporting Person-Centred Planning in Post-16 Education

The final part of this report offers a possible model for post-16 providers to support person-centred planning and the development of person-centred approaches (see appendix three). In the process diagram each box is numbered. Each of the numbered bullet points below relates to that corresponding box.

Rationale for model

This model is one which providers of post 16 providers might like to try. It is an amalgamation of:

- What some providers are currently doing
- What they would like to be seen done
- Ideas from Social Services Departments
- Literature on the subject

It is also based on recent past experiences of one of the NIACE Development Officers involved in this piece of work:

- as a manager in an ACL provider coming into regular contact with learners, family, friends, residential managers, day centre managers and key workers
- as someone who has undertaken the breadth training
- as someone who has undertaken the more in-depth 3 days Essential Lifestyle Planning training
- as someone who has tried to facilitate a plan for a person
- as someone who has participated in a national action research project with a brief to use person centred approaches in an effort to effect change.

There are many forces at work in the post-16 arena that could impact on effective use of Person-Centred Approaches:

1. For this process to work in any organisation it is essential that the Senior Management Team are familiar with person-centred planning, believe in it and back it fully. It is important that post 16 providers sign up to the Person-centred process and remember that being a person-centred organisation is not dependant on learners having person centred plans.
2. The relationships providers have with other agencies have a crucial role to play in the success or failure of the implementation of such approaches. One way of building these relationships is through the annual review process. If learners are willing to invite a member of staff from the education service they use to their review, they will have the opportunity to meet the other people involved in this person's life. The relationship that they build up with the PCP co-ordinator in social care will be vital to this work. This person could

be willing to offer the breadth training during inset week. Staff may try and say, “It has nothing to do with us, we don’t teach those learners”. However underpinning all this work is the need to change mindsets. You have to start somewhere!

4. Within the PCP process facilitators are not paid for their time. It is a voluntary role they take on. It is a time consuming process and for it to be successful it is necessary that facilitators are passionate about the process. For this very reason it is important that if college staff are to take on a facilitating role the support of the Senior Management Team is essential. One provider I spoke with had 2 staff who were trained facilitators. However this college only facilitated those parts of the PCP that were education related.
- 5/6 There are many competing voices in learners’ lives and this is particularly evident at times in the annual review process. This is why it is so necessary for learners to be able to advocate for themselves or with support from an outside agency if necessary. Learning providers can support this by buying in expert knowledge from advocacy organisations – training for learners on how to advocate, training for staff on the benefits of advocacy and also as intermediaries in crisis situations. Additional taster sessions and courses to support the process could be offered. Empowering learners to advocate for themselves is a central tenet of this process. The knock on effects are many e.g. discovering what learners want to learn, being able to move learners on to what it is they do want to do, joint working and a curriculum that is much more learner focused and orientated.
7. Facilitators need time zoned into their weekly timetable to offer support to learners who have decided to undertake the PCP process. This should not be in addition to a normal teaching timetable.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that many in post-16 education and training remain unclear in their understanding of person-centred planning and the part they should be playing in it, some providers are engaging with person-centred planning in creative and dynamic ways. Where this is happening, involvement with the local Learning Disability Partnership Board and participation in the person-centred planning training courses that they offer, has been key. More post-16 education providers need to avail themselves of these and similar training opportunities and become involved in the work of the local partnership board.

There also needs to be a better understanding by other services and people responsible for co-ordinating person-centred planning training about what education has to offer in this area of work. There is worryingly, a sense of mistrust between services and perceptions of other services can be negative. As one person-centred planning co-ordinator involved in the fieldwork for this project commented:

“Culturally Education focuses on what is important for rather than what is important to.”

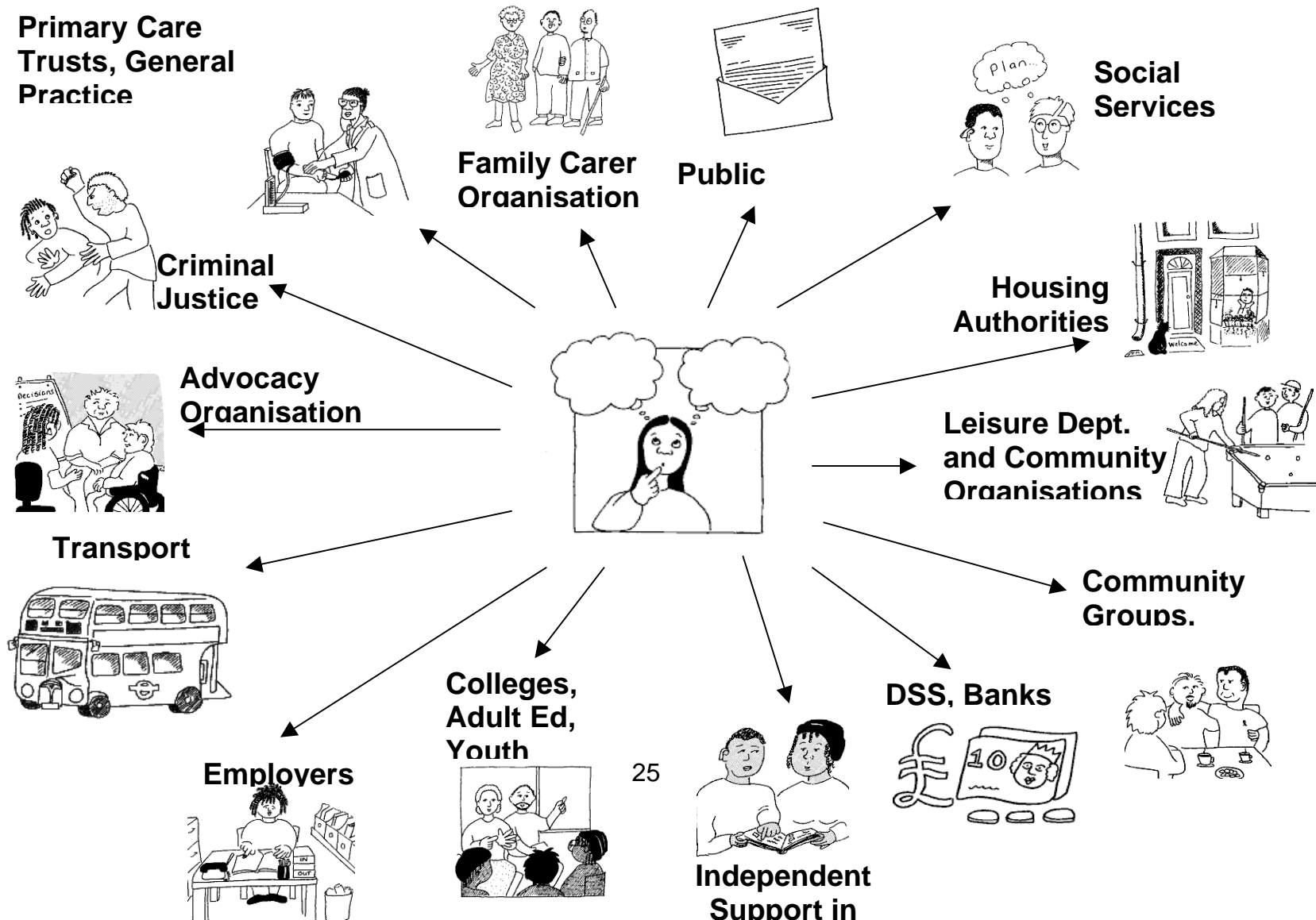
Such barriers have to be overcome if services are to work together effectively to support person-centred planning.

There is considerable overlap between the principles of person-centred planning and Inclusive Learning. The Inclusive Learning approach is not regarded as an optional part of the way post-16 learning providers organise their provision. Neither should the development of person-centred approaches for students with learning difficulties.

Appendix:1 Services people with learning difficulties may use

Valuing People

Support Team

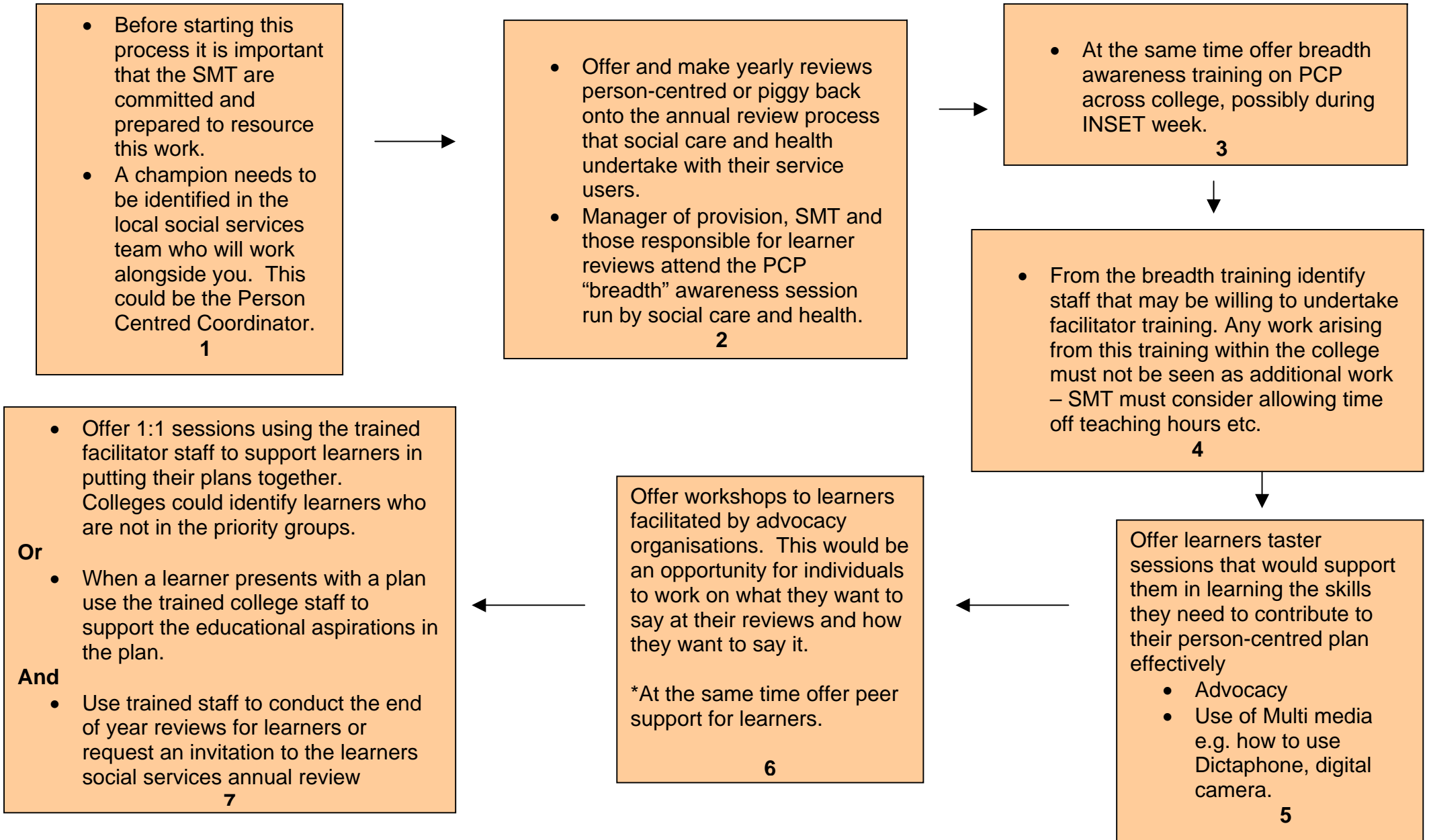


Appendix 2 Student feedback from the 'Have your say for the day' event



Student feedback from the 'Have your say for a day' event.

Appendix:3 A model to support person centred planning in Post 16 Education providers



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- ⁱ Survey carried out by the Valuing People Support team, 2003, unpublished
- ⁱⁱ Maudslay L, Nightingale C, Recognising achievement in non-accredited learning for adults with learning difficulties. DfES, 2004
- ⁱⁱⁱ Department of Health, (2001). Valuing People: A new strategy for learning disability in the 21st Century (includes Planning with People: Towards Person Centred Approaches), London, DoH.
- ^{iv} Sanderson H, Routledge M et al, People, Plans and Practicalities, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2003
- ^v Routledge M, Sanderson H and Greig R – Planning with People Towards Person-Centred Approaches: The Development of Guidance on Person-Centred Planning from the English Department of Health, 2002 DoH
- ^{vi} O'Brien J and Towell, D – Getting More of Life: Improving the Timeliness of Person-Centred Approaches. 2005, Valuing People website
- ^{vii} Maudslay, L Valuing People and its implications for post school education for people with learning difficulties, (LSDA, forthcoming)
- ^{viii} Ibid
- ^{ix} Inclusive Learning: Report of the Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities Committee, FEFC 1996
- ^x Lesley Dee, 2004 Final Report for Project 10. DDA Taking the Work Forward. See LSDA website
- ^{xi} Routledge M, Sanderson H and Greig R – Planning with People Towards Person-Centred Approaches: The Development of Guidance on Person-Centred Planning from the English Department of Health, 2002 DoH

Useful websites

- www.circlesnetwork.org.uk
- www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk
- www.valuingpeople.gov.uk