

My Future Choices

For disabled young people, their families and people who support them

Issue 1 2013



What's in this issue



Wheelchair Basketball



EPIC

CSV Respect Us

Young Inspectors

Disability Rocks 2013

Oska Bright Film Festival

And much more!



The magazine of the Transition Information Network

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Hello from TIN!

Welcome to another issue of My Future Choices. This issue is all about hobbies and making a positive change in the wider community.

Here at TIN we think that all young people should be able to access positive activities. This could include youth clubs, leisure activities and places to hang out with friends. Having things to do and places to go after school and at the weekend is really important. It is a way of making friends and getting involved in the local community.



TIN also believes that all young people should be able to have a say in the services that they use. In this issue we find out about mystery shopping in leisure and sports facilities, multi-media mini websites called Wikis and a young people's advisory group called EPIC.

This issue of My Future Choices has all sorts of articles about things that disabled young people are involved in across the country. You can also read stories by disabled young people about what they like to do in their free time.

Happy reading!

Best wishes,

Lettice Wigby

What is the Transition Information Network?

The Transition Information Network (TIN) is an alliance of organisations and individuals with the common aim of improving the experience of disabled young people's transition to adulthood. TIN aims to be a source of information and good practice standards for disabled young people, their families and people who support them. TIN is based at the Council for Disabled Children, the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector in England. www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

TIN Membership

Membership to TIN is free. You will receive My Future Choices magazine by post and our monthly newsletter by email. Register online at: www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk/membership

Children and Families Bill

Children and young people in England with Special Educational Needs

What the new law will change for children and young people with special educational needs

The government is planning changes to the way children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are supported. The aim is to give good support to children and young people with special educational needs, and their families.

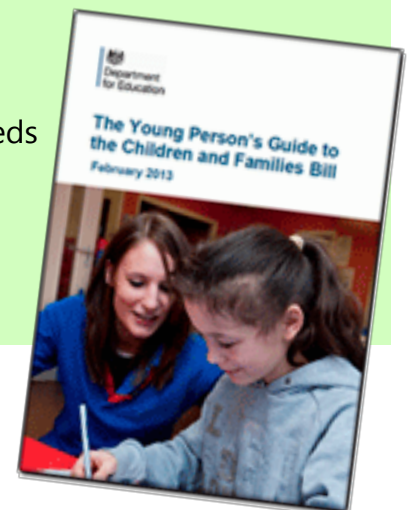
Children and young people with special educational needs can find it harder to learn than other people their age. They can need extra help. This support could go right up to when they are 25 if they need longer to finish their education. There are lots of changes planned to make this happen. The changes mean giving children and young people themselves, as well as their parents, more choices about the help they get.

If the new law is agreed, there will be EIGHT main changes for children and young people with special educational needs from birth to age 25. In particular, for the first time, young people aged 16-25 at college with special educational needs would have the right to ask for their needs to be assessed, the right to say which college they want to go to, and the right to make appeals about the support they receive.

The 8 ideas are:

- to get education, health and social care services working together
- make sure children, young people and families know what help they can get when a child or young person has special educational needs
- to make sure that different organisations work together to help children and young people with special educational needs
- to give children and young people and their parents more say about the help they get
- for one overall assessment to look at what special help a child or young person needs with their education, and their health and social care needs, all at the same time
- for a child or young person to have one plan for meeting their education, health and social care needs, which can run from birth to 25 if it needs to
- To make sure children, young people and their parents can choose some of the help they need
- to help sort things out if a child or young person or their parent needs to appeal about the help they get

See the Young Person's Guide to the Children and Families Bill here:
www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk/cfbill



Preparing for Adulthood programme

The preparing for Adulthood programme (PfA) supports local areas in England to start making the changes that the SEN reforms are bringing in. PfA has resources that are useful to parents and disabled young people. There are lots of free resources on the PfA website including videos, webinars, factsheets, stories and good practice.

Visit the PfA website at www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk where you can also sign up to the monthly PfA newsletter.



Volunteer For New Skills!

By Carol Williams from CSV

Respect Us Project

CSV (Community Service Volunteers) is a charity which runs the Respect Us project. The project, which was funded by the City Bridge Trust, gives disabled students, from schools and colleges in London, the chance to go out into their local community together and volunteer as a group. The young people gain new skills to take with them as they move into their adult lives.

Bromley College

A group of students from Bromley College got involved with the Respect Us Project. Giles Delamare from Bromley College explains why his students got involved:

- The project fitted with our Employment Preparation Course
- The project broadened students outlook of volunteering and adult working life
- The project helped students develop confidence and self esteem
- The college has gained more work placements and more students are getting jobs
- The project has developed our students' personal and social development and built links with the wider community
- The feedback from our students, parents, staff and voluntary organisations has been fantastic
- The project has encouraged volunteering
- The project has helped students develop the skills needed for gaining and sustaining meaningful employment.

Activities

The young people took part in lots of different activities as part of the project from hosting a community tea party, scanning photographs for a library project to building bug houses to help the environment. Students enjoyed getting out of school and doing something different which helped them feel a part of their community.



Evaluation

A research report has been produced by the Norah Fry Research Centre at the University of Bristol. The report shows that young people on the project had a fantastic time and learnt a lot. The research report has shown how effective Respect Us can be in supporting disabled young people in their transition to adulthood, so CSV is now seeking further funding to continue with the project. CSV would love to expand the project so that more students can benefit, just like the students from Bromley College did.

Find out more

CSV Respect Us - To read the full report visit:
www.csv.org.uk.



To find out more about CSV Respect Us contact respectus@csv.org.uk or call Carol Williams on 01223 728460.

To find out more about Bromley College visit www.bromley.ac.uk.

Oska Bright Film Festival

By Lisa Wolfe from Oska Bright

Oska Bright is unique. It is the first and only festival managed and promoted by learning disabled artists as a showcase for their creativity and skill as film-makers. Submitted films are selected by a panel and there is a variety of categories for which awards are offered, including development bursaries. There are networking opportunities over the three day event and it culminates in a lively awards ceremony.

For the film makers who enter their work, Oska Bright is a very important focus and a date to look forward to. For award winners it is a real thrill. One such winner, Matthew Eggert, gives the reasons why Oska Bright is so important to him, and how he first got involved.

How did you first hear about the Oska Bright Film Festival?

Our local Mencap group in Epping Forest told us about the film festival, which had just been launched, so it was very exciting to be part of the festival right from the first one in 2004.

What attracted you to submit an entry for the festival?

I had already made my first short film at my old school in Loughton, Essex; an animation called Tree Whizz and the Apple Attack. I was delighted when it was chosen for screening and couldn't wait to go to the festival.

How has being involved with the festival affected you personally?

I really enjoy going to the Oska Bright Film Festival because it is interesting to see the films and to join in all the activities. My first film won two awards, including a bursary for two days film training.

My second film, By the Seaside, was made in three weeks because that's all the time I had after the film training before the deadline for entries to the next festival. That won another award in 2005. I couldn't believe it! I then made The Adventurous Duck which was shown at



Matthew Eggert receives his award from Dan Simmons of SkillSet

the 2007 festival, and after a holiday in Iceland made SOS Save Our Sheep about a volcano erupting under an icecap. That was the year before the one that stopped the planes from flying all over Europe!

SOS won a bursary at the 2009 festival so I had two more days of film training and branched out into live action as well as animation. The Dreamer was screened in 2011.

What is the best part of being involved with the festival?

I enjoy meeting new people there and seeing friends I have made at previous festivals. I have always liked films and animation in particular, and now I am a film maker myself I am very happy. It is good to share that interest with all the other film makers at Oska Bright. I always look forward to the festival.

Get involved

- The next Oska Bright Film Festival takes place on 17, 18, 19 November at the Brighton Dome, Corn Exchange.
- Full information and ticket booking is on the website www.oskabright.co.uk. You can see clips of winning films from the last festival and learn how to make your own film on the website too. Or you can call Oska Bright on 01273 234 734 or email oskabright@carousel.org.uk



At a glance

Find out how you can get involved in wheelchair basketball.



Wheelchair Basketball

By Ellie Jackson from British Wheelchair Basketball (BWB)



Who can play?

Everyone! You don't need to be a wheelchair user to play and people without a disability are also very welcome to play and compete alongside you in The Lord's Taverners Junior League (U15 & U19), Women's League, the BWB Development League, and National League in Divisions 3-1, so bring your friends and family!

Why Play?

A fantastic action-packed team sport, wheelchair basketball offers you a great way to get all the health benefits of physical activity whilst meeting new friends and team-mates in a fun environment!

Many players start playing as part of their physical rehabilitation, building their strength, improving chair skills and hand-eye coordination in a sociable environment.

With Leagues that span the whole of the UK, there's also the added potential benefit of getting to travel the nation and seeing a

whole host of different places. For players who compete in the RGK Super League – the equivalent of football's Premier League – or for the Standard Life GB Women's club teams, there's also the chance to travel abroad!

How to Get Started

Just get in touch with your local club! To find out where your nearest club is visit www.britishwheelchairbasketball.co.uk and enter your postcode into Club Finder or give the BWB Office a call on 01509 279900.

When you've found when and where your local club train, all you need to do is head over to a session in your sports kit!

You don't need to worry about a chair to play in as your club will be able to provide you with a specialised sports chair when you first start.



Classification System

At all levels – from your local club to the Paralympic Games – every wheelchair basketball team is made up of players with a whole range of different physical abilities, with each player crucial to their team's success. Because no two players are the same, wheelchair basketball has a classification system to make sure that all teams are balanced and fair when playing matches.

Players are assigned points as their classification with 1, 2, 3, and 4 as the recognised classes, and 0.5 classes between for the exceptional cases which do not fit exactly into one class, 4.5 being the category for the player with least or minimal disability.

For example, players like the Standard Life GB Women's Team member Amy Conroy (pictured) who have had a leg amputated above the knee are usually given a 4.0 classification; whilst players such as the Standard Life GB Men's Team athlete Abdi Jama who are paralysed from the upper chest downwards are usually classified as a 1.0 player. Able-bodied competitors can compete in the UK with a 5.0 classification, but they cannot represent Great Britain.



Get Involved Off the Court!

Wheelchair basketball also offers you fantastic off-court opportunities with BWB Courses for coaches and officials – a great way to learn new skills and develop your confidence for higher education and job applications.

Find out more

To find out more visit:
www.britishwheelchairbasketball.co.uk or
 give the BWB Office a call on
 01509 279900.

Young Inspectors

By Robert Cooper, Jake Gradon and Jamie Nicholson

At a glance

Three young people talk about inspecting local leisure facilities.

Hi! We are a group of Young Inspectors from Gateshead Tyne & Wear. We have been involved in inspecting and mystery shopping leisure and sports facilities across the Borough of Gateshead.

When we inspect and mystery shop we look for accessibility, staff's attitude to young people and what activities the service offers to young people.

Robert's story

My Name is Robert Cooper, I am 18 years old, I live in Chopwell Tyne & Wear. I have a hearing impairment and autism. I love being involved in the Young Inspectors, it's not only about inspecting and mystery shopping, it's also about having fun and making new friends.

I like mystery shopping the best as I feel like an under cover detective and the staff do not know that I am there.

When I am not mystery shopping or inspecting, I like skiing and have been going with my school, Cedars, every year. I am doing my John Muir award and have been learning about conservation. Over to Jake now.....

"I love being involved in the Young Inspectors, it's not only about inspecting and mystery shopping it's about having fun and making new friends." - Robert



Jake's story

Hello my name is Jake Gradon I am 19 years old from Winlaton Tyne & Wear and have Cerebral Palsy. In my leisure time I am also a Young Inspector and enjoy being part of the group going out inspecting and mystery shopping. It is all about trying to make services accessible for all. I have been a Young Inspector for two years and it has given me a lot of confidence and I have learnt new skills and most importantly I have made new friends.

My favourite mystery shop was in Gateshead Leisure Centre where Jamie and I went swimming and we learnt new skills playing squash, we had a mint time and the accessibility was very good and the staff very smiley.

When I am not an Inspector in my spare time I like going to youth clubs, I am also doing the John Muir award, my motto is "no matter what your disability is don't let nothing hold you back", I like taking on new challenges and I am determined to achieve them. Over to Jamie.....



Jake and Jamie

Jamie's story

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Hi, my name is Jamie Nicholson I am 21 years old, I live in Blaydon, Tyne & Wear. I have Cerebral Palsy and am a wheelchair user. I am also a Young Inspector; I like mystery shopping the best as we are just members of the public. For me it's an important role especially looking at accessibility in different services as a wheelchair user. When we did the mystery shop at Gateshead Leisure centre, the staff were very good in helping me into the swimming pool using a hoist and a chair; I had a lot of fun that day with Jake and James my PA.

? When I am not a Young Inspector I go to the Gym at Blaydon, the equipment there is very good and caters for everyone. There are machines I use and a chair is removed and I can fit my wheelchair into the equipment. I use the cable machine, free weights, a medicine ball and an arm cycle. Since going the gym I feel fitter and it is good for my muscles, after a trip to the gym my PA gives me a massage on my back, shoulders, legs and feet this helps relax my muscles, I find the shoulder massage very ticklish.

"For me it's an important role especially looking at accessibility in different services as a wheelchair user."
- Jamie

Find out more

If anyone is interested in becoming a Gateshead Young Inspector, then please get in touch with Deborah Hoare on deborahhoare@gateshead.gov.uk.



www.gateshead.gov.uk

Gateshead Council, Civic Centre,
Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH
Tel 0191 4333000

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Kirsty's Story

By Kirsty Seager



My name is Kirsty. I am 23 years old and I have autism, dyspraxia and learning disabilities. Here I talk about my hobbies and the things I do to make a positive impact to the lives of disabled young people.



Young Ambassadors

For 3 years I was a member of the Council for Disabled Children's Young Ambassadors group. We were involved in campaigning for the rights of disabled children and young people.

We made a film called "Young Disabled and In Control!" The film is about changing people's attitudes towards disability and that they should not perceive us differently because we are disabled. We have goals and ambitions of what we want to do but some people's perceptions of disability are stereotyping us and they think because we are disabled we can't do that.

EPIC

Now I am on a group called EPIC, which stands for Equality, Participation, Influence and Change. We work with the Department for Education on improving the education system for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities.

Writing

The most important thing I enjoy is running my autism website and writing my own book, which I will be self-publishing. So look out for the book 'Autie girl: Living Life To The Full and Facing Challenges', it is about the ups and downs of life living with autism.

Radio

I also love helping to run an international radio show, which is part of ANCA on Blogtalkradio. We are autistic but we do not let that get in the way of our day to day lives. Actually it has helped me see we are diverse-abled not disabled. Self-advocates come on every Saturday night at midnight.

Volunteering

I give up my free time to help the community, locally and nationally, making it a better place. I help make a magazine called 'The Chatterboxes' and I used to be involved in a Youth Forum/ Members Committee in which I took minutes for and ran a special needs club.

Singing

I also enjoy singing. I am part of Rock Choir which is recognised all over the country and we sing pop, gospel and Motown. We sing to support Women's Refuge and Missing People.

Video games

I love to play on my Wii fit, especially on the dance games. I love the upbeat music and it gives me lots of energy.

Find out more

To watch Young, Disabled and In Control! Visit:
www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/youngdisabledincontrol

Find out more about EPIC here:
www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/epic

To see Kirsty's Autism website visit:
www.autie-for-independence.co.uk

To find out more about the international radio show Kirsty helps run visit:
www.naturallyautistic.com

Visit Blogtalkradio here:
www.blogtalkradio.com



By Tania Bonello

My name is Tania and I am 17 years old. I live in Cromer, Norfolk. I am profoundly deaf and wear a cochlear implant in my right ear. I am part of a group called EPIC which focuses on helping disabled young people get their voices heard by the government. I joined EPIC because I really want to change lives for disabled young people as I feel that we don't get our say when the government want to make changes and they don't realise how it affects us all. Being in EPIC and having close contact with the government I feel that things will start to improve and the government will understand more about disabled young people and what we go through. As well as contributing my own ideas I also collect ideas from other disabled young people. I then take these ideas to the EPIC meetings for discussion.

In the EPIC meetings we discuss the Children and Families Bill and how it might affect disabled young people and those with SEN. Then we give our views and advice on the Children and Families Bill to the Department for Education. We also send 3 representatives from EPIC to the Special Educational Needs and Disability National Advisory Group (NAG) meetings. NAG is a group of adult experts who advises the Department for Education on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms in the Children and Families Bill. We also engage with other groups of disabled young people through social media. We hold online discussions to find out their experiences and their views about the changes in the Children and Families Bill. We also attend events and meetings to raise awareness about EPIC and the work we do.

So far EPIC has been working on identifying the key topics that are most important to us and other disabled young people. We have designed



EPIC members



Tania



EPIC meeting

a website that tells people what we do in our meetings and who the EPIC members are. We helped design the EPIC logo. We have set up a Facebook page so that we can get views and ideas from other disabled young people. We have met the Department for Education policy leads to tell them about EPIC, our work so far and what we want to achieve. We have attended an Action for Kids House of Lords event to hear from other young people about their experiences of participation and see how digital media can support participation. We have also interviewed the Children's Minister Edward Timpson MP. The interview is on our website.

Overall, I am glad to be on the group and being selected has been an honour. I really want to help change lives for disabled young people.

To see more about EPIC visit our website:
www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/epic

We also want you to tell us about what is important to you in the Children and Families Bill and have set up a Facebook Page so you can ask us questions and tell us what you think!
www.facebook.com/EPICAdvisors

Leisure Activity Interview

By Tabitha Stevens

Calum and Khadija are two Year 10 students at a mainstream secondary school in Cambridgeshire. They both have a variety of interests, skills, aspirations and hopes. They also both have a deteriorating eye condition and are registered visually impaired.

What kinds of things do you like to do in your spare time?

Calum: I do loads of things. I go to Athletics competitions, football competitions, swimming, ride my bike. Although riding your bike could be tricky as it depends on how bad someone's eye sight is. For example, you might not be able to see oncoming cars. I also like the skate-park, X-box especially Fifa 13 and COD 2, and hanging out with my mates.

Khadija: I do nothing! I'm so boring!! I have two other sisters so three girls in one house; I feel really sorry for my brother. He does Karate and tries to do moves on us but we don't let him. He has no control over the TV either. I like TV: Miranda, Waterloo Road, Vampire Diaries; that's Katie's fault! I do volunteering on a Saturday at my Saturday school. I've been going there since I was 2 ½ so I know everyone. I help with the smaller kids in the morning, who are learning Arabic and other activities in the afternoon. I have loads of friends there; it's really fun.

Why is sport important to you?

C: Athletics is so important to me. The fun of competing. It's a great group.



There is a real mix of ages from under 11 upto maybe 50. I'm in a group from 11 – 16. Once you turn 16, you move into a different group.

Is the Athletics club for mixed abilities or just Visual Impairment?

C: It's for a mix of all abilities – I'm the only one there with a VI. Sometimes that's good as I can use it as an excuse!

K: That happens to me too! We played Goalball in school recently and I thought oh no...if I'm bad at this, I can't blame my eyes!

C: Goalball is a great game; it's really fast paced.

K: I like playing it but I wouldn't play it in a team outside of school.

Is the Saturday club for mixed abilities or just Visual Impairment?

K: Saturday school is for all children but I am the only one there with a VI. I like it as I feel like I can be a completely different person there than at school. I've known the people there all my life; it's really inclusive. I have talked to them about my eyes but it's not a big deal to them. They don't treat me differently just because they know. They don't feel sorry for me.



Do you feel that your visual impairment prevents you from accessing activities?

C: When I was about 8 or 9 I wanted to do Karate, but dad wouldn't let me do it because of my eyes. I wasn't impressed.

K: I did karate once but didn't like it. It seemed really boring.

Both of you are part of a teenage group – can you tell me a bit about that?

C: It's a VI teenage group run by Camsight. It gives us all a chance to do things we wouldn't be able to do normally.

K: Yeah, mum thinks it's good to meet with others.

C: Yeah, and we did driving – Khadija stalled hers!

K: That's because I didn't know how to do it! We walked past all these really cool convertible cars...but kept walking right up to these really old 4x4's.

C: I was told I was the most skilled driver there :) that's because I used to do go-kart racing before. That was a long time ago when I was about 12. I'd like to go again. I wouldn't be scared; you have to take the impact sometimes!

Is it good because you are all visually impaired?

C: In a way, because we are all there for one reason. But it's not good for them to be visually impaired.

K: We never discuss our visual impairment: I don't know what their VI is; we've never asked each other.

Both of you are part of a smaller peer group with another student. You all share a similar eye condition. Has this been helpful for you?

C: Definitely. We wouldn't have got to know each other so well otherwise.

K: I think we have a connection, but not just because of our eyes; we just get on well.

C: But the thing is, we wouldn't have met if it hadn't been for our eyes.

Is there anything that is a barrier to you being able to access clubs and activities?

K: I know we should say, never let your eyes be the barrier but sometimes it just is.

C: Yes, eye sight is the biggest barrier.

K: That's the joke: your eyes shouldn't matter; nothing should stop you doing what you want to do. But they do stop you being able to do some things.

C: Like tennis!

K: I play tennis...well, I can serve well!

C: I can serve well too!

K: Your eyes shouldn't stop you doing things and all those clichés, but sometimes it is embarrassing. But I do think you should look for the opportunities not dwell on the negatives.

Shane's Wiki

At a glance

Sam talks about a Wiki (website) she created for her son Shane.

By Sam, Shane's mum



My name is Sam and I am Shane's mum. Shane is a young person with complex needs who goes to Charlton Park Academy.

I developed a Wiki for Shane as it was very important to me for everyone involved with Shane's transition to get

an insight into Shane as a person and not just his disabilities and difficulties. A Wiki is a multi-media mini website which can be easily accessed and updated. It gives information about our family, Shane's communication, mobility and care needs, the things Shane likes to do, his spiritual life and school life. Shane's IEP, Annual Review Reports, Speech and Language report, Physio Program, medical letters etc. are all on the Wiki. Everything is in one place and I no longer have to hold onto lots of papers. Shane's eleven



year old brother helped create the whole Wiki. Siblings of disabled children can sometimes feel left out and by involving Daniel in this process he felt very important indeed.

Last year Shane's class teacher changed which as you can imagine for a young

person with complex needs can be quite daunting. We shared Shane's Wiki with his new teacher and she immediately learned so much about Shane. It gave her the tools to create lesson plans appropriate for Shane and most importantly helped her understand his unique communication. When young people with complex needs are not supported by individuals who understand their communication they can become frustrated and this can lead to challenging behaviour. Personally I do not like the phrase challenging behaviour as to me it is a form of communication and if the young person is understood and supported appropriately behaviours which are inappropriate tend to be much less.

It is vital to understand how a young person communicates. I always try to imagine what it would be like to be in a foreign country where no one speaks my language and believe that is what it must be like for Shane if he is being supported by someone who does not understand his language. Now when someone new works with Shane they can now learn all about Shane's communication on his Wiki.

I have used Shane's Wiki in numerous ways but the most beneficial and rewarding has been teaching Shane how to operate it. I must admit I was quite apprehensive as I was unsure if Shane would get upset listening to himself having a good time. It had the opposite effect and now I believe it is a way to help Shane remember good times.

Previously Shane had never tolerated being at his Annual Review. However, his Year 9 review had his full participation. He loved showing his Wiki to all who attended. I must admit there was not a dry eye in the room and I was very proud of his achievement. Unfortunately,

Shane's physiotherapist was unable to attend the meeting but as she had already created a video for Shane's Wiki and this was shown at the meeting.



I am delighted that Charlton Park Academy are offering this toolkit to all of Shane's friends at school. It truly has helped Shane and us as a family to try to get the support and services necessary for Shane to live the life he wants to live. I want a healthy happy life for my son where he is given the opportunity to reach his potential and learn skills which will help him in adulthood.

For more information about Wikis visit:
www.rixcentre.org

To hear more about Shane visit the
Preparing for Adulthood website:
www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/shane

disability rocks 2013

By Richard Sutton from Disability Rocks

What is Disability Rocks?

Disability Rocks is a not for profit organisation dedicated to producing live music and arts experiences for those living with the impact of disabilities including parents, carers, siblings and friends.

The company was started in early 2012 by Richard Sutton, father of a little boy with a rare chromosome disorder, when it became clear that many live music and arts events were not geared towards people with a wide range of disabilities.

A key aim of Disability Rocks is to provide a stage for bands, artists and comedians who themselves have disabilities and make a positive statement through their art form. Disability Rocks is also committed to providing performance opportunities to new bands and artists wishing to perform to a wider audience.

Disability Rocks 2013

Disability Rocks is proud and excited to announce our second music and arts Festival to be held at Nell Bank, Ilkley on 8 June 2013.

This year's event will follow on from our highly successful first summer festival in May 2012 and our Christmas concerts in December 2012.

We have almost reached capacity for this year's line-up, which will see some familiar faces and some new talent, together with new and exciting features aimed at improving the experience of live music and arts for those living with the impact of disabilities.

Keep checking www.disabilityrocks.org for the announcement of acts and advance ticket sales.

For those not familiar with the setting, Nell Bank is a fantastic outdoor activity, environmental and educational centre which is a perfect partner for Disability Rocks and what we are about. Checkout www.nellbank.com.



Disability Rocks 2012

Feedback from our first festival was unanimously positive with some excellent suggestions put forward. We have pulled out the stops to try and accommodate many of these.

We are expecting to have a larger capacity this year with more features, workshops and activities.

Because of our experience from 2012, we aim to make the festival experience smoother and with more volunteers to assist with entry, car parking and catering.

Partnerships

As well as our events we are planning a number of partnerships to introduce music and art into the daily lives of children, young people and adults who will benefit from this.

If you are a music and arts provider with interest and experience in delivering to people with disabilities- irrespective of age, please contact Disability Rocks Founding Director Richard Sutton on richsutt@live.co.uk.

Joe's Story

By Joe Dixon



Hi my name is Joe Dixon and I am 21 years old. I have severe dyspraxia, dyslexia and some autistic spectrum features and while these things make life difficult at times I do not let them hold me back and I am always busy.

I like doing drama and singing and I love musical theatre. I have been a member of the Hull Truck Youth Theatre drama group and the Stage Door Musical Theatre drama group. Currently I am a member of the Dark Horse Theatre Group (www.darkhorsetheatre.co.uk). To join I had to pass an audition. Luckily I passed and I have been training with them since January. I am really enjoying it.

I also have my own felting business (www.jdfelt.co.uk). I learnt how to make felt at Freemans College and I find it very therapeutic. It is classed as a heritage craft and I can make many different unique items from merino wool using soapy water, heat and friction.

Some evenings and weekends I volunteer at Junction in Goole which is a small theatre and cinema and it has a cafe. I show people to their seats and make sure everyone is ok during performances. I really enjoy it and it helps me to improve my social skills as I have to deal politely with members of the public.

I also like swimming, seeing my friend Fred, going on Facebook and watching TV.



To learn more about dyspraxia see www.dyspraxiainfo.co.uk or www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

Madi's Story

By Madison Eaton

At a glance

Madi talks about her hobbies.



Hello, my name is Madi, I am 12 and live in Staffordshire. I have Asperger's Syndrome. I like to swim, and I do lifesaving lessons each week that I love to do. I also like horse riding, as it's relaxing and enjoyable.

I never really fitted in at school. I always had a hard time finding friends. I would get upset in most lessons because I couldn't understand what the teachers were talking about, and they made it very confusing. Then when I got to secondary school, things got worse and so my mum started homeschooling me.

Last year I joined the Stafford branch of the National Autistic Society (NAS) and the Jigsaw group, they are clubs for people like me who have an autism spectrum condition; both clubs are really enjoyable. The staff and volunteers are kind and really understanding.

At the NAS get together every other Saturday, we get to do fun activities and go on trips to places like Alton Towers, Laser and Bowling; three of my favourite trips! There is also a residential trip too. The Jigsaw group meets every Friday and my first few weeks there were spent doing Jigsaw puzzles, then I made friends who made me laugh and smile and I became more eager to go and enjoy myself.

Now every week, I can't wait to see all my friends and talk about what's happened in our week. I don't feel so alienated from people anymore, and now I feel much happier to go out and have fun!

If you live in Staffordshire and would like to join the Jigsaw Group, contact Machita Denny:
Telephone: 07882 823954
Email: machita_denny@btinternet.com

If you would like to join the Stafford branch of the National Autistic Society, contact Mandy Binns:
Telephone: 07789032153
Email: stafford@nas.org.uk

Diagnosis

By Vicki Taylor

Is it a competition?
A game? Or just a show?
Or why else do you label me
everywhere I go?

Everything I say or do
adds another to the list
without all these labels
would I not exist?

Then why is it you label me so?
with all these medical terms
can't I be a normal teen
without so many concerns?

If I took a look in a medical book
I'd be on every page!
You may as well just lock me up
like a bird stuck in its cage!

I didn't ask for your labels
nor your time to spare!
I didn't beg for you to see me
and I don't need you to care!

For this just isn't caring!
You're making an item of me!
Like the sales in the shops...
10% less free!

Autism, anxiety, ADHD,
Depression, dyslexia, need glasses to see,
Bipolar, Conduct Disorder, OCD,
GLD, paranoia, diabetes, epilepsy.

Asthma, Hayfever, ferit allergy,
Not allowed cheese,
always in need
of leg surgery!

Hearing problems, social and emotional
difficulty...

How many more are you gonna burden
on me?!

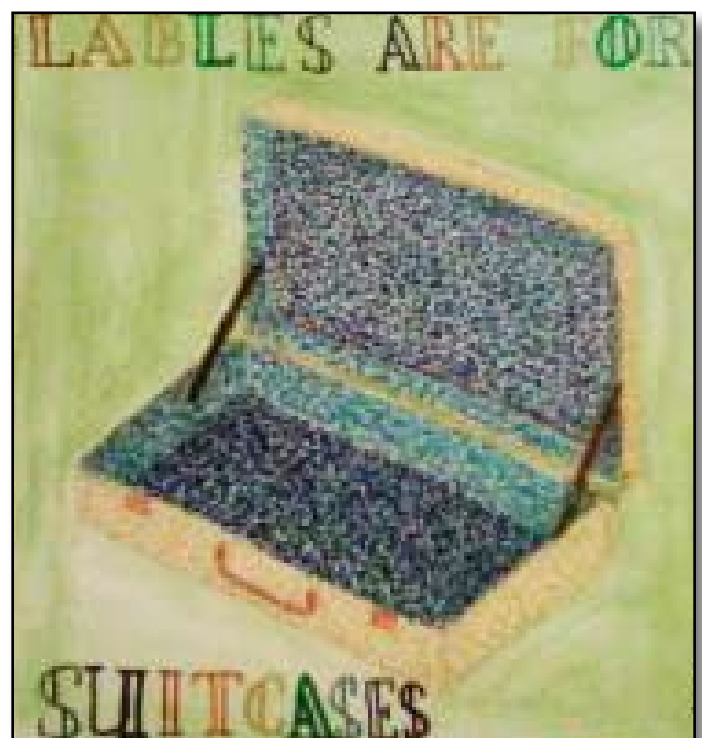
At a glance

Vicki Taylor wrote a
poem called Diagnosis.



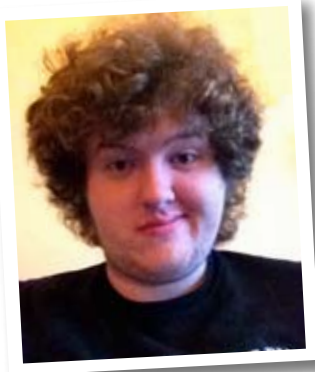
Vicki Taylor (aka Vicki Rainbow) wrote the poem 'Diagnosis' when she was 14 years old because she was frustrated by the diagnostic assessments that she felt were taking away her identity. With all of the diagnoses

listed in the poem, Vicki was upset by the system and confused about why services that claimed to 'care' did not offer anything more than a list of labels. At an age where identity is really questioned, Vicki wrote this poem to emphasise that she is more than just a list of conditions and she wished for everybody to understand this. The poem has not lost its relevance over the years though as assessments continue to be arranged to source further understanding of Vicki's mind. However, Vicki believes that no matter what labels and conditions people are diagnosed with, you are who you are, and you should be proud of that. To accompany the poem Vicki painted 'Labels are for Suitcases' (below). To read Vicki's other poems visit: www.hypovix.wetpaint.com.



Living in my fantasy world

By Adam Somerville



My name is Adam Somerville. I'm 18 years old and have been diagnosed with Aspergers syndrome, but this hasn't stopped me being a published author.

Why did I start writing?

I originally started writing because, as an autistic child, I felt pushed out of social situations. Instead, I made my own in my head and on the internet, where I found friends that would share this world with me and help me develop the world it was in. One day I thought to myself, "I want to get this out somehow. Any way possible." and, well, I picked up a pen and started writing.

How did it go?

It feels amazing to see your world unfold. I don't know how a person without a mental disability feels, but for me it feels just great. I wrote and wrote, sent my work to my friends and got amazing feedback. I knew what I loved now.

I structure and plan how many words I'll write each day and how many words go in to a chapter. As for the storyline, I pick the start and end, then I just let my hands do the rest.

Where I went from there

Originally I just wrote for fun, showing my friends and family my work. Eventually I decided to publish my work under the name "The Ireza's Rise", subtitled "Awakening". This would be the first of many books, of course, and I'm giving back to the people who helped me by donating some of the proceeds to the National Autistic Society.

At a glance

Adam talks about why he enjoys writing.



All of my other written works are being released for free on DeviantArt, and I'm just so happy to see visible results; people are actually reading and enjoying my work.

I wish I could meet every one of these people and hug them.

Find out more

To read Adam's written work visit www.theirezasrise.deviantart.com

Visit the National Autistic Society website here: www.autism.org.uk



Festival Spirit



At a glance

Festival Spirit is a charity that takes disabled young people to festivals.

By Steve Clarke from Festival Spirit

If you love music and never thought you could make it to a major music festival, think again! Festival Spirit provides the full festival experience to young people who would not normally be able to enjoy one due to life-limiting illness or disability. As Very Important People in our festival trips we call them our VIPs.



Who can go?

Ever since our first trip in 2010 we have targeted:

- Those whose condition mean they could not get to a festival without the level of support we provide.
- Those who could go independently with their carer but for whom the idea is just too scary to try. We build their confidence to be comfortable with the whole experience.

Our first trip included a number of people with muscular dystrophy from a local hospice. Other attendees have included C3 spinal injury, young amputee soldiers, cerebral palsy and a whole host of conditions some of which don't even have a name!



Our support team

Carers may be your own regular carer or hand-picked from our own bank of nurses and carers to match our VIPs' needs from straightforward feeding and showering to more complex routines.

Able-bodied "buddies" are matched up to VIPs to help them get around the festival site and to get the most out of the event, to see the bands they want to see and to attend all the other exciting activities on offer. They also help out with camp duties like cooking brunch and tidying.



Where do we stay?

Our accommodation is just amazing! Our specially adapted Indian marquee is one of the most colourful parts of the whole festival site.

We also provide:

- Hard flooring in the marquee.
- Curtained off sleeping area with full hospital profile bed for VIPs.
- Hoists.
- Wheelchair charging facilities.

We are always camped close to disabled facilities such as showers and toilets. We work closely with festival organisers to ensure these meet high standards.

MUD!

Festivals are famous for muddy conditions. This can be a challenge for electric wheelchairs but we managed to get round most of Glastonbury despite the mud in 2011!

How do we get there?

A fully adapted bus will transport VIPs to and from the festival site from agreed pick up points. If you can't make one of these sites you may need to make your own arrangements.

Which festivals do you go to?

In 2013 we are planning trips to WOMAD and Wilderness. Both have a fabulous range of music and events.



What's the programme?



On arrival at the festival there is a welcome party followed by a tour of the arenas with help from the Buddies. The daily programme tends to be driven by the musical tastes of each individual.

What does it cost?

We do need to charge to contribute towards transport, festival entry, accommodation, arrival party and a daily brunch meal. You will be expected to pay for your own food and drink through the day. The venues usually have a fantastic range of foods available.

How can I find out more?

Visit our website at www.festivalspirit.org which has application forms and contacts and our Facebook page.



Visit Festival Spirit online at:
www.festivalspirit.org



Freedom to play

By Hamdi Khalif from Play England

Free play provides children of different ages, genders and abilities an opportunity to be themselves, to make friends and to learn about their world.

Sadly, not everyone understands the importance of play - some schools are reducing playtimes and replacing them with more classes, and many local authorities are cutting their play services or shutting down playgrounds. Have you seen the signs that read 'no ball games', are there any in your area?

At Play England, we think play is an essential part of every child's life and is important for your development and wellbeing. We believe that every child should have the freedom, time, space and opportunity to play freely, both indoors and outdoors, in nature and on the streets where you live. It's important for all those who manage spaces where children play to think about how they can ensure that disabled children and young people are included.

Come and celebrate Playday 2013 with us!

Our biggest annual campaign is Playday, which is the national day for play across the whole of the UK. Playday happens every year on the first Wednesday in August, so this year Playday will be on 7 August. On Playday, we celebrate all children and young people's right to play. Did you know that playing is part of your rights and is written into the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31)?

Last year the Playday campaign theme was Get out and play! and encouraged everyone to play outside wherever they were. Over half a million children and young people got out to play for Playday 2012 - make sure you don't miss out this year by getting involved in the celebrations happening in your area. Visit the Playday website for more information: www.playday.org.uk.



Do you Love Outdoor Play?

This is another big campaign of ours which calls on everyone to do something to make sure that more children can play out more often. This could be helping out at a local play project, or simply sharing information about the campaign on Facebook and Twitter. When we talk about outdoor play this could be in parks, playgrounds or even on your street.

You can support the Love Outdoor Play campaign by getting together with your family and friends and add your favourite places to play on our play map – you can do this by visiting our website www.playengland.org.uk/map. You can also let other young people and their families know what's great about these places. You can also use the interactive play map to find great places to play, upload your images and leave comments – get your friends to do this too!

Resources

Doing Sport Differently

This is a guide to accessing sports and leisure opportunities in your area. It is written by and for people with lived experience of disability or health conditions, to inspire involvement in sport and fitness and improve access to grassroots sport.

www.radar.org.uk/publications/doing-sport-differently

Don't Let Me Down: Ensuring a good transition for young people with palliative care needs

This report makes a number of recommendations for change to adult services to support the growing number of young people with palliative care needs being transferred to their services.

www.mariecurie.org.uk/dontletmedown

Moving on Well Resource Pack

This pack is for anyone interested in improving transition and raising the aspirations and achievements of young people with complex health needs or disabilities.

www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/movingonwell

My Rights, Your Responsibility

A set of information for parents on their child's rights to access activities, community facilities and other services.

www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/rightsresponsibility

Pathways to Getting a Life: transition planning for full lives

This report by the Getting a Life programme looks at the support needed by young people with a severe learning disability to achieve paid employment and full lives when they leave education.

www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/gettingalife

Respect Us

This report outlines the benefits to young people in transition of increasing their life and employability skills through volunteering.

www.csv.org.uk

Supported Internships factsheet

This factsheet explains what a Supported Internship is, the policy surrounding them and how to set one up.

www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/supportedinternships

Links

Disability Horizons

A free online disability related magazine with articles and resources to help disabled people achieve whatever they wish.

www.disabilityhorizons.com

Family Fund

The Family Fund helps low income families caring for a disabled child aged 17 and under with grants for everyday things like washing machines, cookers, clothing, and much more.

www.familyfund.org.uk

Gateway Award

The Gateway Award is an activity award which people with a learning disability of any age or ability can take part in.

www.mencap.org.uk/gatewayaward

Kidz Unlimited

The Kidz Unlimited website is an interactive, social resource for young people with mobility needs. The website has wheelchair skills videos, online learning, ways to socialise with others at local youth clubs and much more.

www.kidz-unlimited.org.uk

Free software to help protect your family online

The Anti Bullying Alliance and Argos are giving away free safety software that will help families stay safe online. The software uses trusted Norton technology so family members can enjoy the internet whilst being protected from cyber-bullying and other online dangers.

www.argos.co.uk/safekidsonline

Useful Organisations

Organisations that make up the Transition Information Network Steering Group

Action for Children
www.actionforchildren.org.uk

Ambitious about Autism
www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

Association for Real Change (ARC)
www.arcuk.org.uk

Contact a Family
www.cafamily.org.uk

Council for Disabled Children
www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

Dimensions
www.dimensions-uk.org

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities
www.learningdisabilities.org.uk

Mencap
www.mencap.org.uk

National Autistic Society
www.autism.org.uk

These are some of the member organisation that make up the Transition Information Network

Children in Scotland
www.childreninscotland.org.uk

The Children's Society
www.childrensociety.org.uk

Children in Wales
www.childreninwales.org.uk

Disability Alliance
www.disabilityalliance.org

Home Farm Trust
www.hft.org.uk

Kids
www.kids.org.uk

MacIntyre
www.macintyrecharity.org

National Deaf Children's Society
www.ndcs.org.uk

National Development Team for inclusion
www.ndti.org.uk

National Youth Agency
www.nya.org.uk

Norah Fry Research Centre
www.bristol.ac.uk/norahfry

Paradigm
www.paradigm-uk.org

Scope
www.scope.org.uk

Sense
www.sense.org.uk

Shaw Trust
www.shaw-trust.org.uk

Voiceability
www.voiceability.org

Young Minds
www.youngminds.org.uk

Statement of Association

The Transition Information Network is based at the Council for Disabled Children.
The Council for Disabled Children is hosted by the National Children's Bureau.
Registered Charity number 258825.

