



Issue 27 | March 2015

# My Future Choices

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

## ENTERING WORK

The opportunities created  
through supported  
employment

## HEALTH

Top tips to manage  
your own  
healthcare

## STARTING UNIVERSITY

The highs and lows



## Inside this issue:

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Guest blog  
Leisure and arts

Health  
Policy update  
Education

**Transition  
Information  
Network**



# Hello from TIN

**Welcome to another edition of My Future Choices. As you can see we have a new look for this issue based on your feedback from our last edition. We hope you like it, do tell us via Facebook and Twitter!**

In this issue we have some great stories from young people, which talk about their transition into further education, employment and much more!

We start with a policy update, and then to the first of our stories from Channelle, who tells us how she secured her place at university.

Gaining employment and work experience can be achieved through many different routes and our two stories on employment showcases just this.

There are top tips for managing your own health and care and, in our leisure and arts stories we hear about some of the great activities and groups that young people have been involved in from writing poetry to drama and youth cabinet groups.

We are always looking for new stories to share from young people so if you would like to write for us, get in touch!

Best wishes,

Rachel O'Brien

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 [www.twitter.com/tin\\_tweets](https://www.twitter.com/tin_tweets)

 [www.facebook.com/TransitionInformationNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/TransitionInformationNetwork)



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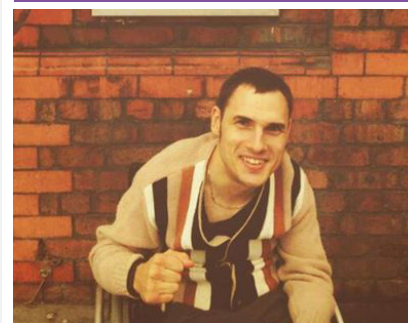
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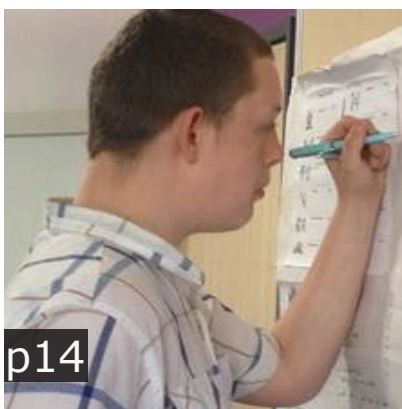






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### What is the Transition Information Network?

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](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

### TIN Membership

Membership to TIN is free. Register online at: [transitioninfonetwork.org.uk/membership](http://transitioninfonetwork.org.uk/membership)

# Policy Update

By Caroline Bennett

from Preparing for Adulthood

PfA is delivered by partnership between NDTi and CDC



In September 2014 the Children and Families Act 2014 became law. Here are some of the things young people need to know:

- The new law applies to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN) from birth to 25 years old;
- This means that if you are a disabled young person or a young person with SEN, the way you get help and support will change;
- Your local authority should have a Local Offer. A Local Offer should tell you about the services and support available in your local area and how to access them;
- The Local Offer should also include information about services and support to help you prepare for adulthood;

## This is how it might affect you:

- If you have a Statement of SEN, you will have a new assessment to see if you can transfer over to having an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. This is called a transfer review.
- If you are at college and have a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) you can request an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment to see if you need an EHC plan.
- An EHC plan can help you get the support you need to achieve the things you want to in your future;
- You will only get an EHC plan if your school or college can't already meet your support needs;
- If the local authority decide that you do not need an EHC plan you can appeal this decision and they will write to you to tell you how;
- If you don't have an EHC plan but you need help and support you can:
  - Look at the Local Offer to see what other services and support are available - Independent Support;
  - Contact your local Independent, Advice and Support Service (IASS);
  - Speak to your school or college for advice.

# Helpful resources

To help get a better idea of exactly how these changes will effect you have a look at some of the different organisations and different materials that are available to support and advise you.

## 1 Information Advice and Support Services

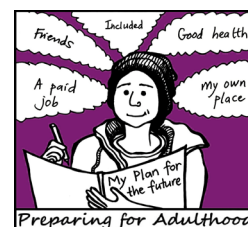
If you are disabled, or if you have special educational needs, your local IAS Service can talk to you about issues to do with education, health and social care.

[www.iassnetwork.org.uk/children](http://www.iassnetwork.org.uk/children)



## 2 Preparing for Adulthood

Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) have many stories and resources for young people. You can visit the website: [preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources](http://preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources) or the PfA blog: [preparingforadulthood.wordpress.com](http://preparingforadulthood.wordpress.com)



## 3 Council for Disabled Children

CDC, in partnership with the Department for Education, has developed a series of fact sheets, films and posters for young people to help you understand some of the key themes of the new reforms including EHC plans, Post-16 support, the Local Offer and making decisions.

[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/information-for-children-and-young-people-on-send-reforms](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/information-for-children-and-young-people-on-send-reforms)



## 4 Independent Supporters

Independent Supporters are available to provide you with advice and support during your transition from Statements to the new Education, Health and Care Plans. You can find out who your local Independent Supporter is at [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/independentsupport/](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/independentsupport/)



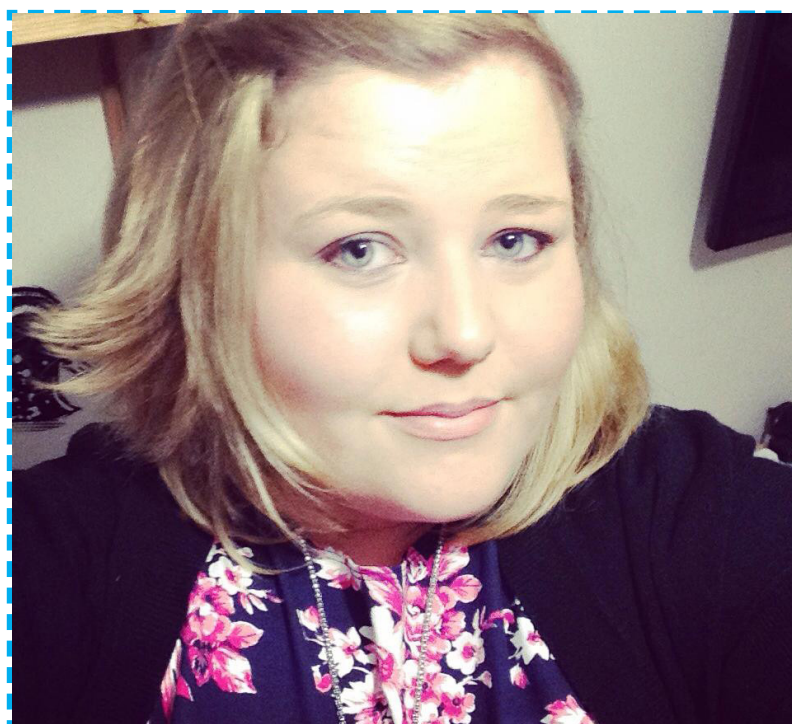


## Starting University

by Chanelle Weightman



**Chanelle, 20  
tells us about  
her transition  
to Liverpool  
University**



"Wow!" I thought to myself as I stepped into University to enrol for the first year. I felt nervous but excited at the same time. I was greeted by a member of the Inclusion Team who helps people with learning difficulties. He took me to my halls and showed me around the fire exits and told me rules about living in halls. I then saw another student who was staying in my halls; I hid away in my room, suddenly feeling nervous. I started to unpack and settle myself into the new area. It hit me.

I'm going to be approximately five hours away from my hometown to start anew.

In Sixth Form College, I struggled to find a career path suitable for me. From choice to choice, I had decided to work with media, specifically Stop Motion

**"The tutors seemed very nice and very understanding when I explained to them about my hearing impairment"**

Animation. With a few hesitations as to whether to go to university or not, I started looking at universities around my hometown. Having had a few holidays there with members of family, I decided that I loved Liverpool and found myself looking for universities in the Liverpool area. I had picked one and worked hard to meet the points needed to enrol. I was very nervous when I went to my interview at the university as I had my heart set on it.

The tutors seemed very nice and very understanding when I explained to them about my hearing impairment. As soon as I left after the interview, I knew this was it. My future!



As I had settled in and said my goodbyes to my parents, I took a deep breath and walked out of my room and into the kitchen. My mum watched me as I introduced myself with a smile. "I'm ready for this!" I thought to myself. This was the first time I felt independent.

Freshers week came. I panicked at the thought of loud music and the number of people that were going to be there, however I felt silly for panicking after making a number of friends. My course friends were absolutely lovely. I had to pay my rent for my accommodation, and pay for my food. I was ecstatic at how much I looked after myself.

I did however encounter a problem, as before I started university, I needed to participate in a needs assessment for support. On my arrival I found that this wasn't scheduled to begin until the end of my first semester. I was very worried about going to lectures without a notetaker and a proofreader. I studied extremely hard and was very exhausted at the end of each week. At the end of my first semester, I received high marks without any help. I then completed a needs assessment and

everything was in place. In the second semester. I knew the work would be harder however, I was introduced to my notetaker and proofreader. The weight has been lifted from my shoulders and I continued to get high marks.

The last semester was very difficult however. I was feeling very homesick even though I had a number of friends surrounding me. I had lost my motivation to continue Stop Motion Animation. But it didn't end there, I did leave the course as I didn't feel it was the right career path for me. I started second year in advertising. I had a choice whether to stay in halls or move into a student house, but instantly, I moved out of halls and lived with four of my good friends. One was blind with a guide dog which was a good bonus for me as I love dogs! Now the issue with changing courses was meeting new people. I was very excited but, once again, nervous. Very quickly, I found I had made new friends.

I have now finished the second year with high marks and a smile on my face. I am ready to take one more step forward to graduation.

## Supported Employment

By Dennis Gale



Hi my name is Dennis Gale and I live in Bradford, West Yorkshire. I am 24 years old and diagnosed with Fragile X Syndrome with ADHD.

At Leeds City College I am doing a supported employment qualification at level 2 along with functional numeracy and literacy.

My friends do ask me about my condition. What is Fragile X Syndrome?

Fragile X Syndrome is the most common inherited cause of learning disability and a medical condition diagnosed through DNA. Young people with Fragile X experience difficulties in speaking and being understood.

They also experience difficulties expressing their feelings, asking for help, knowing how to address different people or when to approach a particular topic.

Young people like me often find it difficult to make sense of and react appropriately to the information coming to them via their senses. In busy environments and noisy crowded places, I can become overwhelmed by the excessive stimulation. This may cause me to become anxious and panic.

In spite of all these difficulties I manage to overcome them with the support and guidance from my personal tutor Rachel Walton and the staff from Oxford Café.

When I started the placement at Oxford Café I began by observing



how the kitchen was run and then moved on to following instructions and demonstrations from my supervisors. I quickly picked up the routines of working in the kitchen, such as storing my belongings in my locker, removing jewellery, collecting an apron and washing my hands. Before long I was able to carry out a large number of tasks in the café; keeping condiments, greeting customers, taking orders and preparing food.





My supervisor Ricky, spent some time teaching me skills around cooking and food preparation. For example, peeling and chopping using safe methods. Ricky also taught me to make pastry and prepare a quiche.



As my confidence improved I was able to ask questions if I was unsure of something. For example, if a customer asked me for a latté from the new coffee machine, instead of asking someone else to deal with it, I would ask colleagues how to make the latté and would then complete the task myself. This showed my tutor, Ms Walton, just how far I had come on my journey; asking for help and guidance to complete a task as opposed to simply referring the task to a colleague.

***"All of his colleagues praised Dennis for his commitment and his willingness to do anything that was asked of him. Dennis always has a positive approach and attitude and he received praise and compliments from customers. He is very well liked and popular in the café with staff and customers alike."***

**Tutor**

Working under two different supervisors during my first year placement, they gave my tutor excellent feedback regarding my work in the café. They highlighted that I was a quick learner and was always willing to do anything that was asked of me.

The second year placement started on the 18th September, I arrived for my work experience at the café on time and worked really well. Every one said "it was great to see me being involved with the running of the café".



All staff were over the moon that I was able to continue with my work placement. After speaking to my new job coach I am keen to continue working in the café rather than going anywhere else. The manager and staff are very supportive of me and are pleased to know that I am willing to return. Unfortunately however, the Café had to close down due to lack of funding and it was very sad but at the same time I have to move on and take my next steps in employment.

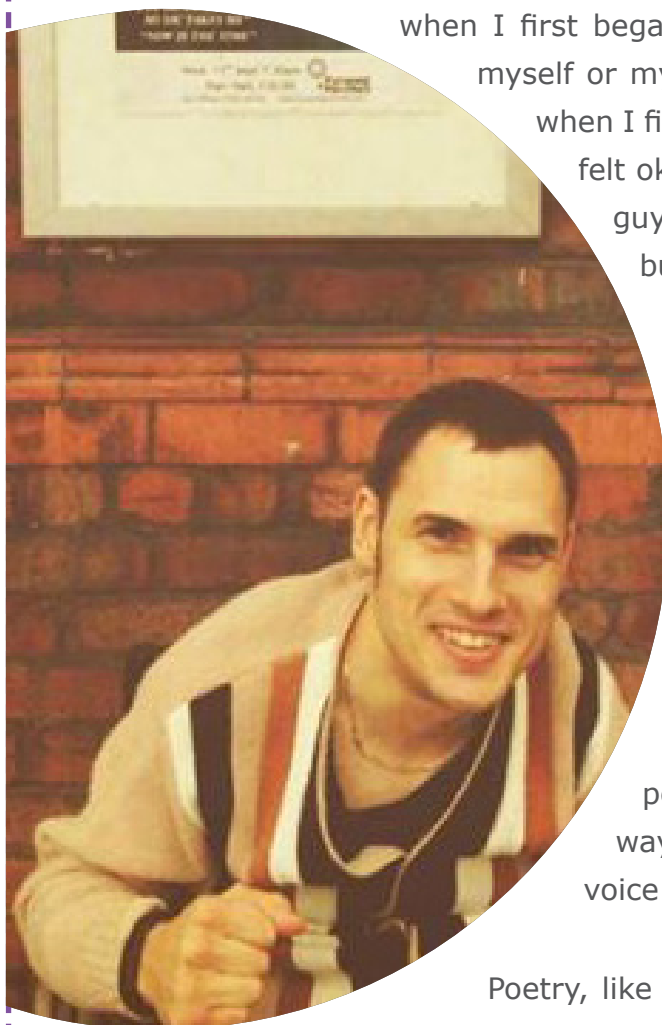
I am pleased to have been offered an internal college work placement in the college café and also an interview in one of the 5\* hotel kitchens in Leeds next month. I will also be gaining experience coaching football at school and in a football club through a college placement.

I am looking forward to working in a bigger and busier kitchen where I will have to use all my skills to keep up with the customer orders in preparing breakfast and meals.



## Writing Poetry

*By Shaun Fallows*



My name is Shaun Fallows and I am poet from Wigan. I was born with Cerebral Palsy and although I would say that it has influenced my work, especially when I first began, it definitely isn't the dominant part of myself or my writing. From a transition point of view, when I first started writing and reading my poems I felt ok with having a certain niche of being 'that guy in a wheelchair' writing about access on buses. The magic thing with creativity though is that over time, as confidence and views have developed, your disability becomes almost insignificant. I feel empowered. I have control over how I want people to see me by the way I present myself.

Until about the age of 16, I remember feeling a lot of frustration and isolation that I wasn't making my own friends or just doing what most able bodied people take for granted. I needed a way to show my personality and my own voice. I felt stuck, trapped and often lonely.

Poetry, like a lot of things in life happened for me by accident. My cousins have always been in bands and we were close, like brothers. I used to watch them practice and play gigs. With support from my cousins they introduced me to great music and I became slightly obsessed with The Jam, the Small Faces, and 60's mod culture. From this starting block I saw that not only was the sound great, but you could have confidence while looking cool and smart in the process too.





I struggled to play instruments due to my co-ordination. However I started to look to writing and singing with a view, like most kids, to emulate my heroes. It was always music, the catalyst poetry was never the intention at first.

Around this time I had moved away to study fitness instructing at a disabled residential college. My horizon was opening up! I was in lectures one day daydreaming when I should have been finishing a fitness task. So I decided to write something. My tutor caught me but instead of telling me off just said "These are good mate. Do you have anymore?" I think this reaction really gave me the belief to carry on. He believed in me so they couldn't be that bad. I was still very much obsessed with The Jam and the 60's mods, and college life that was exploding around me. My music tastes were expanding as I was meeting people from all different walks of life.

One day I heard The Jam do a cover of the Curtis Mayfield song 'Move on Up' and this lead me to my next obsession - soul music. The positive message in the music was mind blowing for me. I heard Curtis Mayfield once describe his songs as just poems and this was it. I thought, "why not, if he can I can", and so I stumbled on to poetry.

Today I write and read my poems at open mic nights in my local area and I like to travel a lot too, all because of the events that have led me to now. Poetry, more than just the words, has given me the impetus to try all things. It was the main reason I wrote poetry, to show that we can be more than the stereotype; we can thrive, live and grasp all opportunities whatever the field.



## Find out more



If you are interested in reading more of Sean's poetry you can visit his website at: **[shaunfallows.weebly.com/](http://shaunfallows.weebly.com/)**







## Managing my health

*By Lucy Watts*



I have a fantastic team of health professionals and experts that see to my condition. I have palliative care, which means multiple hospitals and my care takes a lots of coordinating. The focus of all of my care is quality of life and symptom control.

I live at home with my mum and older sister. My mum is my main carer and has learnt to do a lot of nursing procedures to keep me alive at home, I have carers that come in twice a week from the hospice to give mum a break for a few hours but

she can't do it all as I have intravenous medications that need doing, which the carers can do.

I have a private carer who does other hours. I have a wonderful hospice nurse without whom I would not be alive, and my team of health professionals are very supportive of my wishes and the other things I want to do. My carers help me with personal care needs, keeping me company and when I'm well enough, getting me into my wheelchair so we can take my dog for a walk.



It gives mum a few hours to do what she needs to do such as spend time with my sister or her parents to go shopping. We are hoping to build a team of nurses to support me soon to give my mum a complete break.

I am very lucky to have a huge circle of friends. I have some friends in person, some of whom I have known before since I was ill. Others are online friends that I have been fortunate enough to meet and I have a huge friendship group online. Most of us will never meet face-to-face,. They are a huge support network for me and I have formed some really strong bonds with them.

My friends and health are most important to me when moving into adulthood purely because employment and living independently are highly unlikely. It's hard to choose between the two as my health dominates my life and poses a huge number of limits on my life and the quality of it. But my friends and networks keep me going. I am so lucky to have the huge network of support that I do.

I write and speak for a number of charities

and am involved with many projects and campaigns and I am fortunate enough to be able to give back to society by helping to change policies and improve services – especially for young people. I also keep a blog which has had over 47,000 views and I am very fortunate that people listen to what I say. All the people in my life are very supportive of my wishes, of my writing and speaking and I am very grateful to them for helping me achieve all that I have.

## Find out more!



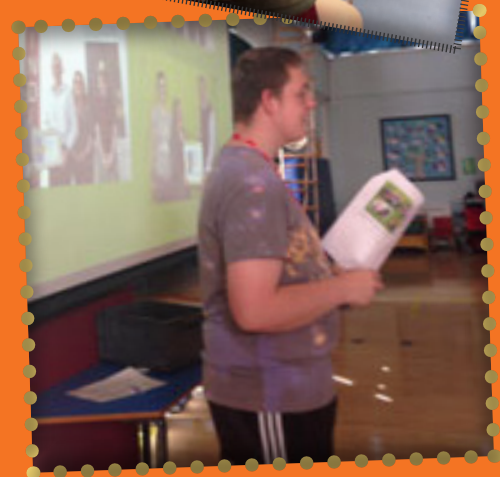
Check out Lucy's website:  
**[www.lucy-watts.co.uk](http://www.lucy-watts.co.uk)**

You can also find Lucy on  
twitter:  
**@LucyAlexandria**



# My Adventure

By Thomas Norris



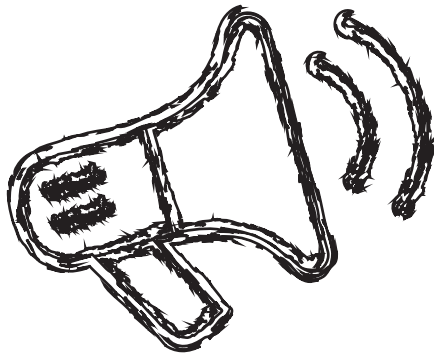
Hi, I'm Thomas Norris, and I am 16 years old. I have special educational needs and I'm going to tell you my story - it's quite an adventure. At primary school in Doncaster, I had extra support with my speech and language. I was also bullied. After that I went to a high school for young people with disabilities. In May 2011 I moved down to Runcorn where I live now. When I was 13 I joined the Ella Performance Group. Ella is a drama group for young people with or without disabilities. We perform regularly throughout the year at the Brindley Theatre in Runcorn, Cheshire.

Before rehearsals, me and a group of other young people did some consultation work with the Bright Sparks Project from Halton Speak Out. This project makes sure the views of young people with disabilities are heard. The project workers from Bright Sparks told me about the Halton youth cabinet elections. They helped me with my manifesto and I became elected!

I really enjoy being part of the cabinet even though I am the only one with a disability on it. In my manifesto I promised to give a voice to those with special educational needs and disabilities. I'm passionate about this and would like others to join me on my quest.







The cabinet is also great fun and a chance to meet new people. Every three months, some of us go to an event called Youthforia where all the youth cabinets in the North West meet together. I'm also part of a group called INVOLVE that try to make sure that young people are involved in decision making in their local area.

In April, I started a paid job with the Bright Sparks Project at Halton Speak Out, the same project I started to work with over a year ago! It's great to be paid! Halton Speak Out is a self-advocacy group for people with learning difficulties. I am the chairman of the Bright Sparks Cabinet. We gather the views and opinions of young people in Halton and then I take them to the Halton Childrens Trust Board.

I was the main speaker at an event to help young people understand the changes to the way support will be given to people from 0 to 25 with disabilities or special educational needs. Over the summer I completed a leadership course with the Rotary Club it will help me encourage others to have a voice.



I have made my own Facebook page called 'Disabled Youth Being Heard'. This is the start of my campaign. I am working to build this up with support of friends from the Youth Cabinet, Catch 22 and Halton Speak Out. I am also planning to apply for a grant to kick start things so I can move towards my goal of giving a voice to young people with disabilities and to stop discrimination. This is an exciting time!

For more information about projects that Thomas is involved in you can visit:  
Halton Speak Out: **[www.haltonspeakout.co.uk/](http://www.haltonspeakout.co.uk/)**

Or check out facebook for The Ella Performance Group:  
**[www.facebook.com/pages/The-Ella-Performance-Group/219384191422695](https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Ella-Performance-Group/219384191422695)**





## Top Tips



## Top Tips

By Hannah- Rebecca Joy Guscoth

I have lost count of the number of hospitals I have been to in the last few years. I have a rare condition called Hereditary Multiple Exostoses, which is a medical condition affecting bone development.

Being at university in Reading but having my specialist hospital in Birmingham meant that many of the doctors I needed to see to manage my care had almost no clue how to treat me. At first, I put my trust in medical professionals. However after I was referred to see a lung specialist to investigate a bony lump on my chest and a consultant clapped his hands in excitement because I was the first person he'd ever met with my condition... well, I decided to take greater ownership in my care.



### Know Your Doctors

*Find out who is treating you and what for – if there is a lead consultant on your case, get his details too!*

I made a note of the consultant's name at the Royal Orthopaedic in Birmingham. I chased the contact details for his personal secretary. It took a while to get but once I had it, I was able to refer any new doctors to my usual team. It sounds a bit cumbersome, but any hospital appointments in the summer that needed treatment in the Autumn - the Royal Berkshire hospital were able to help me having all of the information necessary. It helps communication!





I once needed a nerve conductive test that was recommended by Birmingham but carried out in Reading – thanks to this system I'd put in place, everyone managed to get it done.

### Get a Copy of Everything!

*Doctor writing a letter? Have a copy sent to your address. Test results? Request a copy?*

Despite everything you do – mistakes happen. My Reading hospital completed my nerve conductive test but somewhere along the line an error happened and when I'd gone for my follow-up appointment in Birmingham, they didn't have a copy of the nerve report! Almost a wasted journey, but fortunately I had requested one and brought it along. We were able to continue. Urgent medication and treatment was recommended to me on the basis of having that report.

### Use a Diary!

*Keep track of your appointments and minimise disruption!*

When I had physio and hydrotherapy, I was working, which meant my time was limited. I wanted minimum disruption to my studies, and I enjoyed having a job. I didn't want to cause difficulty by being regularly away from the office. Just asking for either the first or last appointment

in the day meant that I had minimal disruption, or I asked for appointments on days where I wasn't studying. When possible, every one of my hospitals helped. It seems like a small thing, but most people don't realise you can ask! Having everything written down helped me keep track and I could write notes of what I'd need for the next appointment.



### Find out more



We have many great resources in the health section of our website: <http://www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk/resources/health.aspx>





# My transition to adulthood

featuring  
Mark Phillipson



Hi I am Mark! I used to live with my mum



I am good at cooking and art

  
**Transition 2**  
Start with the end in sight

I go to Transition 2



I would like to work in a kitchen one day

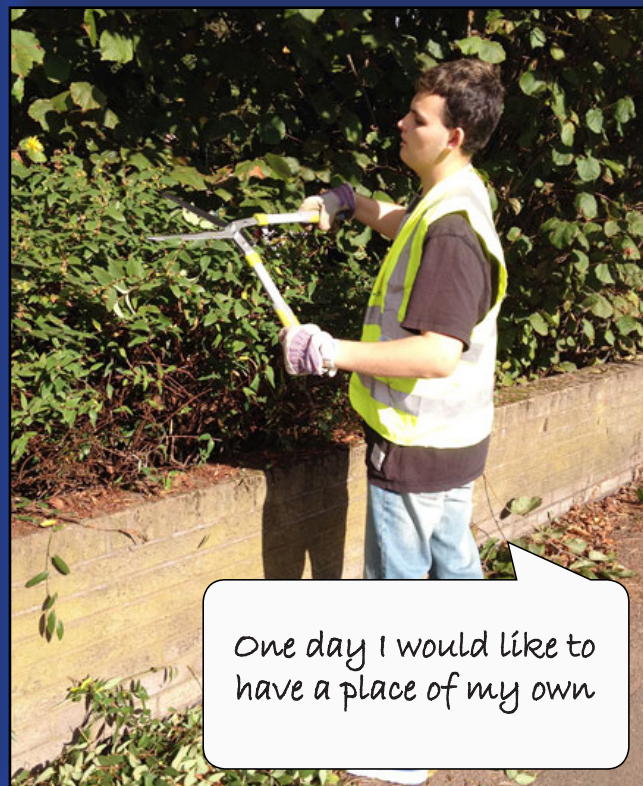




Derby



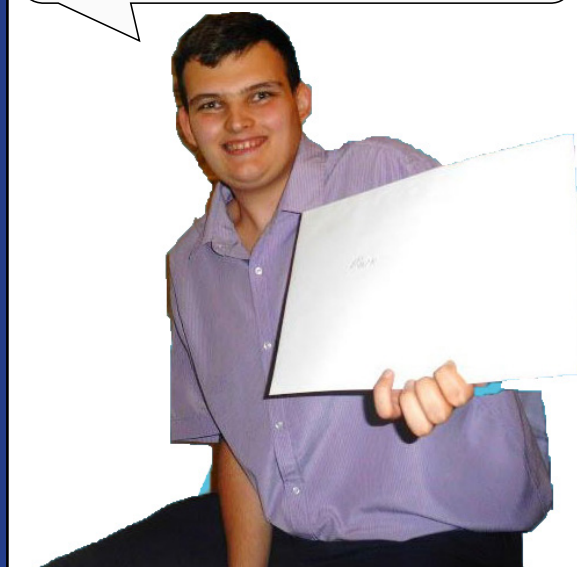
I now live with Kirby and Paul they are my shared lives carers



One day I would like to have a place of my own



I travel independently on the bus



I had a Harry Potter themed birthday party







# 'It's my Move!'

By Julie McNamara and Face Front Inclusive Theatre



**Julie McNamara tells us about Face Front's new production about transition for young people with Learning Difficulties and or Disabilities (LDD).**



Face Front wants to create a more inclusive world through multi-sensory theatre and uses the transformational power of theatre in order to improve emotional well-being.

We have been working in special and mainstream schools, colleges and day services for over ten years. We provide multi-accessible theatre programmes working closely with our partners in health and education. Our programmes enable young people to make informed, healthy and positive life choices.

We are developnig a new piece of theatre on the theme of change, choice, control and new beginnings. The aim of the new production is to reduce anxiety around transition for young people with LDD and parent carers, ensuring that they have real control over their move from school to the adult world.

*The element of surprise was the best for me. So many unexpected stories and passions expressed'*

**Julie McNamara writer of 'It's my move'**

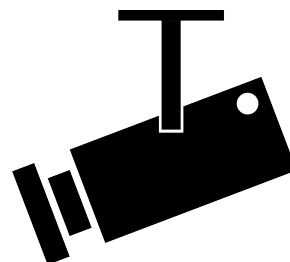




## London



Face Front, in collaboration with King's College London, has been working on this new research and development project collecting over 50 stories about transition from young people (14-25) with learning disabilities, their parents, teachers and support workers. The stories have been filled with joy and tears, it is a very difficult and emotional time for many young people and their parents.



We have also spent some time experimenting with our talented creative team of emerging artists with LDD. Their mid-career arts mentors from national music company 'Heart n Soul', visual arts group 'ActionSpace', Dance group 'Blink' and Writer Julie McNamara from 'Vital Exposure'. We have worked with layering dance, sign language, music, poetry/rap, drama and site specific art in order to be able to communicate on many different levels. Our artists have really risen to the challenge.

The new interactive play is based on the journeys of 4 characters with LDD who have different transition experiences. The stories explore how to make and express choices around transition in order for young people with LDD to have some control over their own lives. The characters' parent carers who are either supportive, over-protective, dominating or too busy. The young people learn how to communicate what they want to parent carers and also to teacher's social workers and other transition professionals.

*"I have learnt how important it is for parents to listen and not assume"* Parent

The audience (aimed at young people with LDD from 14 – 25 years and their parent carers) help all the characters through their journey's offering advice and changing places with them to role-play how they could have expressed themselves in order to get what they want.

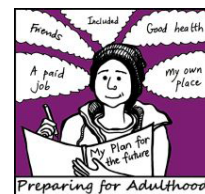
We have presented our 'work-in-progress' to young people with LDD, their parent carers, teachers, social workers, support workers and arts practitioners at two special schools, a Further Education (FE) college and a day service. We collected their views and the response has been overwhelmingly positive with some very useful comments for developing the programme.

We will be developing the piece over the coming months with the aim of taking the production to special schools, FE colleges and day services in Autumn 2015. If you would be interested in Face Front visiting your young people and parents or you would like to find out more about the project please contact: **annie@facefront.org** or **phone: 020 8350 3461/ 07765 714384.**





# Preparing for Adulthood: Corey's Work Experience at DfE



My name is Corey Scott. I am 22 years old and I live in North West England. I live in supported housing because I have Cerebral Palsy, but I do not let it define me and I make the most of life. I am a student at Blackburn College University as well as having connections with several charities. I enjoy pursuing a variety of pastimes.

I was keen to write this blog to share the impact that my recent work experience, at the Department for Education, had on me and to encourage other young people to have the confidence to get involved in similar opportunities.

Standard work experience usually includes a strong sense of passion and enthusiasm for a chosen discipline and an element of cooperating effectively as part of a team. This can create a foundation of new knowledge and give opportunities to develop new skills and make new friends. There are huge benefits for both disabled young people and employers.

I have found my recent week long placement at DfE in Manchester has been very different from those I have done in the past. It was really memorable, especially because the staff were so pleased to have me and gave me really valuable assistance allowing me to express myself and complete some tasks independently. I gave advice to a customer over the phone about the new Education, Health and Care plans as part of the SEND reforms. This spoke volumes to me as the caller also had a disability which gave us a certain rapport. Often the perception of disabled people is that their capabilities and potential are underestimated by wider society. I was very encouraged by the degree of trust and professionalism that the staff gave to me.

I was able to shadow several areas of interest:

- **Social care reform** where I had a very detailed discussion about my experience that there is no continuity or communication within the system and the way that social workers are heavily scrutinised and receive bad press.
- **School complaint procedures** showed me how precious and emotive the right education can be, causing so much division and upset among families. This illustrated that advocacy is paramount in some situations and every case should be judged on its own merits; be it from the pupil, parent or guardian.



- I was given the opportunity to look into the variety and diversity within **fostering and adoption** within the British culture and internationally; being shown a list of different countries with different rules and how the correspondence from each culture is dealt with based on the procedures and their eligibility to adopt.
- **E-petitions** are a general government document highlighting issues that someone believes is in the public interest and needs changing or improving by the people who can. It has to be a specific subject and receive a certain amount of signatures to trigger a debate in parliament. The petition can vary between wanting to improve the sport curriculum to wanting to ban a celebrity! It was striking how many correspondents addressed their letter to the Queen or Prime Minister directly.
- I was privileged to look into the **red box of special correspondence** from Downing Street, which was delivered daily asking different sections of the department for advice or expertise on a whole array of subjects.

Before I started the placement I didn't really know what to expect, I was nervous and excited. Fortunately, I had a great main contact at the DfE who made a real effort to get to know me. In just one week I feel more confident in my own abilities and I am able to pick up new skills in a short space of time. I have developed my skills in teamwork and building relationships.

This week will resonate with me for a long time. It was such a varied insight into all the different aspects of work that the department handles, which I hope to re-visit one day.

It's really important that employers create opportunities for disabled young people to demonstrate the valuable contribution they can make in the workplace. It is vital to build young people's self-esteem and to inform employers of what they can achieve.





# Useful Organisations

## **Action for Sick Children**

[www.actionforsickchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforsickchildren.org.uk)

## **Afasic**

[www.afasicengland.org.uk](http://www.afasicengland.org.uk)

## **Ambitious about Autism**

[www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)

## **Anti-Bullying Alliance**

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

## **British Association for Supported Employment**

[www.base-uk.org](http://www.base-uk.org)

## **British Institute of Learning Disabilities**

[www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk)

## **Cerebra**

[www.cerebra.org.uk](http://www.cerebra.org.uk)

## **Challenging Behaviour Foundation**

[www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk)

## **The Communication Trust**

[www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)

## **Contact a Family**

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

## **Council for Disabled Children**

[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/)

## **Dimensions**

[www.dimensions-uk.org](http://www.dimensions-uk.org)

## **Disability Rights UK**

[www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

## **Down's Syndrome Association**

[www.downs-syndrome.org.uk](http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk)

## **Dyslexia-SpLD Trust**

[www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk](http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk)

## **Family Fund**

[www.familyfund.org.uk](http://www.familyfund.org.uk)

## **Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities**

[www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk)

## **Home Farm Trust**

[www.hft.org.uk](http://www.hft.org.uk)

## **Housing and Support Alliance**

[www.housingandsupport.org.uk](http://www.housingandsupport.org.uk)

## **I CAN**

[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

## **IPSEA**

[www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)

## **Macintyre**

[www.macintyrecharity.org](http://www.macintyrecharity.org)

## **Mencap**

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

## **nasen**

[www.nasen.org.uk](http://www.nasen.org.uk)

## **National Autistic Society**

[www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

## **National Deaf Children's Society**

[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

## **National Development Team for inclusion**

[www.ndti.org.uk](http://www.ndti.org.uk)

## **National Network of Parent Carer Forums**

[www.nnpfcf.org.uk](http://www.nnpfcf.org.uk)

## **Information, Advice and Support Network**

<http://www.iassnetwork.org.uk/>

## **Paradigm**

[www.paradigm-uk.org](http://www.paradigm-uk.org)

## **RNIB**

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

## **Scope**

[www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

## **Sense**

[www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

## **Shaw Trust**

[www.shaw-trust.org.uk](http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk)

## **Together for Short Lives**

[www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk](http://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk)

## **Whizz-Kidz**

[www.whizz-kidz.org.uk](http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk)

## **Young Minds**

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://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.

