



Consolidated Research Report

GOET **Games Offering Education &** **Training**

UK/08/LLP-LdV/TOI/163-181

Chapter One: Learning Disability in the UK, Hungary and Lithuania.

Definitions of 'Learning Disability'

United Kingdom:

This study adopts the definition of learning disability used in Valuing People (Department of Health 2001): The definition describes learning disabilities as:-

'The presence of impaired intelligence (a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn new skills) combined with impaired social functioning (a reduced ability to cope independently). These will have begun before adulthood, and will have had a lasting effect on development.'

Such a definition encompasses people with a broad range of disabilities. Learning disability as defined here does not include those who have a specific 'learning difficulty' in an educational sense such as dyslexia.

Hungary:

In **Hungary** these days there are many definitions in use. The latest researches and action plans use the definition contained in the WHO 2001 International Classifications of Functioning, Disability and Health. When speaking about a disabled person we understand those living with impairment, disability or social handicap as well as those who have partially or completely lost their ability to work.

Lithuania:

Disability is the condition of an individual, as established by competent institutions, which due to a congenital or acquired physical or mental defect, totally or partially incapacitates the individual from taking care of his private or social life, from enjoying his rights and from fulfilling his duties.

From 1 July 2005, according to The Law on Social Integration of the Disabled, the disabled people over 18 until they reach the age for the old-age pension are awarded **the capacity for work level instead of the disability group**. The capacity for work level is set at the interval of 5 percentage points, i.e. if the person is recognised as having 0–25% of the capacity for work, he is deemed to be incapable for work; in cases of 30–55% of the capacity as partially capable and in cases of 60–100% of the capacity as capable for work.

Statistics for the Project Target Groups:

United Kingdom:

The target group for the United Kingdom is people with learning disabilities and those with additional impairments.

The numbers of people recorded as having a learning disability varies widely between sources.

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities provides the following information:

- About 985,000 people in England have a learning disability (about 2% of the population). 796,000 of them are aged 20 or over - *Estimating Future Need/Demand for Supports for Adults with Learning Disabilities in England, Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University (2004)*
- There are 55,000-75,000 children with a moderate or severe learning disability in England - Learning disabilities: facts and figures, *Department of Health (accessed online 2007)*
- There are an estimated 210,000 people with severe and profound learning disabilities in England: around 65,000 children and young people, 120,000 adults of working age and 25,000 older people - *Valuing People, Department of Health (2001)*
- Only 20% of adults with learning disabilities are known to learning disability services - note to Adults with learning difficulties in England 2003/4, *National Statistics & NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre (2004)*

They believe that this number will increase in the future, stating the following:

- The number of adults with learning disabilities is predicted to increase by 11 per cent between 2001 and 2021. This would raise the number of people in England aged 15 and above with learning disabilities to over one million in 2021. - *Estimating Future Need/Demand for Supports for Adults with Learning Disabilities in England, Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University (2004)*
- The number of adults with learning disabilities aged over 60 is predicted to increase by 36 per cent between 2001 and 2021 - *Estimating Future Need/Demand for Supports for Adults with Learning Disabilities in England, Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University (2004)*

The increase in the number of people with a learning disability may be explained by:

- increased life expectancy, especially among people with Down's syndrome
- growing numbers of children and young people with complex and multiple disabilities who now survive into adulthood

- a sharp rise in the reported numbers of school age children with autistic spectrum disorders, some of whom will have learning disabilities
- greater prevalence among some minority ethnic populations of South Asian origin

Valuing People, Department of Health (2001)

The following table from the *National Statistics Online* website shows the official prevalence of Learning Disability in the context of other forms of disability:

Type of long-term health problem	All		Men		Women	
	(000s)	Per cent	(000s)	Per cent	(000s)	Per cent
Musculo-skeletal problems	2,472	34.8	1,291	34.7	1,182	35.0
Back or neck	1,277	18.0	639	17.2	638	18.9
Legs or feet	791	11.2	455	12.2	336	10.0
Arms, hands	404	5.7	196	5.3	208	6.2
Difficulty in seeing	136	1.9	84	2.3	53	1.6
Difficulty in hearing	119	1.7	65	1.7	54	1.6
Speech impediment	*	*	*	*	*	*
Skin conditions, allergies	131	1.9	73	2.0	59	1.7
Chest, breathing problems	924	13.0	459	12.3	465	13.8
Heart, blood, pressure, circulation	798	11.2	526	14.1	272	8.1
Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion	340	4.8	165	4.4	174	5.2
Diabetes	333	4.7	205	5.5	127	3.8
Epilepsy	159	2.2	79	2.1	80	2.4
Mental illness	636	9.0	302	8.1	334	9.9
Depression, bad nerves	432	6.1	193	5.2	240	7.1
Mental illness, phobia, panics	204	2.9	110	2.9	94	2.8
Learning difficulties	149	2.1	100	2.7	49	1.4
Progressive illness not elsewhere classified	310	4.4	143	3.8	167	5.0
Other problems, disabilities	582	8.2	224	6.0	357	10.6
All disabled people^a	7,121	100.0	3,731	100.0	3,390	100.0

Source: Labour Force Survey

^a Includes those who did not state the nature of their health problem or disability. However, percentages exclude these people. Percentages are the proportions of disabled people with each type of disability.
* Sample size too small for a reliable estimate.

However other sources show a very different picture. The Disability Rights Commission in their 'Disability Debate' claimed that there are 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK and that 200 babies are born with a learning disability every year in the UK.

The Centre for Disability Research (CeDR), on behalf of the Learning Disability Coalition produced in May 2008 a report that claimed that it is not possible to estimate the number of number of adults with learning disabilities in England either from information held by centrally government departments or from large-scale population based surveys.

For children, however, they state that information collected by the Department of Children Families & Schools (DCFS) suggests that (as of January 2006), 210,510 (2.6%) pupils were identified as having a primary special educational need (SEN) associated with learning disabilities. They believe, however, that this is a significant under-estimate of the actual prevalence due to the failure to report data collected on children at the School Action stage in the assessment of SEN and failure to report data collected on secondary SEN.

Given this lack of information, CeDR were commissioned by the Department of Health in 2004 to derive robust estimates of current and future numbers of people with learning disabilities in England. They estimated that 985,000 people in England have a learning disability (2% of the general population). This figure includes 828,000 adults (aged 18 or more). Of these adults, we estimated that 177,000 were known users of learning disability services in England (equivalent to 0.47% of the adult population).

In their report 'Valuing People', the Department of Health estimated that 65,000 children and 145,000 English adults have severe or profound learning disabilities, and 1.2 million have mild or moderate learning disabilities. The Department of Health estimate for children (for which no age range is given) with severe or profound learning disabilities is 67% higher than DCFS data on the SEN of pupils.

Given that the large majority of service users have severe or profound learning disabilities, the Department of Health estimate for adults with severe or profound learning disabilities (145,000) is consistent with CeDR's estimate of 177,000 known users of learning disability services (most, but not all, of whom will have severe or profound learning disabilities). The Department of Health estimate for adults with mild/moderate learning disabilities is significantly higher than CeDR's estimate. This discrepancy is most probably due to the use by the Department of Health of the same prevalence estimate across all age groups. In CeDR's estimates they progressively adjusted prevalence estimates to take into account the increased mortality of people with learning disabilities, particularly in older age groups.

The Foundation for People with learning disabilities notes that: Only 20% of adults with learning disabilities are known to learning disability services (*note to Adults with learning difficulties in England 2003/4, National Statistics & NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre (2004)*).

The number of adults with learning disabilities is predicted to increase by 11 per cent between 2001 and 2021. This would raise the number of people in England aged 15 and above with learning disabilities to over one million in 2021. (- *Estimating Future Need/Demand for Supports for Adults with Learning Disabilities in England, Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University (2004)*)

The number of adults with learning disabilities aged over 60 is predicted to increase by 36 per cent between 2001 and 2021 (*Estimating Future Need/Demand for Supports for Adults with Learning Disabilities in England, Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University (2004)*)

The Foundation claims that the increase in the number of people with a learning disability may be explained by:

- increased life expectancy, especially among people with Down's syndrome

- growing numbers of children and young people with complex and multiple disabilities who now survive into adulthood
- a sharp rise in the reported numbers of school age children with autistic spectrum disorders, some of whom will have learning disabilities
- greater prevalence among some minority ethnic populations of South Asian origin

(Valuing People, Department of Health (2001))

Hungary

The target groups for the project in Hungary are: people with dyslexia and mild learning disabilities.

Demographic facts about disabled people.

According to the 2001. National Census, in Hungary, 577.000 people live with impairment or disability (5,7% of population) With the growth of age, their ratio also grows, almost half of them are older than 60 years. Out of the whole group, 10% are mentally disabled. 22,7% of them live alone, 55% with one other person and 10,5% with more than one person. 8% live in a social institute. About 40% live in bigger villages, 14,2% in the capital. (National Disability Plan)

53,6% of them are men, 46,4% are women. Most of them have only one type of problem, but 12% have two, while 2% have three or more types of disabilities. 5% of them are between 0-14 years of age, 14,6% are between 15-39, 35,6 between 40-59 and 44,8 is above 60.

In 2001 43,6% of them had motor disorders, 14,4% had eye problems, 9,9% were mentally disabled, 7,7% had problems with hearing, 1,5% was mute, 1,3% has speech problems, 21,6 % other.

Schooling

Most of these people were trained in special primary schools, almost only physically handicapped people were able to finish high schools.

The mentally handicapped (8369 people) attend 126 schools. 32% of handicapped students don't finish primary school, 25% finish secondary school and only 5% finish with a university degree.

World of work

Only 9% of them had a workplace in 2001. Since then, 1/3 of the concerned were successfully put into work.

For further information about the National Plan dealing with Handicapped Citizens, see http://egyenloesely.freeblog.hu/archives/2008/12/08/Orszagos_Fogyatekosugyi_Tanacs_es_a_Program/from the National Disability Program (in Hungarian)

Lithuania

The target group for the project in Hungary is people with hearing impairments.

Statutory policies, strategies and action plans in each partner country/region relating to the employment/skills development of the target.

United Kingdom.

The UK Government, recognising how few people with learning disabilities are meeting their aspirations to get a job, how many of them are dependent on state benefits and how poorly the UK are performing in supporting disabled people into work compared with other European countries, have developed a number of strategies to remedy this situation over the past few years. Below is a summary of the major strategies and action plans written to address the situation.

1. Valuing People – a new strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century

The Government declared its commitment to raising the number of people with learning disabilities in employment in the March 2001 document “Valuing People”. In this published strategy, the Government sets out its intentions to improve the lives, healthcare, education and employment prospects for people with learning disabilities. The then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, says in his introduction to this document,

“This White Paper sets out this Government’s commitment to improving the life chances of people with learning disabilities. It shows how we will meet this commitment by working closely with local councils, the health service, voluntary organisations and most importantly with people with learning disabilities and their families to provide new opportunities for those with learning disabilities to lead full and active lives.”

In “Valuing People – a new strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century”, it is stated that people with learning disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable and socially excluded in our society. Very few have jobs, live in their own homes or have choice over who cares for them. This needs to change: people with learning disabilities must no longer be marginalised or excluded. Valuing People sets out how the Government will provide new opportunities for children and adults with learning disabilities and their families to live full and independent lives as part of their local communities. This highly detailed 149 page document looks at the progress made in the 30 years since the last white paper concerning people with learning disabilities with regard to people with learning disabilities; what educational, health care and leisure provision is available now; what opportunities there are for further training and employment

Problems and Challenges

The statistics quoted in *Valuing People* are that there are about 210,000 people with severe learning disabilities in England, and about 1.2 million with a mild or moderate disability.

Health and social services expenditure on services for adults with learning disabilities stands at around £3 billion. In the 30 years since the last White Paper “Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped”, progress has been made in closing large institutions and developing services in the community, but more needs to be done.

There are major problems, including:

- Poorly coordinated services for families with disabled children especially for those with severely disabled children;
- Poor planning for young disabled people at the point of transition into adulthood;
- Insufficient support for carers, particularly for those caring for people with complex needs
- People with learning disabilities often have little choice or control over many aspects of their lives;
- Substantial health care needs of people with learning disabilities are often unmet;
- Housing choice is limited;
- Day services are often not tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual;
- Limited opportunities for employment;
- The needs of people from minority ethnic communities are often overlooked;
- Inconsistency in expenditure and service delivery; and
- Few examples of real partnership between health and social care or involving people with learning disabilities and carers.

TRANSITION INTO ADULT LIFE

Government Objective: As young people with learning disabilities move into adulthood, to ensure continuity of care and support for the young person and their family; and to provide equality of opportunity in order to enable as many disabled young people as possible to participate in education, training or employment.

Problems and Challenges

Disabled young people and their families often find the transition to adulthood both stressful and difficult. For many, there has been a lack of co-ordination between the relevant agencies and little involvement from the young person. Some young people are not transferred from children’s to adult services with adequate health care plans, which results in their exclusion from adult services. This is likely to affect young people with severe learning disabilities and complex health needs in particular. Starting adult life should be a time of opportunity for young people. The Government wants to see more young people taking part in education and training, which will help them lead productive adult lives and find employment.

Making the *Connexions* Service work for Young People with Learning Disabilities

From April 2001, the *Connexions* Service was rolled out to provide all 13–19-year-olds with access to advice, guidance and support, through the creation of a network of personal advisers.

These advisers identify young people with learning disabilities; and are now invited to attend annual reviews of all year 9 pupils with statements of SEN (Special educational need); and work with the school and other relevant agencies to draw up transition plans. Each *Connexions* Partnership must have sufficient Personal Advisers with the appropriate skills, experience and training to work with disabled young people. For young people leaving care the Children (Leaving Care) Act places a duty on councils to provide qualifying young people aged 16 and over in and leaving care with a personal adviser.

Connexions Partnerships will have responsibility for arranging with the local Learning and Skills Council and the Employment Service a review for the young person with learning disabilities in their 19th year, to agree arrangements for appropriate transition from the support provided by the *Connexions* Service, whilst ensuring continuity. Adult social services may need to be involved in some cases. Where young people are not ready to use the adult guidance services, *Connexions* Partnerships will continue to support them, with the aim of helping them make use of the adult systems and to reduce dependency on the *Connexions* Service. These arrangements can extend up to their 25th birthday.

MOVING INTO EMPLOYMENT

Government Objective: To enable more people with learning disabilities to participate in all forms of employment, wherever possible in paid work, and to make a valued contribution to the world of work.

The Government believes that employment is an important route to social inclusion and that all those who wish to work should have the opportunities and support to do so. Our Welfare to Work agenda is designed to increase employment opportunities for those who can work while retaining support for those who are unable to work. We will ensure that people with learning disabilities benefit from this major programme of reform.

KEY ACTIONS – MOVING INTO EMPLOYMENT

- New Government target for increasing numbers of people with learning disabilities in work.
- New Workstep Programme will benefit people with learning disabilities.
- Joint Department of Health/Department for Education and Employment scoping study into links between supported employment and day services.
- Job Brokers under the New Deal for Disabled People will have skills in working with people with learning disabilities.
- Disabled people starting work will not lose Disability Living Allowance unfairly.
- Learning Disability Partnership Boards to develop local employment strategies.
- Better employment opportunities in public services for people with learning disabilities.

New Targets and Incentives

The Government's overall aim is to increase the number of people with learning disabilities in employment and to work towards their achieving parity with other disabled people in the workforce. Our target for this group is to increase the employment rate of people with learning disabilities and reduce the difference between their employment rates and the overall employment rate of disabled people. The challenge now is to ensure that our programmes and policies reach as many people with learning disabilities as possible and are delivered in ways which are responsive to their needs. The Government will work with the Employers Forum on Disability and the local Employer Networks to ensure that employers are engaged in this process.

The Government has taken a number of important steps to improve the incentives for moving into employment, including introduction of the minimum wage and the Disabled Person's Tax Credit which will help to achieve our target.

Workstep: Reforming the Supported Employment Programme

Supported employment is provided by a variety of agencies including the voluntary sector, local authorities (usually via social services departments), and health authorities and through the Government's Supported Employment Programme. Many using supported employment are people with learning disabilities and in one form or another supported employment has traditionally been the main route to employment for people with learning disabilities.

A recent report by the Policy Consortium for Supported Employment takes stock of current provision and concludes that there is scope for considerable development in this sector. The report identifies barriers to the expansion of supported employment and proposes possible ways of tackling them.

The Government's Supported Employment Programme was operated by the Employment Service. Over 22,000 disabled people were employed at a cost of over £155 million including over 10,000 people employed by Remploy and over 12,000 people employed through Supported Employment Programmes (SEP) run by local authorities and voluntary bodies. Some 40% of those on SEP have learning disabilities – the highest single category of disability.

The Government modernised the programme. In April 2001 and renamed it Workstep. It now has a greater focus on developing disabled people and helping them move into mainstream employment where they wish to do so and with longer term support available where needed. The aim for progression will be 10% a year for existing supported employees and 30% over two years for new supported employees.

Links between Supported Employment and Day Services

The Government recognized in *Valuing People* that they needed to look more closely at the interface between the full range of pre-vocational, employment and supported employment provision, including Department for Education and Employment's Workstep, and day services provided by local councils and the health service. The Department for Education and Employment and the Department of Health will establish a joint working group to explore this issue further, in partnership with local authorities and the voluntary sector. The two Departments also jointly funded a scoping study to look at these issues in more depth. The outcome from this work informed the Learning Disability Partnership Boards in drawing up their plans to modernise day services.

New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP)

The New Deal for Disabled People- the joint initiative between the Department of Social Security and the Department for Education and Employment – tested a range of approaches to find out how best to help disabled people who want to work. By the end of December 2000 the NDDP pilots had helped over 6,000 disabled people into work. NDDP was extended nationally from July 2001, building on experience in the pilot phase. The development of a network of job brokers to offer work focused help to disabled people being a central feature.

The Department for Education and Employment seeks to ensure that the new job brokers have the skills needed to work with people with learning disabilities. Organisations bidding to be job brokers need to have the right capacity and competences. All organisations and individuals who work with disabled people must provide the support and advice they need to make appropriate decisions and be sensitive to the needs of people with learning disabilities.

Local Employment Strategies

Local councils were asked to have Joint Investment Plans for Welfare to Work for Disabled People in place by April 2001. This is an important tool for improving the range of local employment opportunities. In many areas, preparatory work for the Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plans has done a good deal to strengthen relationships between local councils and the Employment Service in order to increase employment opportunities for disabled people.

Local Employment Services have become members of the Learning Disability Partnership Boards, and play an active part in developing local employment strategies. These will include local targets for the employment of people with learning disabilities. Partnership Boards will also be expected to identify employment champions.

Better Employment Opportunities in the Public Sector

Central Government, local government and the NHS together form one of the largest employment groups in the world. However, only a small minority of organizations within the public sector employs people with learning disabilities, and currently very few are employed in real jobs in either central or local government or the NHS.

The Government is committed to a dramatic improvement in diversity with the Civil Service, including the employment of disabled people. They are seeking to improve their employment of people with learning disabilities as part of this process.

The Department of Health is committed to widening opportunities for employing disabled people, including those with learning disabilities, in the NHS. Local councils will be setting targets for the employment of socially excluded people, including people with learning disabilities, as part of Local Public Service Agreements. This situation has been reviewed in the following document, *Valuing People Now*.

Valuing People Now

The white paper '*Valuing People*' (2001) set out the Government's vision for people with a learning disability, across a range of services based on four key principles of rights, independence, choice, and inclusion. The white paper's vision covered a range of issues including health, housing and employment. '*Valuing People Now*' seeks people's views on the priorities for the learning disability agenda from 2008 – 2011.

Valuing People Now: From progress to transformation sets out the priorities for the provision of services for people with learning disabilities over the years 2008–11. It stands by the commitments made in 2001 and considers them in the context of what has happened over the last six years in terms of national policy, local delivery and any new issues that we need to address. The main priorities that Valuing People Now has focused on are personalisation, what people do during the day, better health, and access to housing and making sure that change happens. It also covers other important issues such as hate crime and relationships.

The main priorities for 2008 to 2011 are:

- Personalisation – so that people have real choice and control over their lives and services;
- What people do during the day (and evenings and weekends) – helping people to be properly included in their communities, with a particular focus on paid work;
- Better health – ensuring that the NHS provides full and equal access to good quality healthcare;
- Access to housing – housing that people want and need with a particular emphasis on home ownership and tenancies; and
- Making sure that change happens and the policy is delivered – including making partnership boards more effective.

One of the key areas identified in Valuing People Now, and of particular interest and relevance for this project is:

What people do during the day:

Joined-up working between adult social services and the employment and education sectors should be at the centre of people getting better lives. To address the problem of people going to traditional day centres rather than getting a job and education and a life, action will include:

- moving away from the concept of day service modernisation and instead having the policy objective of supporting people to live the lives that they want as equal citizens in their communities – in other words, social inclusion;
- using outcomes from person-centred plans to design new opportunities and supports for people, with paid work at the centre of this;
- a cross-government Getting a Life programme to bring together funding and assessment systems for young people going through transition, with the aim of people getting a job, an education and a social life in the way they want;
- A review of government disability employment services with the aim of increasing the number of people with learning disabilities in paid work;

- A five-year Progression Through Partnership programme to help make further education better meet the needs of learners with learning disabilities; and
- Government prioritization of employment through the socially excluded adults PSA.

What people do during the day (and evenings and weekends)

People with learning disabilities want to lead ordinary lives and do the things that most people take for granted. They want to study at college, get a job, have relationships and friendships, and enjoy leisure activities. Yet for many people this does not happen and they still spend too much time in traditional day services.

Employment levels for people with learning disabilities have increased slightly over the last decade but remain disappointingly low. Different surveys give figures of between 5% and 17% of people being in work. In contrast, employment levels are 47% for disabled people (up from 38% a decade ago) and 74% for the working-age population as a whole.

Access to post-16 education continues to be a problem because of priority being given to young people and achieving Level 2 qualifications. The Learning and Skills Council's strategy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities – *Learning for Living and Work (2006)* – undertook to stop commissioning poor quality provision by September 2008 (for example, where people repeat the same course year after year or there is no focus on getting into work). Some courses have already ceased. Although alternatives were developed in most cases, in some areas people returned to traditional day services, which is not desirable.

Valuing People proposed day services modernisation in relation to services provided by adult social services departments. We now think that this term is unhelpful. It encourages people to think about buildings rather than outcomes. Some authorities have used this policy to justify cuts in services. For others, small day centres have replaced big ones, but what people do with their time has hardly changed.

Changing this picture means that people and organisations responsible for adult social services, employment, education, leisure and community development will need to work better together in the future.

Next steps

Adult social care day services

The concept of day services modernisation is unhelpful if people understand it as making day centres smaller. The policy objective is to support people to live the lives that they want as equal citizens in their community – in other words social inclusion. One outcome will be major changes to many existing day services.

The two starting points to achieving this are:

- Effective person-centred planning. The outcomes from this will inform planners what services and supports should be put in place instead of traditional day services. As more people take up direct payments and individual budgets, they will be taking these decisions for themselves and the speed of change will increase;

and

- Forward planning. Good person-centred planning can take time. Rather than use this as an excuse for inaction, effective managers should already be planning to develop what we know people say is most important to them and what society expects for all other people – access to real, paid work. As well as providing income, paid work opens up other opportunities such as social networks. It is an achievable objective for almost everyone, including people with complex disabilities.

The Government expects the end result of this will be significant changes to many existing day centres. However, this should not be the starting point. The starting point is effective person-centred planning that finds out what people want in order to plan new services that will achieve social inclusion.

The document asserts that experience has shown that the best way for local authorities to develop services that achieve social inclusion is to:

- Work in partnership with the employment, education and leisure sectors, using resources flexibly between sectors and linking into local strategic partnerships and local area agreements;
- Prioritise making support for person-centred planning available to people in receipt of traditional day services – and direct payments and individual budgets;
- Make sure that young people with learning disabilities (including those at special schools) get equal access to the entitlement to work experience for children and young people in schools and colleges, and work with independent supported employment agencies to help this happen;
- Prioritise change for people with high support needs and people from black and minority ethnic communities who currently use traditional day centres;
- Think beyond nine-to-five working days and include evenings and weekends – but also recognise that, for people living with their families, existing day centre hours provide important breaks for both the family and the person themselves;
- Have an objective that no young person leaving school and college in the future goes into a segregated day service or centre;
- Invest in specialist employment support agencies, but see Jobcentre Plus as the main resource to help people to find jobs. Develop partnerships with major employers to help find paid employment – with public services leading by example;
- Recognise the importance of planning for people who are past retirement age and may want things other than work; and
- Establish a local outcome (for example within three years) that no day centre should be segregated. Only invest in integrated facilities and
- Have a decommissioning strategy for traditional services.

The Getting a Life project

A major barrier to people having real choice and control over their lives is the way that different services plan and fund support. To help address this, the Office for Disability Issues (ODI), Department of Health (DH), Department of Work & Pensions (DWP), Department of Children Schools & Families (DCSF) and Department for Innovation,

Universities and Skills(DIUS), have established the Getting a Life demonstration project.

A small number of localities will join the project and explore how to bring together the funding and planning processes around:

- SEN transition planning;
- Post-16 education planning and provision;
- Disability employment advice and support; and
- Local authority social care assessment and support.

Starting from person-centred planning, the aim is to achieve an integrated assessment and decision-making process that will allow people to use public resources flexibly in order to get the outcomes they want. The initial focus of the work will be on young people going through the transition to adult life. The project has already started. Learning from the project will be shared quickly so that other parts of the country can take on new ideas at an early date.

Employment

A cross-government working group led by DWP is developing an action plan to increase the number of people with learning disabilities in paid work in response to the report Improving Work Opportunities for People with a Learning Disability. This is focusing on:

- Improving partnership between different sectors;
 - Increasing the focus on work at the time of transition;
- Making current work programmes work better for people with learning disabilities;
- Making sure the benefits system helps people into work; and
 - Supporting and encouraging employers to employ people with learning disabilities.

The DWP is reviewing its employment services for disabled people and is currently consulting on proposals. This is in recognition of the need to do more to help people with higher support needs into employment and deliver the vision set out in *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, that:

Future government policy should be designed to ensure that in 20 years time any disabled person who wants a job and needs support to get and keep a job anywhere in the country should, wherever possible, be able to do so. Any employer wanting to employ a person should be able to find the right person and the right support.

The review is examining ways to make services more flexible to the needs of individual disabled people, and thus help them get and maintain paid employment, including:

- A greater focus on those who need specialist support, such as many of those with a learning disability;
 - Less prescription and greater flexibility;
 - Better links between elements of provision;
 - Better consistency and quality of provision;
 - Improved effectiveness in helping disabled people into work;
 - Improved help to enable people to maintain their job independently;
- and
- An improved service for people receiving long-term support.

The public sector itself is a huge employer. Government and its associated bodies will

therefore demonstrate a lead and ensure that its employment practices lead to increased numbers of people with learning disabilities in paid work across the public sector.

Post-16 education

The then Department for Education and Skills (DfES), DH and DWP published a strategy in June 2007 called *Progression Through Partnership*. It set out a five-year programme of change which includes:

- starting from the position that people with learning disabilities can learn, benefit from learning and should progress to paid employment;
- improving the experience and quality of transition to adulthood;
- ensuring that the curriculum followed by learners is high quality, can be accredited and provide positive outcomes; and
- improving the clarity and flexibility of funding to support learning and place the individual at the centre of planning services.

From autumn 2008, the *Foundation Learning Tier* will give new ways for learners from the age of 14 to progress at a pace suited to their needs and talents. With an emphasis on employability skills, the framework will provide preparation for independent living.

Action summary

Nationally:

- The cross-government *Getting a Life* project;
- A five-year delivery strategy around post-16 education (*Progression Through Partnership*);
- Cross-government action, led by DWP, to achieve an increase in the number of people moving into real, paid jobs;
- Consultation on the redesign of DWP employment services for disabled people that will actively seek and respond to the views of people with learning disabilities;
- The DWP and DH-funded pilot in Newham to learn how best to instigate local action towards increased employment, with the learning shared nationally;
- Prioritization of this issue within the Valuing People delivery programme for the next three years and for the LDDF in delivering the social exclusion employment indicator; and
- Government departments will review their own employment of people with learning disabilities as part of disability equality strategies.

Locally:

- Support for person-centred planning for people attending traditional day centres should be a priority;
- Person-centred transition processes should be in place to support young people into jobs and education rather than traditional day centres;
- Strong partnerships should be developed between adult social care, employment, education and leisure sectors to develop strategies in response to outcomes from person-centred planning.
- Reinvestment strategies should move from traditional day services to a social inclusion strategy; and
- Public sector organisations to review and increase their employment levels of

people with learning disabilities.

Hungary.

1998 XXVI. Law about the Rights of Disabled People and their equal opportunities

The law starts with the statement that people with disabilities having equal rights cannot cope with the challenges of everyday life. They need to be given support to live with equal opportunities.

They must be provided with a safe environment and transportation, all possible means to communication and access to information.

The law guarantees the establishment of a supportive service and aids.

The target fields of action: health care, education and training, work, living environment, sport and cultural events.

In connection with work: people with disabilities should be employed in integrated workplaces, or, where this is not possible, in protected workplaces. Special protected workplaces are supported financially by the central budget. The employers in both places are liable for reshaping the working environment in order to ensure safety and accessibility – financial support from central source is possible.

Disabled people have the right to rehabilitation. For rehabilitation services the Hungarian state set up a Public Foundation.

National Disability Council

The Government set up the Council to deal with all issues arising in connection with disability. It coordinates all decision-making, proposal making, or judgment forming and coordinating actions. It is also responsible for developing the National Disability Program and its execution.

Source: <http://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/getdoc.cgi?docid=99800026.tv> (Hungarian)

The National Disability Program 2007-2013

This program is a complex study, containing a full report on the state and condition of disabled people in Hungary and the attitude of members of society towards them. It draws up basic principles about the importance of prevention, the difficulties the families of disabled people face and how they could be helped. It declares that individual needs should be taken into account in each case and it emphasises the importance and means of integration, and positive discrimination. The program puts forward that these services given to disabled people are not charities, but their rights and the whole society should be educated to enable integration. It states, that no decision or action connected to their

life should be taken without the representatives of disabled people. It also lists the aids needed by disabled people.

In Chapter 4.3, the Program deals with the **Employment of disabled citizens**.

Active participation in society can be primarily achieved, if the person is occupied. This is the reason, why disabled people should work in open workplaces: all barriers (legal, professional, material) should be abolished. It should be in both the employers' and employees' interest to work/occupy a disabled person, with special attention to people with multiple disadvantages.

For those, not able to find work in the open market, protected workplaces and therapeutically workplaces should be set up within reach. All appropriate training should be organised for both disabled persons and their surroundings.

The local governments should be made interested to integrate the disabled living there, into work and social life. They are responsible for the appropriate services, work opportunities and the life conditions of these families and individuals. Central government should support local initiatives financially.

The Program contains the list of necessary actions, the timing and the responsibilities connected to the realisation of the above aims.

For details: www.bpxv.hu/docok/mobilitasi_het2007/fogytekosugyi_program.pps
(Hungarian)

2007 LXXXIV. Law about the Rehabilitation Pension

This law contains all information about the financial support for people losing their ability to work: who, when, how can apply and get it, together with the system of criteria according to which disabilities are ranked.

In 2007 the Parliament also ratified the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** as a law, (accepted in New York by the UN).

For details see: www.szmm.gov.hu/openlink.php?linkID=1259 (both in English and Hungarian)

Lithuania.

Law of Social Integration of the Disabled , 2005, October 18th

The social integration system for the disabled comprises provision of medical, professional and social rehabilitation services, provision for special needs using special assistance tools, support to employment of the disabled, social assistance, award and payment of pensions and benefits of the State Social Insurance Fund, award and payment of benefits of the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund, provision of education services, ensuring equal opportunities to participate in cultural, sports and other areas of public life.

The social integration system for the disabled is funded from the national budget, municipal budgets, State Social Insurance Fund, Compulsory Health Insurance Fund, Employment Fund, Structural Funds of **The Law on Social Integration of the Disabled**, which came into force on 1 July 2005, defined new terms and definitions,

modified the methods of disability assessment used for children and adults, stipulated equal rights and opportunities of the disabled in society thereby bringing closer the social integration model for the disabled to the model used in EU countries.

To implement the provisions of the new law and ensure high-quality assessment of the level of capacity for work and disability level as well as settlement of disputes concerning the disability level and capacity for work level, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour reorganised, from 1 July 2005, the State Medical Social Expertise Commission under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour by dividing it into the Disability and Capacity for Work Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Dispute Commission under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour the European Union and other legitimate financial resources.

From 1 July 2005, the disabled people over 18 until they reach the age for the old-age pension are awarded the **capacity for work level instead of the disability group**.

The capacity for work level is set at the interval of 5 percentage points, i.e. if the person is recognised as having 0–25% of the capacity for work, he is deemed to be incapable for work; in cases of 30–55% of the capacity as partially capable and in cases of 60–100% of the capacity as capable for work.

Article 13. Types of State Aid Provided to a Social Enterprise

1. A social enterprise may be granted the State aid of the following types:

- 1) partial reimbursement of wages and state social insurance contributions;
- 2) subsidy for the creation of workplaces, adaptation of workplaces to disabled employees and acquisition or adaptation of their work equipment;
- 3) subsidy for the training of the employees who are attributed to the target groups.

2. In addition to the types of State aid indicated in paragraph 1 of this Article, additional State aid of the following types may be provided to a social enterprise of the disabled:

- 1) subsidy for the adaptation of the work environment of disabled employees, production premises and rest rooms;
- 2) subsidy for the reimbursement of additional administrative and transport expenses;
- 3) subsidy for the reimbursement of expenses on an assistant (sign language interpreter).

1.3. Law on Support for Employment, 2006 June 15th

Chapter 1, Article 4 „**Persons Additionally Supported in the Labour Market**” indicates the following groups of persons are additionally supported in the labour market:

- 1) the disabled whose capacity for work is rated at 20-40% (before 1 July 2005 – persons with Group I or II disability) or the disabled for whom moderate disability has been established;
- 2) the disabled whose capacity for work is rated at 45-55% (before 1 July 2005 – persons with Group III disability) or the disabled for whom mild disability has been established;
- 3) persons who have completed vocational rehabilitation programmes;
- 4) persons taking up their first employment according to the acquired speciality or occupation;
- 5) the long-term unemployed;
- 6) persons over 50 years of age who are capable of work;
- 7) pregnant women, at the choice of a family, a mother (adoptive mother) or a father (adoptive father), a guardian or a custodian who actually raises a child under

8 years of age or a disabled child under 18 years of age (before 1 July 2005 – a child recognised as an invalid);

8) persons who have been released from places of imprisonment, where the duration of imprisonment was longer than 6 months;

9) persons whose unemployment period are or exceed 2 years from the date of registration with a local labour exchange office;

10) persons addicted to drugs, psychotropic or other psychoactive substances, which have completed psycho-social and/or vocational rehabilitation programmes;

11) victims of trafficking in human beings, who have completed psycho-social and/or vocational rehabilitation programmes.

Main organization in charge of employment policy implementation is the Lithuanian Labour market Exchange and local labour exchange offices. Other state institutions shall contribute to the achievement of the objective of the support for employment set out by this Law by fulfilling the tasks and implementing the employment support measures in accordance with this Law and other legal acts.

Chapter 2, Article 10. Competence of other Legal and Natural Persons

Other legal and natural persons (and also branches of enterprises and organisations, which were founded in the states that have signed the Agreement on the European Economic Area, in the Republic of Lithuania) **may provide general employment support services and submit proposals to institutions implementing the employment support policy concerning the implementation of these services.**

Chapter 5, Article 22. Active Labour Market Policy Measures

1. Active labour market policy measures shall cover:

1) vocational training of the unemployed and of the employees who have been given a notice of dismissal;

2) non-formal education of the unemployed and of the employees who have been given a notice of dismissal;

3) supported employment;

4) support for job creation;

5) job rotation;

2. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange shall implement active labour market policy measures.

Article 26. Subsidised Employment

1. Subsidised employment shall be organised for persons specified in subparagraphs 2, 3, 4, 6-13 of paragraph 1 of Article 4 of this Law seeking to help them strengthen their positions in the labour market and for persons specified in subparagraph 1 of paragraph 1 of Article 4 of this Law – to create special conditions enabling them to remain in the labour market.

2. Employees, who have employed persons specified in subparagraphs 2, 3, 4, 6-13 of paragraph 1 of Article 4 of this Law, shall receive wage subsidies for a period of up to 12 months. Where fixed-term contracts of employment are concluded with the employed persons, the period of payment of the subsidy may not be longer than 3 months.

3. Employers, who have employed persons specified in subparagraphs 2, 3, 4, 6-13 of paragraph 1 of Article 4 of this Law, each month shall receive a subsidy to compensate for the wage, the amount thereof is specified in the contract of employment concluded with the employed person, paid to each employed person and the insurer's compulsory state social insurance contributions calculated from this wage. The amount of this

subsidy may not exceed the amount of the minimum monthly wage approved by the Government.

4. Employers, who have employed persons specified in subparagraph 1 of paragraph 1 of Article 4 of this Law, each month, throughout the whole period of their employment, for each employed person shall receive a wage subsidy calculated for the time actually worked according to the minimum hourly pay approved by the Government.

5. The Government, or an institution authorised by it, shall set the conditions of and the procedure for subsidised employment.

National/regional situations regarding work preparation for the target groups in the partner countries

United Kingdom.

Through Inclusion to Excellence: The Report of the Steering Group for the Strategic Review of the LSC's Planning and Funding of Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities across the Post-16 Learning and Skills Sector. November 2005.

In March 2004, the Learning and Skills Council's National Council endorsed the need for a strategic review of its funding and planning of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A Steering Group, chaired by Peter Little, OBE, has overseen the review between July 2004 and September 2005. This has been the first, major, comprehensive review of provision for these learners since the 1996 report, *Inclusive Learning*, with its focus on the Further Education sector.

Reflecting the LSC's wider remit, the review is concerned with provision for these learners across the whole learning and skills sector, and the report highlights some different entitlements for learners in the five funding streams. In 2003-4 there were 579,000 learners who self declared a learning difficulty and/or disability. This represented around 11 per cent of the LSC's total fulltime equivalents, and the total cost was around £1.3 billion. Around 71 per cent were adults over 19 years of age. The largest cohort was in the Further Education sector (382,000), compared to 3,038 in specialist colleges for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The Steering Group's transformational vision underpinned its work and recommendations for remodeling provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The group envisaged that:

"Learners' needs should be met through equitable and easily understood systems of planning, funding and placement, enabling all learners to achieve their goals and

progress to the maximum possible level of independence and activity in their communities and in employment.”

The review’s overarching recommendation to take forward the vision of systemic transformation is that the:

“LSC should develop a national strategy for the regional/local delivery, through collaboration with partners, of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the post-16 learning and skills sector that is high quality, learner-centred and cost-effective.

Planning

The report suggested key activities, which the LSC should implement to enable transformation. After discussing the planning baseline, there follows a detailed discussion of the respective LSC roles at national, regional and local levels. Specific proposals are developed to clarify these roles. A key recommendation centres on the potential of LSC’s regional structures to oversee the development of a wider range of high quality provision to meet needs locally:

“This will require LSC, through Regional Directors, to put in place consistent regional staffing structures to enable strategic and operational oversight of the development of appropriate, coordinated, collaborative and consistent provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In particular, there should be a designated individual at a senior level whose role it is to provide the necessary operational oversight.”

Quality

Quality of provision for these learners remains highly variable and a fundamental change in provider capacity and capability is called for. A wide range of factors is discussed, including workforce development and “listening to learners”.

“The LSC should commit to a policy of “investment for change” to achieve systemic transformation and increased supply of high quality, local provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.”

Funding

Radical changes are required to ensure there is a system that effectively meets the needs of all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the whole learning and skills sector, whose diversity is seen as a potential source of strength. Specific aspects are covered, including additional learning support and placement budgets, impact on schools and local authorities and capital budgets. Building on the impulse created by *agenda for change*, the report advocates systemic changes across the whole sector, enabling more flexible, equitable and cost-effective targeting of funds.

“The LSC should consider the development, in line with agenda for change, of a common funding approach across the whole of the post-16 learning and skills sector.”
“LSC should commit to a policy of ‘investment for change’ to achieve systemic transformation and increased supply of high quality, local provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.”

Working with Partners

The concept of working in partnership is central to the vision of provision that is person-centred and appropriate to the needs of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The impact of the *Children Act 2004* for those aged 16–25, and the development of multi-agency, person-centred planning in adult services are discussed. Particular reference is made to the role of Valuing People in relation to people with learning disabilities. There is extended consideration of transition issues, including significant discussion of work-related matters. This includes the Steering Group's message that more emphasis should be placed on progression to employment and the acquisition of skills that enable disabled people to play a full and active part in their communities.

“The Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education to raise the issue of the LSC's spend on health/care costs with appropriate ministers in other Government departments and seek to reach an agreement about appropriate funding responsibilities and partnership working.”

Conclusion

In summary, the Steering Group recognises and endorses the need for radical change across the sector. As part of these developments, the emerging good practice of the sector, for example, regional/local interagency collaboration, and existing good practice, should be built upon and extended to enable increased choice of high-quality post-16 education and training opportunities appropriate for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This provision should be learner-centred, cost-effective in the use of LSC funds and enable learners to progress to the maximum possible level of independence and activity in their communities and employment.

Learning For Living and Work (Learning and Skills Council October 2006)

In November 2005, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published the findings and recommendations of the strategic review of the LSC's planning and funding of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the FE system, *Through Inclusion to Excellence*.

The overarching recommendation of the report was that, in order to take forward its vision, the LSC should develop a national strategy for the delivery of this provision across the FE system. This document responds to that recommendation and is the first LSC strategy for the planning and funding of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The strategy is the blueprint for LSC thinking and reiterates the organisation's intention to ensure that all of the 40 recommendations made in *Through Inclusion to Excellence* are fully explored and met.

The LSC's vision for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is driven by the concept of learning for living and work. The FE system's role is to drive up participation and to support individuals entering education and training to achieve their ambition, whether this is to improve their lives, strengthen their career opportunities, or

develop their skills. Such skills enable economic participation, the development of self-confidence and help people of all ages to live autonomously and contribute to the communities in which they live.

Our vision is also driven by the principles of *Through Inclusion to Excellence*, that individuals' needs should be met through equitable and easily understood systems of planning, funding and placement, enabling all learners to achieve their goals and progress to the maximum possible level of independence and activity in their communities, and in employment.

This single, unified vision will lead to our core ambition that by 2015, England will be an international exemplar in providing high quality post-16 learning provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whereby poor provision has been eliminated and outstanding provision is the norm. The LSC's strategy outlines our headline work activities and intended outcomes up to 2009/10, and these activities should be seen as part of a longer term programme of reform to achieve this goal by 2015.

By 2009, the LSC intends to have worked with DfES to broker a partnership in which the work undertaken from 2010 to 2015 to improve this provision will be driven by a single strategy that is owned by the national partner organisations that plan, fund, inspect and support the FE system. During 2009/10, new activities and milestones for work up to 2015 will be identified and agreed with key partners.

The current strategy is structured into six themes, four of which are drawn from *Through Inclusion to Excellence*, with two further key themes identified from consultation responses to the report. Each theme, listed below, includes key actions and outcomes that represent a milestone towards this ambition. The themes are:

- Communicating Priorities
- Planning
- Funding
- Working with partners
- Quality
- Learner Progression

The LSC's Vision: Learning for Living and Work

Individuals choose to enter education and training to improve their lives, strengthen their career opportunities, and to develop their skills; whether these are for economic participation, to develop self confidence or to develop the ability to live independently.

Publicly funded education and training must always have purpose and aim; learning is for enabling living and work. The choice to begin learning should be driven by an individual's desired endpoint. It is the role of the FE system to support this.

The LSC's vision for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is driven by this concept of learning for living and work. It is also driven by the principles of *Through Inclusion to Excellence*, that individuals' needs should be met through equitable and easily understood systems of planning, funding and placement, enabling all learners

to achieve their goals and progress to the maximum possible level of independence and activity in their communities, and in employment.

The LSC vision is one of:

- Equity and parity of experience (including entitlement) for all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with their peers without learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Person-centred learning, based on the principles of Inclusive Learning, whereby learning has purpose, positive outcomes and meets learner aspiration, and in which the environment matches learners' requirements
- Accessible local and regional provision, as opposed to provision far from where learners live
- Challenging, quality programmes for all, regardless of the complexity of a learner's learning difficulty and/or disability
- Performance measures for providers in supporting learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve their learning aims
- Recognition of learner achievement through a fit-for-purpose and inclusive credit and qualifications framework
- An increased proportion of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that contribute to LSC targets
- Improved progression to employment for learners who aspire to work
- Collaboration and joint funding of programmes for individuals who require holistic packages of provision
- Barriers that prevent individuals with learning difficulties and/or disabilities accessing appropriate learning being addressed and quickly overcome
- All delivery partners within the FE system, as appropriate, contributing to the delivery of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; either through direct delivery, partnership arrangements or sharing effective practice
- An FE system whose culture will continue to improve, so that all delivery partners fully value and recognise the range and diversity of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and their contribution to our learning communities

In particular, the LSC pledge in the document to deliver the following:

- National consistency with local and regional flexibility
- Simpler and more flexible funding systems
- Expert LSC staff who will lead change
- Better control of growth of expenditure, value for money and cost efficiency
- Strategies, policies, processes and plans that not only take into account the views of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but are informed by this group. This is in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 2006. We will also empower our providers to fulfil their own duties under this Act.

Each regional LSC developed its own implementation plan against this document and there follows a summary of the implementation plan for the LSC for the region in which

Greenhat Interactive and **bid services** will be delivering the GOET project, the West Midlands.

Learning for Living and Work - West Midlands Implementation Plan for 2008 – 2010: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.

Aim

The aim of the document is to outline how the West Midlands LSC will jointly work with partners, providers and stakeholders to deliver our shared vision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The plan focuses on learners over the age of 16 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that may either have a greater difficulty in learning than their peers, or a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of general post-16 education or training institutions as defined within section 13 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

This therefore includes learners with:

- Learning difficulties
- Physical disabilities
- Sensory impairments
- Mental health difficulties

Objectives

Planning

Planning, funding and commissioning priorities will be developed with key partners, in particular, Local Authorities and Health Care Trusts in order to ensure we co-ordinate our resources and jointly plan provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as outlined in Progression through Partnership, and Learning for Living and Work.

Quality

Performance management and performance improvement applies to provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the same way as it does to mainstream provision. Resources and support will be targeted to that provision where improvement to success rates and minimum levels of performance is most needed.

Funding

The West Midlands LSC will continue to support LSC National Office in developing and implementing a fit for purpose funding system that is learner focused, equitable across all areas of the Further Education (FE) sector including School Sixth Forms and Apprenticeships and provides appropriate levels of support for learning.

Learner Progression

The LSC will ensure that young people will receive specialist support, education and training in a residential setting where it is the most appropriate provision to meet their needs. Over the course of this plan they will work with all providers, to ensure that increased specialist support is also available within mainstream provision so that more learners, including adults, will be able to access local, good quality provision that equips them with the skills they need to enable them to progress into economic participation and/or independent living.

Implementation Plan Actions

Planning:

Planning, funding and commissioning priorities will be developed with key partners, in particular Local Authorities and Health Care Trusts. We will co-ordinate our resources and jointly plan provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as outlined in '*Progression through Partnership*' and '*Learning for Living and Work*'.

WM LSC will:

By 31 July 2008

- Agree a joint planning framework with the Directors of Children's Services within the Local Authorities in the West Midlands for the 09/10 academic year for post 16 provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

By 31 October 2008

- Produce a provision map for LSC funded provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across each of the sub-regions within the West Midlands. This will include curriculum delivery/qualification levels/achievement and success rates.
- Identify gaps and areas of curriculum development to inform the joint planning framework with Local Authorities. Produce an update to the West Midlands LLDD Strategic Analysis showing forecasts of cohort sizes, school action and school action plus volumes and demand for education and learning.

By 31 December 2008

- Embed within the 09/10 planning cycle the Strategic Analysis and Provision Mapping in order to ensure the West Midlands Commissioning plan, identifies clear priorities for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

By 31 July 2009

- In partnership with the Local Authorities, have increased the amount of locally delivered provision to make available learning opportunities that are of a high standard that raise levels of achievement and are vocationally focused.

Quality:

Performance Management and Performance Improvement applies to provision for learners with Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities in the same way it does to mainstream provision. Resources and support will be targeted to that provision where improvement to success rates and minimum performance levels is most needed.

WM LSC will:

By 31 August 2008

- Have produced a regional provision map that includes a detailed analysis of the quality of provision underpinned by success rates, minimum performance levels and inspection grades.
- Identify the areas for improvement and work with Quality Improvement Agency (QIA), Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) to develop a quality improvement programme for roll out to all providers of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

By 30 September 2008

- Implement the national training support programme to with QIA/CEL and LLUK develop staff competencies and skills, using the qualification frameworks and training pathways that are currently under development.
- Have begun work with providers to identify how Framework for Excellence including Minimum Levels of Performance will be implemented across the learning disability sector.

Funding and Capital Investment:

A key priority nationally is the development and improvement of a fit for purpose funding system that is learner focused, equitable across all areas of the FE sector and provides appropriate levels of support for learning.

WM LSC will:

By 30 June 2008

- Have introduced and agreed the demand-led funding approach for Additional Learner Support (ALS) ensuring allocations are made against the principles for ALS.

By 31 July 2008

- Review Capital plans for General FE Colleges and Independent Specialist Colleges specifically for LLDD provision and ensure requirements are embedded in the WM Capital Strategy.

By 31 August 2009

- Through the West Midlands Directors of Children's Services Joint Strategic Forum we will identify the educational, care, health and transport costs associated with supporting Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities.

Learner Progression:

We will work with all providers to ensure that increased specialist support is also available with mainstream provision so that more learners will be able to access good quality local provision. This provision must enable learners to progress into economic participation and/or independent living where appropriate.

WM LSC will:

By 31 July 2008

- Have begun to implement the “Progression Pathways to Employment” pilot findings and use the guidance produced to share with providers, for them to inform their supported employment/economic participation plans.
- Engage with JobCentre Plus to identify provision that can be developed to enable adults on disability benefits to re-engage in education, training and employment.

By 30 September 2008

- Identify ‘good practice providers’ delivering successful transition for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into supported employment, independent living and higher education. We will use those providers to share good practice and improve transition in the West Midlands.
- Identify a group of providers who can pilot the Apprenticeship Pathways.
- Work with providers to further test the development of the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) and Progression Pathways for Supported Employment and Independent Living.

The above is a summary of major UK Government strategies and plans, nationally and regionally. The following will give some examples of current UK practice in employment preparation for people with learning disabilities.

Transition:

The [Aiming High for Disabled Children review](#) found that more needed to be done to coordinate services for disabled young people in transition to adult life, and to ensure young people and families can access high quality information at key points. To address this, the Aiming high for Disabled Children programme (AHDC) announced £19m over the CSR period (2008 - 2011) to develop a Transition Support Programme (TSP).

The TSP will seek to raise the standards of transition support and provision and achieve greater consistency in all local areas. The programme consists of two main elements:

1. The national transition support team, which will coordinate the work with local authorities, PCTs and regional advisers and existing experts
2. Support for change at local level through a combination of direct grants and regional adviser activity

The national transition support team, a coalition between the Council for Disabled Children and partners, has three main roles:

- **Drive and shape** the programme in local areas through work with regional advisers, and disabled young people and their families
- **Engage with and exchange** good practice in transition through websites, targeted information sheets and other resources to help build capacity
- **Identify the support needs** of local areas and work in partnership with regional advisers, the Department for Children Schools and Families and the Department of Health to improve transition practice

The HM TREASURY Department for Education and Skills report 'Aiming high for disabled children: better support for families' may 2007 states: "Engagement of disabled children and young people in shaping services at a local level results in the provision of more appropriate services, and can help services work more efficiently and effectively, allowing for more flexible and tailored provision. Increased transparency about entitlements and services available, and increased information at a local level, should lead to greater equity in access to provision, and make it easier to benchmark local performance." To empower disabled children, young people and their parents, the Government has pledged to set a clear standard or core offer, and give disabled children and their parents the option to be fully involved in local service development and in designing their packages of care.

Valuing People Now *From progress to transformation (Department of Health Dec 2007)* also looks at 'Making the transition to adulthood a positive experience'. Their consultation process shows that Families and young people still say that the transition from children's to adult services is the most difficult time in their lives and that they feel excluded from decisions. The outcomes are often segregated services rather than helping them to achieve the same things as other young people, that is, an education, a job, and living with their friends in their local community. To help deliver the promise in the Children's NSF, the Person-Centred Transitions programme has been introducing person-centred approaches into the statutory transition planning process. The programme is open to every authority in the country and over 300 Year 9 and 200 Year 10 children have experienced person-centred reviews. Some 350 people have been trained to facilitate person-centred reviews with young people, while 12 schools are exploring how to integrate person-centred approaches into the curriculum. Parents and young people say they feel really involved for the first time and that outcomes for people are beginning to change. The further education sector is now joining in. DH and DCSF will continue to support this initiative.

A focus on young people moving into adulthood is an important part of *Valuing People*. Stopping young people moving into outdated traditional services as they leave school and home is acknowledged as an effective way of changing the whole service system. The Government claims that they see that young people in transition should always be a focus and target for early action when developing strategies to support people into paid work, access ordinary housing, introduce individual budgets and undertake comprehensive health checks.

The UK Government's vision is:

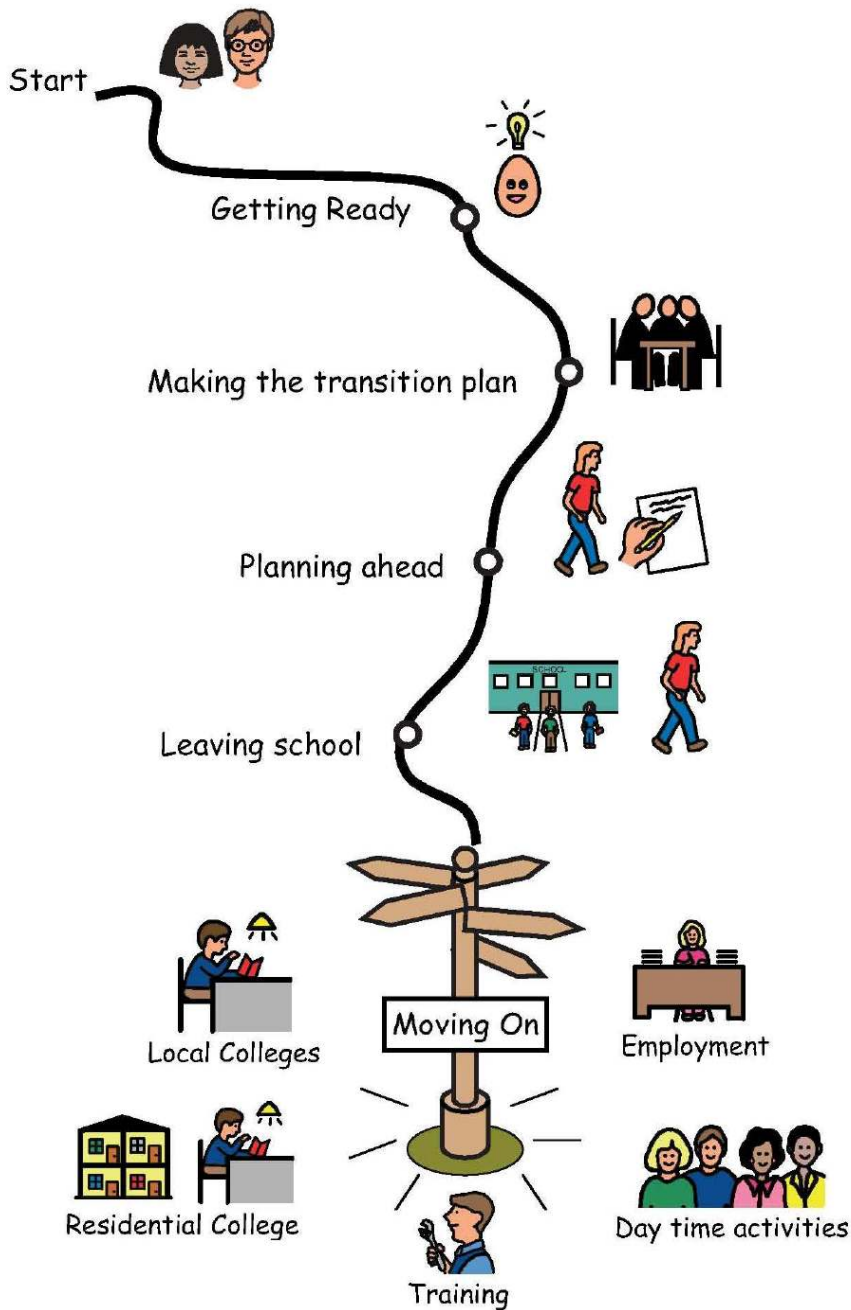
This will be different...	We will know this because...
<p>Every young person with a learning disability and with a statement of SEN will have person-centred reviews from the age of 14 to 19.</p>	<p>Young people will tell us that they are feeling more supported and have a real say about their future.</p>
<p>The Year 9 review will produce a person-centred transition plan that will inform the commissioning and provision of future services and supports, be reviewed each year, and be at the core of a smooth transition to adult services.</p>	<p>Evaluation of the Transition Support Programme will tell us this is happening.</p>
<p>Young people will leave school and enter paid work and education in far greater numbers than at present.</p>	<p>The number of young people recorded as not in education, employment or training will show this reduction.</p>
<p>A substantial increase in the number of young people taking up individual budgets and direct payments.</p>	<p>Nationally collected and analysed data will tell us this.</p>

A cross-government employment strategy will be published in Spring 2009, which includes a significant expansion of employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. This will be linked to the Public Service Agreement (PSA) 16 delivery plan on increasing the number of adults with learning disabilities in employment. The cross-government Work, Education and Life Group will also lead implementation of *'Progression through Partnership'*¹¹ (the post-16 education strategy) and the Getting a Life project, which aims to achieve an integrated assessment and decision-making process that will allow people to use public resources flexibly to get the outcomes they want, including access to employment opportunities.

Following a long period of consultation with young people (aged 16 – 25) with learning disabilities, the ***Transition Pathway Partnership*** in the West Midlands have produced a guide and toolkit for person-centred planning for transition.

It contains the following diagram for the perfect transition pathways:

What happens in transition



Planning for transition therefore starts at the age of 13 with a Transition Plan being written in school, as part of the annual review of stated need for the pupil with learning disabilities and is written in partnership with the **Connexions** Adviser (Connexions is a Government Agency providing information, advice and guidance on employment and training to all people over the age of 13 through a personal adviser service. Statutory provision gives the undertaking that Local authorities must provide all

13- to 19-year-olds, and all those up to 25 years old with a learning difficulty or disability, with reasonable, face-to-face access to a Personal Adviser to provide information, advice, guidance, advocacy and brokerage (including brokering access to targeted youth support services). Connexions and Transition workers will check that an action plan is in place and acceptable by pupil and carers, ready for the time they leave school.

Hungary

Children with a moderate disability are encouraged to take part in mainstream education, if possible, if not, they are offered special boarding school services from the age of 4 till 21. These schools are public schools, fully granted by the central government. There are 18 such schools all around the country. Here, beyond general education, students are trained to have a profession – sometimes with success, sometimes not, depending on their condition. In a 2004 study, it was found, that 23 different types of trainings are offered (from wood works through animal tending to printing , out of which two are available in Veszprém: gardening and rug spinning. Local schools differ in the opportunities they can provide, depending on their environment and level of enterprise.

Local Labour Offices are given tasks too, but civil organisations are more successful in launching programs and offering real help.

Lithuania

Work preparation for the target group is organised only by individual initiatives in the Centres of the Deaf and separate vocational training schools – they have dedicated units which assist in work's search and act as mediators between the deaf people and employers.

Opportunities for the employment of people with learning disabilities and/or hearing impairment in the partner countries.

United Kingdom.

Supported Employment

The European Union of Supported Employment promotes the following definition of Supported Employment:

“Providing support to people with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups to secure and maintain paid employment in the open labour market”

Principles of Supported Employment:

- That the primary aim of human services is to promote individual rights, human dignity and create opportunities for integrated social and economic inclusion.
- All individuals can achieve social and economic inclusion through employment opportunities.
- All individuals have the right to make self-determined decisions and choices about their employment.
- Many individuals need varying degrees of support to enable them to fulfil their employment aspirations and meet the employer’s needs.

All individuals should be entitled to the same pay and conditions, and have access to the same learning and career development opportunities, as their non-disadvantaged co-workers.

Supported Employment Strategies

Supported Employment involves the use of support strategies to enable individuals to:

- Find jobs that suit their aspirations and abilities
- Successfully learn the skills and routines of the jobs they obtain
- Develop career paths in line with personal aspirations and abilities

Such services are developed across all sectors: public, private and voluntary/community. Supported Employment Officers, job coaches and mentors will usually provide an initial self assessment for each referral which will lead to individual learning/action plans being drawn up. According to the needs of each individual a range of services will then be offered which might include:

- Accredited information, advice and guidance, including benefits advice
- Vocational Profiling and Skills analysis
- Development planning to meet identified skills gaps, matched to aspirations
- Job targeting, jobs match and job analysis
- Skills support, supporting the job application process, work placements for work experience, supported by mentors/ job coaches
- Support into work, links to Access to Work for specialist aids/ equipment/ mentors/interpreters etc
- Support for employer/disability awareness raising
- Continued crisis intervention for employment sustainability

Qualifications in Providing Supported Employment

The *European Union of Supported Employment* have developed both a Certificate and a Diploma in Supported Employment delivered through an e-learning platform in order to facilitate the introduction of a quality standard in these services that is uniform across the EU. These qualifications offer learning support materials covering the following topics:

- the values and principles underpinning Supported Employment including self determination
- helping individuals to identify their interests, aspirations and needs together with their strengths, skills, abilities and potential through the process of Vocational Profiling
- assisting individuals at realistic Action Plans which will help them achieve their aims, hopes and aspirations

- job finding processes and techniques together with appropriate job matching
- designing appropriate learning and support packages including on and off the job training where appropriate and involving person centered planning approaches
- Implementing Action Plans through providing support and working with employers where appropriate as well as the community.
- Providing ongoing support to employees and employers through effective monitoring and evaluation processes
- Evaluating your own performance and effectiveness and developing your own knowledge and skills in supporting individuals with disabilities or disadvantages.

Intermediate Labour Markets (ILMs)

As part of the strategy to alleviate worklessness in disadvantaged areas Intermediate Labour Market programmes (ILMs) are being developed as a form of labour market intervention that acts as a 'bridge' between unemployment and the world of work for some of the most disadvantaged members of local communities.

The **Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)** defines an ILM as:

- Having a main aim of giving those who are most removed from the labour market a *bridge back to the world of work* by improving participants' general employability.
- The core feature is paid work on a temporary contract (often up to 12 months), together with training, personal development and job search activities.
- In order to limit the risk of replacing 'real' jobs, the work is in additional economic activities, ideally of community benefit.
- Projects and programmes rely on packages of funding from various sources (e.g. New Deal, European Social Fund, local regeneration funds and project earnings).

The JRF defines the rationale for the ILM approach as:

Some people are so far removed from the mainstream labour market that they do not participate in it and have little influence on it (e.g. wage inflation).

Employers tend to recruit those who have been out of work for a short time or who are new to the labour market. The objective of the ILM is to provide a parallel (intermediate) labour market where the long term unemployed can gain 'employability skills' to compete effectively for mainstream employment.

Within this general rationale, ILM programmes typically aim to do one or more of the following:

- Maximise 'insertion' into the labour market: there is evidence that merely finding a job in the mainstream labour market will not guarantee long term employment. ILM operators argue that it can take six to nine months or more for 'employability skills' to become embedded. This suggests that a comprehensive 're-engagement package' covering work experience, training and confidence building, is more effective in achieving sustainable employment than a minimal approach.
- Fill the jobs gap - where there is still a relative shortage of suitable jobs: here the role of an ILM programme may be to keep people employable and avoid increasing levels of social exclusion.

- Contribute to local regeneration - through work which would not otherwise have been done or which can add value to projects or service.

ILM Programmes in Britain

The study identified 5,300 ILM places (jobs) in the 65 operating programmes, involving around 9,000 people per year (the bulk of those operating in Britain). There are clusters of activity in the big cities and older industrial areas of the North, Midlands and Scotland. Activities include environmental work, childcare, town centre guides, IT services, sports and community work. Seven out of ten places are for 18- to 25-year-olds. Both vocational training (to level 2 and above) and basic skills training are provided, together with childcare and benefits advice.

The most significant operational problem experienced by current programmes is the lack of secure and regular funding. Administration of the paperwork associated with funding is the second main problem. Both distract ILM operators from the programmes' primary objectives.

What works and why?

The study found that the following appear to be the main requirements for a successful programme:

- Establishing clear objectives: the primary purpose is progression into jobs and where the focus is too much on the delivery of services to the community difficulties can arise.
- Creating a model which best meets the local aims and context, and then fitting the funding to it, rather than merely delivering Government programmes.
- Designing the project activity and its location specifically for the target group, as the project type determines who is attracted to it.
- Keeping as close as possible to real labour market conditions.
- Treating ILM workers as normal employees from day one, with managers exercising normal work disciplines.
- Keeping participation voluntary. Furthermore, ILM managers are employers and must have the final say on who gets recruited.
- Maintaining flexibility about training and a focus on transferable skills; this is more likely to keep participants motivated and to lead to sustained employment.
- Paying wages, at a level which relates to local market rates, appears to have a significant influence on retention, motivation and progression of participants – any decision to not use wages should be carefully considered.
- Making job search an integral part of the process, not just something left to the end.
- Being realistic about the amount of paperwork involved: data collection systems need to be in place from the start and incentives created to track job outcomes.
- Establishing measurable performance criteria for contracts: they should be clear about when reviews will take place, how and when a programme will be judged, and what outcomes are expected.

Social Enterprises and Social Firms

Social Enterprises are another source of employment for people with learning disabilities and many Day Services are beginning to set up social enterprises or social firms (see

below) as part of their action plan for moving people out of traditional day services to more meaningful occupation.

The Social Enterprise Coalition defines Social enterprises as businesses set up to tackle a social and/or environmental need. Many commercial businesses would consider themselves to have social objectives, but social enterprises are distinctive because their social or environmental purpose is central to what they do. Rather than maximising shareholder value their main aim is to generate profit to further their social and environmental goals. Social enterprise leaders are passionate about achieving social or environmental aims and this motivates them as much, if not more, than the challenge of running a profitable business in a competitive market. Social enterprises often break with conventional business models to find new and more sustainable ways of improving the world around them.

The 2005 Annual Survey of Small Businesses UK found that there are 55,000 social enterprises in the UK with a combined turnover of £27 billion. Social enterprises account for 5% of all businesses with employees, and contribute £8.4 billion per year to the UK economy.

The social enterprise movement is inclusive and extremely diverse, encompassing organisations such as development trusts, community enterprises, co-operatives, housing associations, 'social firms' and leisure trusts, among others. These businesses are operating across an incredibly wide range of industries and sectors from health and social care, to renewable energy, recycling and fair trade.

Social Firms

The model of social firms take the social aims of a social enterprise one step further in that they are specifically set up to employ disabled or disadvantaged employees.

Social Firms UK defines a social firm as follows:

A Social Firm is a business set up specifically to create good quality jobs for people disadvantaged in the labour market. There are 3 core values that Social Firms will subscribe to within their businesses, orientated around **Enterprise, Employment and Empowerment:**

Enterprise:

- At least 50% of the firm's turnover is earned through sales of goods and/or services. (Lowest for Social Firms April 2005 - 66%)
- The firm has an appropriate legal status. It must not be governed or driven by individual profit (except for worker co-operatives). Remote shareholders must not extract unreasonable profit.
- The firm is trading and follows business processes, such as having a business plan in place.
- The firm has a constitution or written guiding principles that reflect its employment objective concerning disadvantaged people.
- The firm has a management structure that supports trading as the firm's primary purpose.

Employment:

Social Firms are supportive workplaces where the working environment is one that provides all employees with support, opportunity and meaningful work:

- More than 25% of employees are people disadvantaged in the labour market.
- All employees have a contract of employment and market wage at or above national minimum wage.
- An equal approach is taken to the type of employment contracts used (permanent, fixed term, temporary) between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged staff.
- The firm operates processes to engage employees in their own and the organisation's development.
- The firm has procedures and policies in place in respect of Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety.
- The firm is compliant with relevant employers legislation e.g. Disability Discrimination Act and National Minimum Wage.
- All employees have the opportunity to progress either within the Social Firm or into alternative employment as appropriate.
- The firm is acknowledged as a good employer by employees and stakeholders.
- The firm is acknowledged as a good employer through an external accreditation process.

Empowerment:

Social Firms are committed to the social and economic integration of disadvantaged people through employment. A key means to this end is economic empowerment through the payment of market wages to all employees:

- Reasonable adjustments are made for employees relevant to their needs.
- Staff development is a priority for the firm to maximise each employee's ability and potential.
- There are processes in place for managing stress. Staff are encouraged to have control over their working environment.
- The firm demonstrates a commitment to maintaining staff confidentiality. There is a procedure in place that demonstrates when staff have agreed what information can be shared.
- Volunteers have agreements that reflect good practice in volunteering.
- The firm provides Disadvantage/Disability Equality and Awareness training to all staff as appropriate (e.g. mental health awareness).
- The firm has an added emphasis on training for disadvantaged staff. Training reinforces and builds on learning and takes account of developing social skills as appropriate.
- The firm's organisational structure is enabling and encourages staff to participate in business decisions as appropriate.
- Trainees, work experience candidates and volunteers have different programmes and responsibilities to those of employees. Training should be time-limited and should lead to an award once competences are achieved.

Hungary.

Nationally it is guaranteed by law that all firms employing more than 20 people should employ a disabled person, or pay a special tax (5% of production) to a certain development fund, which is used for creating workplaces and better work conditions for disabled people.

In all greater cities it is also compulsory for the local government to set up protected places of work for disabled persons.

There are also networks providing work for people with a changed ability to work. These firms are usually private companies applying for some state fund, but they must be sustainable financially.

If young adults are not able to work permanently, there is a day-care system set up for them in every major town, where they are given the opportunity of doing different temporary jobs: making brushes, assembling pens or small toys.

Only 9% of the disabled population of age had a workplace in 2001. Since then, 1/3 of the concerned were successfully put into work. (National Disability Plan)

Lithuania.

Different tools used while supporting the employment of disabled people

Considering the legal regulations in Lithuania we can identify one basic tool of supporting the employment of people with disabilities:

Law on Support for Employment indicates main tools used while supporting the employment of people with disabilities. This law clarifies main principles of **Subsidised Employment** as indicated above.

Active labour market policy measures cover:

- 1) vocational training of the unemployed and of the employees who have been given a notice of dismissal;
- 2) non-formal education of the unemployed and of the employees who have been given a notice of dismissal;
- 3) supported employment;**
- 4) support for job creation;
- 5) job rotation.

The main institution implementing the employment support policy is Labour Exchange offices all over Lithuania. For people with disabilities there are special sub-divisions established there to provide supported employment.

Current practice relating to the delivery of Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems in the partner countries.

United Kingdom.

UK vocational education and training is flexible, responsive and relevant to the needs of industry as well as individuals. Business works with government, professional and trade associations, awarding bodies and training providers to make sure that we can develop the skills we need today and plan for the skills we will need tomorrow. Employers and individuals know that they get consistent standards and quality built into UK vocational education and training. Many of these are delivered through the strategies and practice outlined above and the process begins in the transition phase of secondary education, again previously outlined.

UK government policy is continually reviewing vocational education and training provision to keep abreast of employer and individual needs. The Government has adopted a comprehensive approach to driving up participation in learning and is committed to making learning more attractive and accessible to learners of all ages.

The [National Skills Strategy](#) aims to provide a framework and delivery plan for meeting the economy's skills needs, including the development of the vocational ladder and the qualifications framework. It aims to engage employers across all areas of skills development and to make sure there is a coherent approach to policy in vocational education and training.

All government departments, the Learning and Skills Council, Sector Skills Councils, Regional Development Agencies and other vocational education and training stakeholders will work together under the framework of the National Skills Strategy.

The UK vocational education and training system involves a wide variety of key players from funding bodies to training institutions. Several national bodies are responsible for setting standards, designing and regulating qualifications, ensuring quality and funding and planning the delivery of vocational education and training (see http://www.britishcouncil.org/training_and_skills_in_the_uk-2.pdf for more details).

A new network of Sector Skills Councils leads the drive to increase skills and workforce development in specific industry and business sectors. The SSCs are owned and run by employers, and draw on the expertise and active involvement of trades unions, professional bodies and other stakeholders in the sector. Their goals are to:

- reduce the skills gaps and shortages and anticipate future needs
- help employers and individuals to make informed choices
- improve productivity, business and public services performance

- increase opportunities to develop and improve individual productivity so that everyone can benefit
- improve the learning supply, including the development of apprenticeships, higher education and national occupational standards

To achieve these goals the tasks of the SSCs include:

- planning for skills development in their sector, based on skills analyses which include information about destinations and earnings for different career and occupational pathways
- promoting employer skills investment and innovation and ensuring that the needs of small and micro businesses are fully met
- building an effective employer network, including the development of employer learning networks and group training arrangements
- promoting career opportunities
- defining key sector occupational skills ensuring the development of comprehensive national occupational standards
- promoting learning and qualifications including specific initiatives such as Investors in People and Modern Apprenticeships

The SSCs are supported by the [Sector Skills Development Agency](#) (SSDA) which promotes effective working between sectors. The SSDA funds, supports and monitors the performance of SSCs across the UK.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and Ofsted ensure that the work of training providers is consistently high. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds and plans education and training for over 16-year-olds. Their work raises participation and attainment by putting the learners' needs first.

Further Education colleges in the UK put an emphasis on student-focused learning when providing vocational training. Further education colleges in the UK are autonomous. This means that they can make their own budgetary decisions and can respond quickly to new demands. Their emphasis is on student-focused learning, with the student at the centre of the learning process. They all operate extensive student support services

There are over 500 further education colleges in the UK. Between them, they serve the learning needs of millions of adults and school leavers as well as providing vocational opportunities for school children from the age of fourteen. In England alone, there are over four million learners in colleges. Many colleges also take students from all over the world and some work in partnership with colleges and businesses around the world. The majority of the UK further education students are part-time and over 21 years old.

All colleges comply with a national framework of quality standards, rigorously applied by government, industry and the UK qualification awarding authorities. Further education colleges offer programmes at all levels - community interest courses, foundation programmes, certificates, National Vocational Qualifications and Scottish Vocational Qualifications, diplomas, degrees and some post-graduate opportunities. These include basic vocational and pre-vocational courses; specialised courses for managers, technicians and craftsmen; postgraduate professional courses, in association with

professional bodies; graduate-level courses and general education courses. They also offer progression to higher education and sometimes have formal partnership arrangements with universities to deliver the first one or two years of selected university degree programmes. The combination of vocational and academic courses allow people to 'mix and match' their study.

The UK further education colleges offer more programmes of study than school sixth forms and universities combined.

In order to make training more flexible to the needs of both employers and employees, Learndirect has been developed as a network of online learning and information services that is sponsored by the UK government to bring quality education to every individual and employer. There are over 750 specially designed learndirect courses for individuals, who can study via the web or visit one of the many learndirect centres around the country.

In Scotland, for example, more than 400 learning centres take learning into the community and provide flexible access to allow people to learn what, where and when most suits their needs. There is a range of specially designed courses and customised learning solutions for businesses and a range of workplace learning opportunities. Learndirect also provides information about over 500 000 UK-wide courses to bring vocational and pre-vocational training within the reach of every individual.

Regional Diversity

Scotland

The vocational education and training system in Scotland is based on exactly the same employer-led principles as in England, uses the same occupational standards and prizes its responsiveness and flexibility. The key agencies perform similar functions, but the names are different. The two systems run in parallel to one another but with differences in terminology. The lynchpin of the system is the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), which is both an accrediting and an awarding body. It can award every type of Scottish qualification except degrees. SQA is also involved in extensive international programmes. It supports the development of qualification systems worldwide through the provision of consultancy services and support. SQA also works to promote education and training for best practice internationally and its expertise is sought by countries seeking to reform their own systems.

Other differences include:

- The 46 FE colleges are funded by the Scottish Further Education Funding Council
- National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are called Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). For more information please visit NGFL Scotland.
- The college sector is inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education

- The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework takes account of the range of qualifications available in Scotland
- The Modern Apprenticeship Programme is available at one level - level 3, broadly equivalent to Advanced Modern Apprenticeships in England. Modern Apprenticeships are available for 16-24 year olds with a limited number of opportunities for workers over 25. All young people in Scotland aged 16-17 are entitled to Skillseekers training. The main elements of Skillseekers are training leading to a recognised qualification up to SVQ level 3, an individual training plan and employer involvement.

For more information about the Scottish system please visit www.scotland.gov.uk

Wales

The National Council for Education and Training in Wales is responsible for the funding, planning and promoting of further education, work-based training, adult and continuing education and school sixth forms.

Fforwm is the national organisation representing all 23 further education colleges in Wales.

ACCAC is the principal advisory body to the National Assembly for Wales on all aspects of the school curriculum, examinations, assessment and vocational qualifications.

Northern Ireland

The Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIC) represents further education colleges in Northern Ireland.

The Council for the Curriculum, Education and Assessment (CCEA) is the regulatory authority for external qualifications for students in full-time education to age 19 in Northern Ireland.

Hungary.

It is not uniform for the whole country. Most special schools for disabled students have no access to serious games, because they are not part of the central educational plan for them. Though, local schools are encouraged to form partnerships with other members of the society and take part in different programs, if they have the chance. In case of integrated schools (like Kolping and Öveges) Hungarian VET softwares are widely used in case of dyslexia and developing separate skills like logical thinking, memory, etc. Students and teachers find PCs a great aid to education.

Lithuania.

There is only one official vocational educational training institution specialised for the deaf and hearing impaired people – Vilnius Rehabilitation Centre of Vocational Training for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Any person over 16 years can join the Centre and obtain general and vocational education or only vocational education. It's a public institution fully funded (including hosting of students in the hostel and subsistence) by the government. Students can obtain those professions:

- woodworker-furniture renovator;
- builder;
- master for the house's interior works;
- publishing office worker;
- typists and technical editors;
- office workers;
- tailors;
- cook/pastry-cook ;
- simple crafts and handcrafts;

The majority of deaf students choose general education and then they join vocational training schools where the secondary education is obtained in parallel with vocational.

Some students choose studies in other cities, where the educational programmes are adopted to their specific (e.g. deaf) requirements: Kaunas Arts School, Klaipeda Vocational Business and Service School, Vilnius School of Tailors and Mechanics.

Barriers to employment for the project target groups

United Kingdom.

Employment barriers for people with learning disabilities

Getting and holding down a job has traditionally been an enormous challenge for people with learning disabilities. Valuing People, the UK Government White Paper on learning disability agrees that Disabled people are amongst those in our society with the lowest employment rates. It is likely that less than 10% of people with learning disabilities are in employment. Paid employment will not be a realistic option for all those with learning disabilities, but real jobs with real wages are a major aspiration for many people.

The report states that the reasons for this exclusion from the labour market are complex, but they include:

- Low expectations on the part of many agencies and professionals of what people with learning disabilities can achieve. This has meant that many learning disabled young people have not received training and preparation for

- employment. Services working with adults with learning disabilities have not seen helping them find work as a priority;
- The interaction between social security benefit rules and employment can result in disincentives to work for some learning disabled people
 - Difficulties in progressing from supported employment schemes (where these exist) into mainstream employment.

The “benefits trap”, as it is commonly known is now being addressed by the *Department of Work and Pensions* (See *Department for Work and Pensions ‘No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility’ Public consultation Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by Command of Her Majesty July 2008 Cm 7363*), together with a range of Government strategies that have been developed to support learning disabled people into employment (see below).

The *Foundation for Learning Disabilities’* policy briefings agree that the ‘benefits’ trap has formed a major barrier to employment but also cites the lack of preparation for employment in schools as another barrier, together with insufficient support for the transition process from the wholly supportive environment of a special school to independent living in the community in general.

The *2008 British Workplace Behaviour Survey* found that a major barrier to sustaining employment was the negative treatment that people with learning disabilities experienced in the workplace.

This research shows that disabled people and people with long-term illnesses are more likely to perceive themselves as subject to negative treatment at work, and this was argued to have implications for Government policy:

- Negative treatment at work may frustrate Government policy by deterring disabled people and people with long-term illnesses from accessing, or remaining in, employment.
- Moving more disabled people and people with long-term illnesses into workplaces where they may experience such negative treatment, may have negative effects on their health and welfare and be an unintended consequence of Government policy.
- If ill-treatment at work causes long-term ill health, then appropriate measures to tackle such behaviour may be an important part of the effort to reduce the numbers moving out of work and onto Employment and Support Allowance.

Negative treatment was defined within the report as including the following:

Type of negative behaviour	Reports any disability or long-term illness	No disability or long-term illness
1 - Someone withholding information which affects your performance	18.9%	15.6%
2 - Pressure from someone else to do work below your level of competence	19.3%*	13.5%
3 - Having your opinions and views ignored	36.6%*	29.8%
4 - Someone continually checking up on you or your work when it is not necessary	25.0%*	19.4%
5 - Pressure from someone else not to claim something which by right you are entitled to	15.8%*	9.8%
6 - Being given an unmanageable workload or impossible deadlines	41.1%*	31.1%
7 - Your employer not following proper procedures	35.2%*	22.4%
8 - Being treated unfairly compared to others in your workplace	21.5%*	16.7%
9 - Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	13.4%*	8.7%
10 - Gossip and rumours being spread about you or having allegations made against you	21.8%*	12.1%
11 - Being insulted or having offensive remarks made about you	27.4%*	16.2%
12 - Being treated in a disrespectful or rude way	34.7%*	24.8%
13 - People excluding you from their group	14.1%*	8.7%
14 - Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job	14.4%*	8.1%
15 - Persistent criticism of your work or performance which is unfair	22.5%*	13.4%
16 - Teasing, mocking, sarcasm or jokes which go too far	18.7%*	13.2%
17 - Being shouted at or someone losing their temper with you	37.3%*	25.9%
18 - Intimidating behaviour from people at work	25.4%*	15.2%
19 - Feeling threatened in any way while at work	19.4%*	12.3%
20 - Actual physical violence at work	11.6%*	5.5%
21 - Injury in some way as a result of violence or aggression at work	8.8%*	4.7%

Asterisks (*) denote statistically significant differences between the two types of employees ($p < .05$ or less).

Other barriers that Greenhat Interactive has observed in our experience of working with the client group include:

- Lack of self confidence and self esteem
- Self-fulfilling low expectations of self achievement
- Over – protective carers
- Lack of independent life skills, including travel and personal hygiene and cleanliness
- Insufficient or inaccessible information, advice and guidance
- Use of jargon in job advertisements and job descriptions
- Overly complicated application procedures
- Employers' lack of awareness about the disability itself
- Media stereotyping.

These barriers have now been thoroughly researched and the needs of people with learning disabilities thoroughly researched. This has resulted in a number of UK Government strategies, some of which are summarised in previous chapters.

Hungary.

According to the experiences of the Kozmutza School for disabled students (Veszprém) employers are more concerned with results and efficiency than with social responsibility. They tend to employ disabled people as long as there is financial support from the government, but not longer.

To help the integration of their clients, social workers are helping the disabled to adapt to their workplaces, as well as help new colleagues to adapt to their new disabled workmates too.

The school has originally taught gardening and rug spinning as a profession, now they have several programmes for their clients. Students are taken to different workplaces and spend there a few months to get to know different professions and adapt to different people and situations. They have contracted to five companies, where students are put into practice: the zoo, a furniture factory, a car parts producer factory, a bakery and the laundry and canteen of the county hospital.

The Életet Segítő Alapítvány (Foundation for Helping Life) is an NGO is helping to integrate these people into workplaces. With their help, in the last years 50% of students, finishing school, were occupied permanently. They usually work part-time.

A further problem is, that many parents feel that it is not right to make their children work.

If young adults are not able to work permanently, there is a day-care system set up for them in every major town, where they are given the opportunity of doing different temporary jobs: making brushes, assembling pens or small toys.

In the Óveges Grammarschool (where dyslexic children are thought integrated and segregated) most students continue their studies at universities, the school has no official statistics about their rate of employment, but they estimate that it is the same as for average students. After finishing the school, many students does not even report their condition to their workplaces or further education places, because they can cope with the tasks.

In the Kolping Vocational School (for problematic children, where our target groups are mild mentally disabled and dyslectic students), students try to remain in the school as

long as possible (till 23 when they reach the age set by the government), many of them move back to their parents, far away from the school and does not report back to the school about their employment.

Lithuania.

The Institute of Labour and Social Researches together with Vilnius Rehabilitation Centre of Vocational Training for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing implemented study on social integration of the deaf people (2006).

Respondents data:)

- 53 % women and 47% men
- age – from 17 to 55 old
- education level – 66 % lower than secondary, 11% - vocational, 6% - high, 6% - higher

The main barriers in finding a job (according the study):

1. Employers propose very low salary (38 proc. respondents)
2. I have difficulties in communication (31 proc. respondents)
3. I wanted to work but couldn't find any job (28 proc. respondents)

What are the main skills gaps for the target groups in trying to enter employment?

United Kingdom.

Employability Skills

People with learning disabilities may have a significant skills gap between their academic skills learned in school and having the skills to obtain employment. To this end a number of pre-vocational courses have been developed in the UK. Post 16 Colleges of further Education, private training agencies, community and voluntary sector agencies supporting people with learning disabilities into employment and schools with students with special needs all offer a range of accredited courses to support people with learning disabilities to develop their “employability” skills through increasing their Basic Skills (literacy, numeracy and ICT); Key Skills (communication, problem solving and working with others); Personal Development Skills (Health, Hygiene and appearance, managing behaviour, coping with stress etc) and Preparation for Working Life (Applying for work, choosing the right job; writing a CV or job application etc).

Identified skills gaps are concerned mainly with communication, inter-personal skills, numeracy and literacy skills

It is acknowledged, however, that theoretical courses alone are insufficient to prepare a person with a learning disability for work. As well as pre-vocational skills they will need to study for a particular vocation, will need confidence building, to develop their motivation and self-esteem and aspirations and will need to build their capacity for work through longer work placements and work experience, often by volunteering. For example, specialist learning disability colleges, such as the **National Star College**, provide for other forms of preparation, including:

- Employability sessions based on learners running their own enterprise to develop their skills vocationally and in working the community
- Extensive work placements, with Job Mentor support for both the learner and the employer to enhance all available learning opportunities.
- Regular reviews with a Personal Tutor to capture progress, celebrate success and ensure challenging goals are set for future development.

Hungary.

In the Kozmutza school teachers replied that skill gaps are very individual, some students must be trained to be able to get about with public transport or on foot, there are problems with personal hygiene, communication with workmates, etc. These problems are solved with the help of a social worker. Skills connected to work: usually they select a work that can be easily completed by the individual.

In the Öveges school teachers found, that basic skills missing are: skills to study, handling anxiety, and effective verbal communication. The self esteem of students is so low, it hinders students from acquiring even those skills, they would be able to learn due to their condition.

Lithuania.

The main reason for members of the target group finding it difficult to procure employment very often comes from the employers fears to face difficulties in communication with the people of the target group.

It's also evident that equipment and teaching technologies used in the vocational training centres are quite old and usually do not respond to the needs of the labour market.

There is lack of training in personal and cross personal and professional skills for target group.

The deaf and hearing-impaired people demand for better integration in the labourmarket:

1. Possibility to ask an employment specialist assistance, to go together to employer (61 %)
2. Possibility to ask a BSL interpreter assistance (53 %)
3. To have a database of employers ready to employ the deaf or hearing impaired people (36 %)
4. To propose a short CV in video format, to have it presented on-line on job search database's websites (34 %)

5. Participation in the training to improve personal skills how to communicate in job search and present oneself (31 %)

What is the current use of games-based and computer games-based learning? How is the potential for its use perceived?

United Kingdom.

“Serious gaming” is defined as the use of games and gaming dynamics for non-entertainment purposes and is the basis of the GOET project platform. Whilst it is still a fairly new delivery platform in the UK, researchers assess that serious gaming, and the use of virtual environments in particular, are set to “take off” dramatically in the next few years, in educational, business, therapeutic and medical applications.

Connolly and Stansfield (2007) define games-based learning (GBL) as: “...*the use of a computer games-based approach to deliver, support and enhance teaching, learning, assessment, and evaluation*” (in Healy & Connolly, 2007). Down (2008) states that GBL refers to different kinds of software applications that use games for learning or educational purposes. Games based learning can also be called ‘serious games’, and these types of games can either be 3D immersive environments or “simpler games such as quiz games” (Down, 2008).

Other research has shown that there may be real benefits in using games for learning; “...*research has shown that learning is much more effective when the student has fun*” (Koops, 2008). This is one of the main reasons for using games to educate, as much more is learnt when the student is enjoying the education. Another reason is “*computer games provide a good environment for learning because they are able to give instant feedback to the players, which is highly beneficial for learning*” (Prensky, 2001).

Becta Emerging technologies for learning Volume 3 (2008): Emerging trends in serious games and virtual worlds: Sara de Freitas Serious Games Institute claims that the role of ‘serious games’ in modern culture is a recent phenomenon, and broadly arises out of the wider use of electronic gaming for leisure purposes and the increasing use of the internet to support large online communities.

Serious games, as distinct from leisure games, provide users and players with opportunities to explore non-leisure applications using games and immersive world applications for education and training, as well as supporting business and medical uses (Michael and Chen, 2006). The term has been coined to create a separation between leisure and non-leisure games-based activities in order to take games as training or learning tools more seriously. The report asserts, then, that the use of serious games, in this way, may engage under-served learners, liven up school and tertiary curricula or provide support for lifelong learners in new and innovative ways.

The emergence of virtual world applications such as Second Life and Active Worlds provides potential for supporting learning communities in new ways. Virtual world applications, like immersive serious games applications, offer the capacity for using three-dimensional spaces as new learning spaces. This can support seminar activities, streaming lectures, create cybercampuses and help to support distributed and remotely located learner groups. This may add value to existing educational provision, as well as extending new provision of learning.

The report summarises that Serious games and virtual worlds allow us the potential to:

- provide support for our learning communities
- broaden our networks of learners
- provide tools to support creative learning activity and experience design.

Sara de Freitas believes that *“part of the problem serious games set out to address is the gulf between learners’ experiences with technology inside and outside formal education. For some at least, this provides a real opportunity to extend learning beyond the conventional boundaries to the widest number, providing scope for reorganising learning and designing learning activities and interactions to fit infinite possibilities. The challenge that faces us today is how we can best make use of these applications to support learning.”*

Futurelab produced a report *‘Teaching with Games: Using commercial off-the-shelf computer games in formal education’*: Richard Sandford, Mary Ulicsak, Keri Facer and Tim Rudd. The Teaching with Games project was a one-year study designed to offer a broad overview of teachers’ and students’ use of and attitudes towards commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) computer games in schools.

It aimed to identify the factors that would impact the use of these entertainment games in school and describe the processes by which teachers plan and implement games-based learning in existing curricular contexts.

Finally, it aimed to provide recommendations for future games-based learning approaches in schools for teachers, developers and policy makers.

The study had two main activities:

- National surveys conducted by Ipsos MORI of primary and secondary teachers and school children aged 11-16.
- Detailed case studies of 10 teachers’ approaches to developing their use of games for learning. Ten case studies were completed in four schools. The schools represented a range of urban, rural, state and private settings. Two schools offered lessons based on a competency-based curriculum derived from the RSA’s Opening Minds project, in addition to lessons based on a traditional curriculum. The games used in the schools were: The Sims 2, RollerCoaster Tycoon 3 and Knights of Honor.

The key findings from the project were:

- A generational divide in games play is still evident, with a significant majority of teachers (72%) not playing games for leisure, compared with 82% of students playing games outside lessons at least once a fortnight. Boys were also more likely to play games for leisure than girls. The majority of teachers and students

- surveyed reported that they thought games would motivate students to engage with learning.
- The teachers and students in the case studies generally reported that using games in lessons was motivating. However, the study suggests that student motivation might be more likely to arise 1) when students were using games familiar from their home environment, and 2) when students were able to have some degree of autonomy in playing the game.
 - There were a variety of technical obstacles to be overcome when using the games in a school context. These were largely due to the copy-protection features of the games. Technical support staff play a significant role in supporting teachers to overcome these difficulties.
 - Concerns over curriculum and assessment appeared to be more influential in selecting the age of students to use games in lessons than the age rating for the games. No teacher expressed concern about using 'teen games', ie those suitable for 13 and over, with 11 year-olds.
 - Many teachers found the fixed length of lessons to be constraining in both the planning and implementation of games-based learning in schools.
 - There was a range of gaming ability amongst students which had an impact on teachers' lesson plans. In general, there seemed to be an expectation that students would be more competent using the game in class than they were seen to be.
 - While teachers needed a certain level of familiarity with a game to be able to use it in their teaching, achieving particular educational objectives through the use of the game was more dependent upon a teacher's knowledge of the curriculum with which they were working than it was on their ability with the game.
 - Teachers followed either competence or content-based curricula. Despite initial assumptions, the particular curriculum followed by teachers did not appear to be the primary factor determining success in integrating a game into classroom teaching. Rather, the particular context in which a teacher worked – their experience, their teaching style, their familiarity with the curriculum followed and the wider culture of the institution – appeared to have more impact.
 - Using games in a meaningful way within lessons depended far more on the effective use of existing teaching skills than it did on the development of any new, game-related skills. Far from being sidelined, teachers were required to take a central role in scaffolding and supporting students' learning through games.
 - Where previous studies have suggested that games need to offer a fully accurate underlying model to be of benefit for formal education, this study suggests that for the game to be of benefit to teachers, it need only be accurate to a certain degree: there may be wider inaccuracies within the game model, but these do not necessarily preclude the game from being used meaningfully in a lesson.

What was clear from the study was that a number of factors were significant in influencing the process by which games can be appropriated for use in schools.

These included:

- the technical infrastructure of the school (including personnel and facilities)
- institutional and professional factors (including the organisation of time and space in the school, cultures of collaboration/knowledge sharing, traditions of 'best practice' in lesson planning, and classroom rituals)

- the extent to which games can be 'disaggregated' and appropriated to meet specific needs
- the individual teachers' personal experience of games play, and their personal and professional identities as teachers
- the pervading cultural expectations of children's attitudes to and expertise in playing computer games.

The report concludes that, while games may have potential to support learning and while many teachers and pupils expressed enthusiasm in using games in lessons (for example, one teacher said "Oh I'd love to use it again. I think there's so much potential in it"), it is clear that these factors need to be taken into account by teachers, and, ideally by school leaders and games developers, before potential can be fully realised.

A growing body of research is emerging in the use of GBL approaches for people with cognitive impairments. Saridaki claims that digital games can provide learning environments that enable interactivity and learning initiative in students with cognitive disabilities (Saridaki et al., 2007). Computer games can also have a beneficial effect on choice reaction time (Standen et al 2006), decision making (Standen et al, 2008) and memory (Brown et al, 2008a) in students with intellectual disabilities, whilst Moreno and Saldaña (2005) found a significantly greater improvement in the ratings of metacognitive abilities of a group of young adults with severe intellectual abilities after repeated sessions using a computer assisted thinking skills program.

GOET project coordinator, Professor David Brown and the Interactive Systems Research Group of Nottingham Trent University, have pioneered research into the use of Serious Games for people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or sensory impairment. Together with project partners, **Greenhat Interactive** they have been involved in a number of EU supported projects to develop Serious Games for pre-vocational preparation of disadvantaged groups.

One of their first Lifelong Learning Programme projects, Game On (GAME ON- 229542-CP-1-2006-1-UK-GRUNDTVIG-G1), had as its aims:

- To create highly engaging and motivating e-learning materials in small, accessible units, to promote the development of personal development and work sustainability skills in the prisoners, ex-offenders, young offenders and young people at risk of offending.
- To embed the learning preferences of our target audience into the conceptual and presentational design of our e-learning materials to drive the most effective acquisition of these employment-related skills and knowledge
- To reduce the multiple educational disadvantage, isolation, inequality of opportunity and poor mental health experienced by deaf prisoners.
- To ensure that at all stages the target audience is engaged in the design, implementation and evaluation of the new e-learning materials
- To continuously evaluate the effectiveness and usability of the materials at all stages of production, and to incorporate these results into their ongoing design and development.

The research report of this project - *Game On: Accessible Serious Games for Offenders and those at Risk of Offending: David J. Brown, Nicholas Shopland, Steven Battersby, Alex Tully and Steven Richardson*), outlines the method, activity, results and conclusions of this project against the listed aims:

The Game on project developed a suite of serious games (Cheese Factory, Rob the Mob, Escapology, to teach basic, personal development and work related skills, as well as to provide accessible information at induction using a 3D games 'mod'. These materials were developed to be usable by prisoners, ex-prisoners and those at risk of offending in a variety of European countries (UK, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece) via the provision of locale detection, whilst education content can be added, edited and scaled to cope with a heterogeneous prison population with a high proportion of prisoners with learning disabilities using in built content editors and Extensible Markup Language. In a prison population with an ever growing number of prisoners with disabilities accessibility is paramount, and game features include BSL signing tracks, closed captions and audio tracks.

Several major issues were encountered when attempting to use serious games in this context. Firstly their use is often viewed mistakenly as a reward. Offenders who engage in work related learning are much less likely to re-offend and games have proved particularly effective in re-engaging learners with low motivation. Given the heterogeneity of the target population it is also unlikely that games (or even games of a particular type) will be an appropriate instructional model for all prisoners. The Game On materials are correspondingly offered with other learning materials to form a blended learning approach.

The theme of the games offered was found to be particularly important. Both trainers and prisoners displayed sensitivities towards some of the game themes trialed (e.g., gambling and punishment), even when these themes were considered 'light' in comparison with many of the overtly violent themes in contemporary computer and video games.

The environment of use was also a potential barrier to their use. Environmental analyses revealed that computers were typically old, with slow processors, absent or poor graphics cards and rarely allowed online access. All these factors should be taken into account in the design of serious games in this context and will inevitably affect how they are viewed by the target population who will have high expectations if they have played contemporary video and computer games.

The project also developed a simulated prison induction DVD, using Half Life, which is already being used in training in prisoners with disabilities. The Game On materials are available for download from <http://gameon.europole.org/> or by contacting the authors for offline versions.

The encouraging results of Game On led to another project being funded under the 'Leonardo Transfer of Innovation' strand of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. The GOAL project (Games Offering Accessible Learning - GOAL.NET- UK/07/LLP-LdV/TOI-009), is still running as a project until the end of October 2009. Its aims are:

- To develop a suite of accessible, interactive computer games with embedded learning objectives in Basic Skills, Personal Development and Employment Preparation.
- To improve innovation and quality in delivering Vocational Enhanced Training (VET) by pulling together a group of expert organisations and user groups across Europe

- To enhance the attractiveness of VET by the use of engaging, innovative, culturally appropriate curriculum and learning materials in a blended learning approach to match the needs of individual learners.

Both of these projects use a strong user- centered approach in order to ensure that materials developed are usable, accessible, engaging, enjoyable and effective for the target group in delivering the learning objects embedded in the games. To this end a number of focus groups are set up with numbers of young people with learning disabilities participating, supported by experienced group facilitators. These groups are consulted on design, involved in testing and contribute to project and materials evaluation.

Experience of running these groups and of observing them during their contribution to these 2 projects constantly inform the direction of further research in this field and, thereby will direct the design and development of additional games in the future.

Hungary.

The Kozmutza school was involved in different projects previously, where they took part in testing serious games: with Mr. Happy: they practiced how to dress up, how to behave in different situations, unfortunately after finishing the program they were not able to fit local conditions to continue work with the software. Now they are using a software called „Job wards”.

In every two weeks, there is a group meeting for working young adults, where they share their experiences with each other and try to find solutions to their problems, with the help of a social worker and the software.

In the Öveges and Kolping schools they use these games for developing reading skills, computing and logic skills, typing. Teachers found that students are more willing and motivated to do exercises on the computer, because it is more fun.

Lithuania.

There is no regular use of games platforms for VET in public vocational schools. Educators and students find it a very engaging tool.

Conclusion

The disparity between levels of VET training and employment support and preparation for the target groups and in the use of interactive technologies and games platforms in schools and further education is too great for detailed comparative analysis to be applied to this report, the content is self evident. However, the empirical research conducted can be presented visually in a format that has been of value in cooperatively designing games content to meet the needs of all partners' target groups in spite of the historical differences in VET practice. The results are displayed separately on the project ATutor site as 'Empirical Research Results Summary'.

