Employment
Big Society? Disabled people with learning disabilities & civil society
Research Question:

How are people with learning disabilities faring in current society at a time of austerity, welfare cuts and big society?

Focus areas:

1. Community inclusion
2. Self-advocacy
3. Employment
What did we do?

Over two years (2013 – 2015), we ...

- Talked to people with learning disabilities, their families, friends and allies.
- Spent time with people with learning disabilities:
  - in self-advocacy groups,
  - in circles of support.
  - looking for or in employment.

bigsocietydis.wordpress.com

humanactivism.org
Work matters …

Work as *the* marker for an individual’s social class and social status; indeed, it is used, by some, as a framework by which to measure the social value of a person (Humber, 2013)
People matter ...

We want to trouble to want to trouble the relationship between human value and paid labour.

We need to ask how else might we live together to support, care and enable one another? (Goodley, Lawthom & Runswick-Cole, 2014).

But we understand that many people with learning disabilities desire work ....
65% of people with learning disabilities want a paid job

5.7% of people with a learning disability are in paid work (BASE, 2017)
The current context

➢ Are 2.5 times more likely to have health problems than other people;

➢ Have a much greater propensity to develop physical and mental health problems compared with the general population;

➢ Experience higher rates of hospital admission (76 per 1000 adults) compared with non-disabled people (15 in 1000);

➢ Are subjected to systematic abuse, dangerous restraint methods and needless suffering in the care of the NHS.


➢ We now know that people with learning disabilities die 23-29 years before they should.

A host of policy responses

➢ In 1984, the King’s Fund published An Ordinary Working Life (Humber, 2013: 132).

➢ In 2005 Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People (Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, 2005) - by 2025 disabled people in Britain should have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and be included as equal members of society, including opportunities for paid work (Purvis et al., 2012: 6).

➢ In 2009, Valuing Employment Now (DWP & DoH, 2009) recognized the particular experiences of marginalisation faced by people with learning disabilities.

➢ In 2010, introduction of the Work Choice programme but only 4.8% of those on the programme have a moderate to severe learning disability AND providers ignore people who are further away from labour market, typically people with learning disabilities (Beyer, 2012: 192).

➢ People with learning disabilities are minority users of the Access to Work Scheme (Bayer, 2013), described by Liz Sayce (2011) as the government’s ‘best kept secret’.
A wicked problem

Wicked problems are seemingly complex, open-ended and intractable problems that despite our best efforts we have failed to solve (Head, 2008)
Wicked problems

• There is currently little focus on employment in transition planning for young people with learning disabilities - if a young person goes into employment they lose their Education, Health and Care Plan;

• Employment is rarely explored by people with learning disabilities using a personal budget

• Job coaching is of varied quality and not always available;

• Supported internships have emerged as an effective strategy to move people into employment but their availability is patchy across the country;

• Currently, few local authorities develop pathways to employment for people with learning disabilities linked to outcomes based commissioning;

• Despite increased guidance and support being available for people with learning disabilities to run their own businesses, very few people do.
Wicked solutions

• The Department for Education should strengthen employment as a strand within the transition review for young people with Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) aged 14 - with a requirement to engage with supported employment providers which continues at every subsequent review of the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC);

• The Department for Education should allow for the continuation of EHC plans for young people to twenty-five in employment, but not in education;

• The government should promote a national register of job coaches backed by emerging quality standards to support training and development;

• Each local authority should be required to provide opportunities for supported internships for people with learning disabilities in their area;

• Each local authority should be required to develop pathways to employment for people with learning disabilities linked to outcomes based commissioning;

• Employment support should be included as an outcome in personal budget planning.

http://www.humanactivism.group.shef.ac.uk/ assets/images/working%20austerity.pdf
Living Life to the Fullest

A research project of the University of Sheffield and funded by the ESRC

livinglifetothefullest.org

Living Life to the Fullest is an arts-informed co-produced research project that seeks to forge new understandings of the lives, hopes, desires and contributions of children and young people with 'life-limiting' or 'life-threatening' impairments (LL/LTs).

With children and young people alongside as our co-researchers - via The Co-Researcher Collective - the project is a space where disabled children and young people can tell new stories of disability; their own stories.

Get in touch!

Email: k.liddiard@sheffield.ac.uk    Web: livinglifetothefullest.org

Cover artwork produced by Living Life to the Fullest Artist Participant Brandon Styla and Co- Researcher Carrie Ainsley.
One story ...

Charlie’s story ...
• City Council needed help in the meals service.
• They looked at what jobs needed to be done.
• Created a set of task into a post
• They carved a new job - operations assistant.
• Work with HR, Unions.
• Information sent widely to providers to match interested individuals to the post
• Valued in Public team supported the recruitment process.
- Initial call for interest to providers, individuals, families
- Basic information provided
- Open day at the jobs location.
- Opportunity to get more detailed information about the job.
- Easy application with support.
• Short list invited for day long working interview
• In the morning individual learnt the jobs in the office
• In the afternoon, the interviewers assessed to see how well jobs were undertaken
• Charlie scored highly and was offered the job
Employ

- 20 hours per week, over 5 days.
- New tasks supported in systematic way.
- Some adaptation made initially.
- Support from job coaches crucial.
- The wider meals service team have welcomed Charlie.
Connor Sparrowhawk (LB)
17th Nov 1994 - 4th July 2013

#JusticeforLB
http://justiceforlb.org/