

# The lives of people with learning disabilities



Short easyread paper

# What this paper is about

People who make plans nationally and locally and people who run services may want to use this easyread paper when they talk with people with learning disabilities about what is important to them in their lives.

The paper is based on things that people with learning disabilities and their family members have told the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities are important to them. People with learning disabilities want to have the same chances in life as other people.

They want to be listened to. If they do not use words, they want people to spend time with them getting to know their wishes as well as talking with those close to them.



# Government plans



People with learning disabilities are pleased that governments in the UK have made plans to improve their lives.

In England- Valuing People

In Wales- Fulfilling the Promises

In Scotland- The Same As You?

In Northern Ireland- A review of services

Although some people's lives are getting better, others have not seen much change yet. Often people from minority ethnic communities and people who need lots of support miss out.



Some government plans are for lots of groups of people. For example the plans may be about health, care, schools and colleges or jobs.

People with learning disabilities want all government plans to take their needs into account.

# Towards a better future

## The young child and their family

If a family has a baby with learning disabilities, they would like doctors, nurses and others to talk about the good things as well as the difficulties.



It is important that families with a young child with learning disabilities get information and support. Often a key worker is a help - one person they can always talk to.



## Children



Children with learning disabilities should have the support to have the same opportunities as other children. Where possible they should go to mainstream schools. The schools should have the money they need and teachers with good training.



Person centred planning can help children as well as adults to have interesting lives. Some children might like to have an advocate or a circle of support.



People should be able to go to leisure activities or after school clubs. Some may need people to help them and someone to go with them on a bus or taxi to get home.

Sometimes children with learning disabilities become friends with another family or like to go to a centre locally to stay with their friends. Each child will have views about what they like.

## Leaving school



Leaving school can be a difficult time. Like other young people, young people with learning disabilities want to go to college, have a job or have interesting things to do. They want to have friends, they want to have relationships or get married.



Young people with learning disabilities need more support and more opportunities.

Some people like to be able to control how the money to support them is spent. Having direct payments or individual budgets can help.

## College



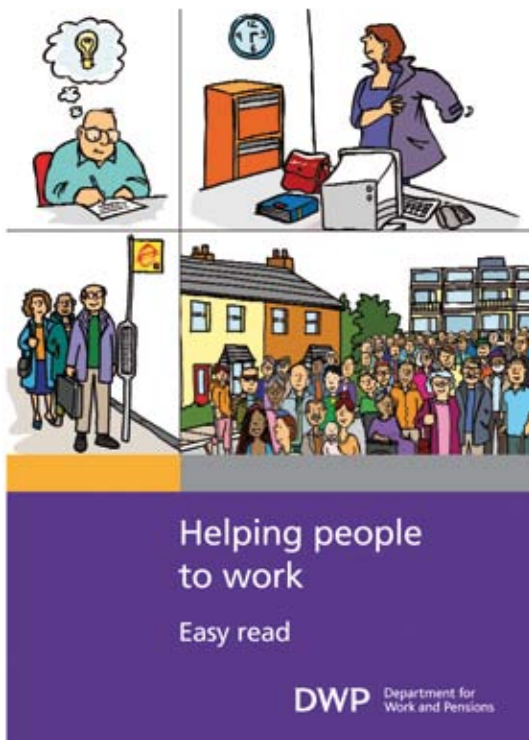
It is good to go to college, but taking a course at college should lead to a job or other interesting things to do; like a leisure activity or volunteering.



## Work



Lots of people with learning disabilities want to work. They may need someone to support them like a job coach. Coaches can help to find and keep a job.

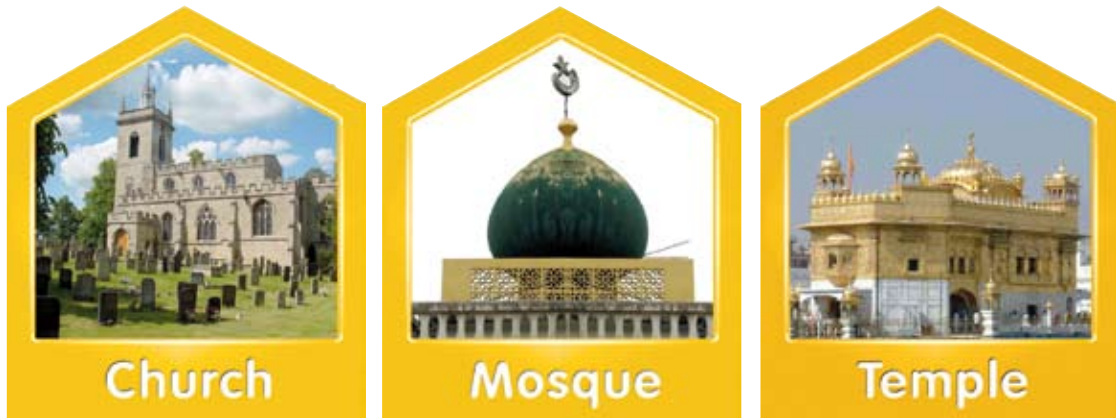


People need to feel sure that they will not lose benefits if the job does not work out. The government has said it will help more people to get work, in the Green Paper, Helping People to Work.

A Green Paper tells people what the government wants to do.



## Other chances in life



Some people with learning disabilities may need support to do things in the community. They may want to go to clubs, cinemas or leisure centres. Staff in those places may need some training. Some people may want to be part of a faith community if that is important to them.

Lots of people get help from their families, but they want friends to go out with as well. Going to different activities helps people to make new friends.



## Getting about



People often need support to get about. Some people use the bus or train. Some people use a car.

## Families



Families too need support. Family carers may find it difficult to have a full time job or a job at all. The government has said family carers should have the same opportunities as other people. Families need more help.

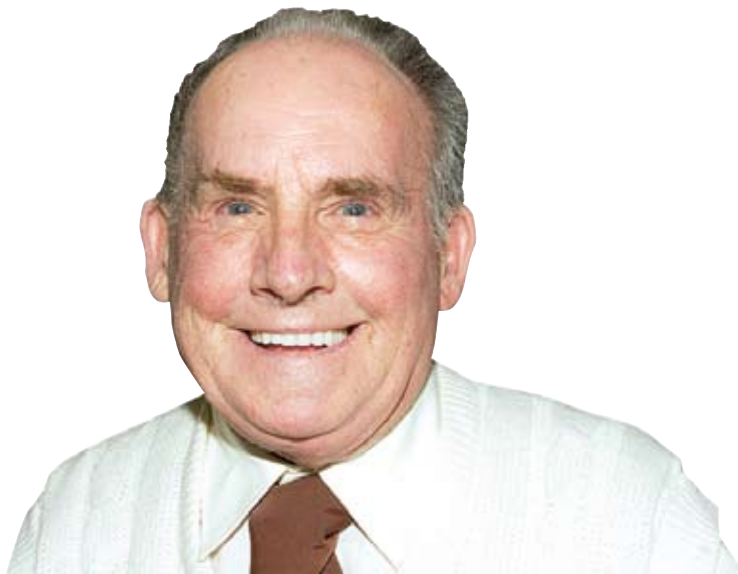


## Housing

People with learning disabilities would like to make more chances to make plans about where they live as adults. Some want to stay with their families. Others would like more support to live on their own or with friends or with a partner.

People who live with their families will want support to make plans as they get older.

## Older people with learning disabilities



When people with learning disabilities get older they want interesting things to do in the day. They want houses that are easy for them to live in, so that they do not have to move in old age.

Some younger people with learning disabilities have gone into residential homes for older people. This should not happen.



## Health



People with learning disabilities need good healthcare. They want to feel healthy and good about themselves. They may need support so that they can have regular health checks.

When they go to the doctor's surgery or to the hospital, they need staff who listen to them and give them time. It is important that staff have training about communicating with people who do not use words and the needs of people with learning disabilities.

Training should be given by people with learning disabilities.



## Bullying and abuse

Some people are bullied or get abused. There are laws and government plans to stop this happening. Everyone should try to make sure that people with learning disabilities are not bullied or harmed.

## Telling other people about what you want



People need to be able to express their wishes in the best way for them. Lots of people belong to Speaking Up groups.



Person centred planning can help people to say what they want in their life.

New laws say that sometimes some people may need others to make a particular decision for them. They should still be involved in the decision as far as possible.

## Conclusion



People with learning disabilities should be involved in all decisions that affect their lives and be able to have their say about plans nationally and locally.

People with learning disabilities may want to use this paper when they talk to people who plan services nationally and locally about their lives.

The people who plan services may have a long paper, which goes with this easyread paper.



Hazel Morgan wrote the short easyread paper and the long briefing.

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