

national transition support team

working together to improve transition
for disabled young people

Case Study: Halton Borough Council

Introduction

Using Community Bridge Builders to support disabled people to access their local community.

Overview

Disabled young people often talk about wanting to access local community facilities like any other young person. For young people who have attended education away from their local area, it can be particularly difficult for them to re-integrate, particularly when their main network has been where they have been living.

This case study looks at how local community bridge builders in Halton can support young people to be part of their community and engage with the various activities it has to offer. Part of the role of the community bridge builder is to support young people with the skills and experience needed to eventually gain paid employment.

Main transferable learning points

- With the right support disabled young people can find employment that they are interested in
- It is important to have in place mechanisms to ensure young people remain linked to their local community, especially when they attend education outside of their local area

Introduction

Halton Borough Council is a Local Authority in Cheshire covering Runcorn and Widnes. This case study provides an overview of the work carried out by the Community Bridge Builder Team in Halton.

The Community Bridge Builder Team was set up to give disabled people the opportunity to do the things they would like to do. A Community Bridge Builder supports people to find out about and access mainstream activities and pursuits of their choice. This can include for example voluntary work with an aim to working towards paid work, or accessing leisure activities to build self esteem and confidence.

Background

When young people leave FE college, especially an out of area college, the transition can be difficult if they have been disengaged from their local community. In previous years young people have left college and struggled to find day time activities, including work opportunities.

This has resulted in some young people having very limited choices, perhaps accessing further courses at a different college or accessing other day provision.

The Community Bridge Builder works alongside 'Halton People into Jobs', Adult Social Care and

Connexions to help put the young person's career ideas into action. Examples might be finding out about voluntary work in animal care for someone interested in being a kennel assistant, or finding work in the local stadium for someone interested in sport. The overall project has strategic sign up and has all agencies working together to produce a positive outcome for the individual.

Aims and Objectives

Halton Borough Council wants to ensure all young people have options of post college activities which include paid work. The long and short term goals are that each young person and their family are able to see paid work as a viable option after college. This will reduce the financial impact for social care and increase financial rewards and independence for young people. Expectations will be raised within the college leavers group.

Approach

The Community Bridge Builder attends the college leaver review along with other professionals and makes arrangements to meet with the individual young person to complete a financial assessment and ascertain their views and wishes regarding work.

The Community Bridge Builder is able to spend one to one time with the young person to support them, and can also providing travel training to ensure the young person can use public transport safely. The main aim is to ensure young people leave college with the option of paid work.

Challenges

The work/jobs available to the young person may not be in areas they would choose to work. The Community Bridge Builder works one to one with the young person to ensure opportunities are identified which would meet their requirements. It can be challenging to find work which would enable a young person to experience the world of work that is financially viable and includes support for them.

Successes

The Community Bridge Builder Team has worked with many college leavers.

One young person's dream has always been to be involved in music and the Community Bridge Builder supported her to meet the manager of Halton Community Radio based in the Castlefields area of Runcorn for an interview. The young person was successful at interview and the Community Bridge Builder supported her for a few weeks to build up her confidence and self esteem. She now runs her own radio station live on air on a Friday and is an expert in using all the technical equipment to facilitate this, she always promotes Halton Speak out (which is a group that advocates for people with learning disabilities).

Community Bridge Builders worked together with the young person and found voluntary work in various settings 3 days a week; she also receives permitted earnings on one day a week. This young person is accessing all mainstream services and has not required any input or funding from the social work team and she is living her dream!

Another young person has an interest in working in the sports industry. He is now working at the local stadium one day a week while he finishes his college course. This experience has provided him with an insight into jobs in sport and allowed him to add valuable work experience to his CV.

Conclusion

This successful project is now in its second year and has been replicated in the local mainstream college, opening up opportunities for more college leavers. It allows different agencies to work together to identify the career aims of the college leavers and look at opportunities in the local community to turn their plans into achievable goals.

Halton are looking to evaluate the Community Bridge Builder project, with particular emphasis

on Cost Benefit Analysis in an attempt to demonstrate the real advantages to young people, families and services in maintaining and developing this support service.

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National Transition Support Team (NTST)

NTST is working alongside the National Strategies and the Child Health and Maternity Partnership to coordinate the delivery of the Transition Support Programme.

NTST is based at the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector in England. CDC is hosted by NCB. www.ncb.org.uk/cdc

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