

Community Inclusion & Equal Citizenship Event

22.03.24

Summary Report of the Graphic Facilitation

Attended by 13 organisations that provide support, 13 Experts by Experience and 3 colleagues from the Department of Health, the day started at 10.30am and closed at 4pm.

To open the meeting the context of the story was outlined by a TILII member's video and then the floor was opened to the Experts by Experience in the room to share their experiences, starting with the early years, and transition from school.



The Context

In summary of this section the graphics indicate that we are on a cliff edge.

For some in school there were feelings of isolation and exclusion for some people.

Unclear path as to what came next, who could help with this and where to go to find information was unclear.

There was a focus on what age would it be appropriate to start discussing transition from school.

Discussion got animated around the fact that people leave school without the skills that we all need for post school life so there is a very steep life learning curve.

The message appeared to echo the quote Failure to Prepare is Preparing to Fail and people do not want to feel like there are failing due to a system not supporting them to succeed.

We discussed a number of government departments that affect the individual success. Examples of not being able to read reflecting that individuals may be 'dumb' yet most participants acknowledge that if there was an easy read option available they would choose to become informed using this rather than an elongated document. Therefore, some joint up thinking and working is required.

There was a clear message that people wanted their voices to be heard more clearly.

There were frustrations that services and equipment do not move with the person through the transition to adult services.

Numbers relating to the increase in SEN cases and reduction in available work force were highlighted.

Benefits system barriers were discussed where people were concerned about losing PIP for example if they got a job as once out of the system it was very difficult to get back into it.

Suggestions for a 'Try before you buy' type option might resolve this where grace periods to try these opportunities without risk to benefits might be useful as a safety net.

The point re: not just learning but life education was important alongside appreciating individual skills which might be unique but equally valuable.

People also shared that they don't necessarily want to stay in the same job, they want the opportunities available to all to chop and change as they feel fit.

One system giving equal opportunities to all citizens.

Discussion on Meaningful opportunities not just keeping people busy on a hamster wheel of classes and repeated courses.

The emotional toll of financial worry was noted.

We also talked about assessments and hospital passports, who has knowledge/sight of our reports and are we actively informed about who can and have seen them?

A frustration was felt at having to tell life stories over and over again.

A detailed point was made re: offers of DP, SDS and PCP's being a Postcode lottery.

People want choice and control to exercise their right to be in the driving seat of their future.

We discussed accessing the Arts such as photography, DJ'ing opportunities however this highlighted that these things are again often a postcode lottery.

A suggestion of a directory of services available online and accessible via mobile phone alongside social media.

The Dream

A level playing field is required which will require joint up thinking in all areas.

A solid and known plan.

A menu of options with an equal number of options for equal citizens.

The right teams in the right places.

Links across transition departments.

Strong foundations to avoid post code lotteries.

Identify people who can help people with their choices.

Funding going with the individual post 18.

Having a compass for clear directions and a core curriculum.

Appropriate public and private transport with easy read timetables or alternative information systems.

Equality of opportunities.

Binoculars to see into the future.

Consensus that forward motion doesn't have to be in a straight line if forward motion continues.

People knowing the landscape as the information is readily available at the right time.

Having policies that are lifelong rather than transitioning from one time period to another.

Being able to contribute whilst not trying to fit a square peg in a round hole.

Maintaining positive outcomes with clear processes.

Processes to ensure there is a sharing of knowledge and continuous communication which will ensure all the cogs that work together are well oiled and have smooth motion.

The Nightmare

The resounding message was that people did not want to be back round tables discussing exactly the same issues in 5years time due to no action being taken.

What it takes

Individual choice.

New model implemented.

Listening and reflection.

Menus of options.

Connections required between the statutory private and voluntary sectors.

Redeployment of staff.

Communication.

Embracing connections.

Menus of services.

Bridging of the gap between government departments and a meeting of department for an understanding of the issues and a joint up approach to solutions.

Actions

A need to have all the government departments in the same room to hear and work through some of these issues was agreed as a good next step.