

**What Next? Opportunities for young people with
learning disabilities after leaving school**

Gillian MacIntyre, MA

**Thesis submitted in full for the award of Doctor of
Philosophy**

University of Glasgow

**Department of Sociology, Anthropology and
Applied Social Sciences**

February 2007

Abstract

This thesis explores one aspect of the transition from childhood to adulthood for young people with moderate learning disabilities, namely the transition from school to further education, training or employment. The research was carried out during a time of changing expectations for people with learning disabilities. In Scotland the national review of learning disability services *The Same As You?* (Scottish Executive, 2001b) had recently been published. This report suggested that adults with learning disabilities have the same hopes and aspirations as the general population in terms of living in the community in their own home, with paid employment and good access to leisure and transport facilities. This thesis explores the extent to which twenty young people who were diagnosed as having a moderate learning disability, who left school in 2000, were able to attain further education, training and employment. In depth interviews were carried out with the young people over a period of six months in order to follow their progress in relation to attaining their goals. In addition a range of interviews were carried out with various “significant others” in the lives of the young people including parents, college lecturers, employers and careers advisors. The thesis presents the experiences of the young people in a range of settings and explores the factors that influenced the young people’s transitions. Three models of transition were developed in order to assist in developing an understanding of the different experiences of this group of young people. The thesis then goes on to explore the potential impact that being labelled as having a learning disability has on young people’s experiences and identity creation. Finally, the thesis highlights the impact that recent policy changes, such as the introduction of the Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004 may have on the transitional experiences of young people with moderate learning disabilities.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Table of Contents	3
List of Tables	7
List of Figures.....	8
List of Figures.....	8
Acknowledgement	9
Acknowledgement	9
Author’s Declaration	10
Chapter One: Introduction	11
Changing structures of support	11
Understanding the experiences of young people with learning disabilities making the transition from school to further education, training and employment.....	13
A note on terminology	16
Structure of the thesis.....	17
Chapter Two: Setting the scene – key policy developments and trends	21
Education: A move towards greater inclusion?	21
Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004	22
Post-sixteen education, training and employment policy – the Beattie Report	25
Disability policy and how it relates to further education, training and employment.....	31
The Same as You?.....	31
Equal Access to Employment	33
The role of mainstream employment services in assisting people with disabilities into employment.....	35
New Deal for Disabled People.....	35
Work Preparation Programme.....	36
New Futures Fund	38
The Benefit System and how it assists or hinders disabled people from working	40
Incapacity Benefit and other related benefits.....	40
National Minimum Wage.....	42
Anti-discrimination legislation	43
Disability Discrimination Act	43
Discussion	45
Chapter Three – Frameworks for understanding the experiences of people with learning disabilities	47
The historical development of the social model of disability	48
The social model and its critics.....	49
Learning disability and the social model	52
Learning disability and the creation of a disabled identity	55
Disabled people are free to construct their own identities.....	56
Disabled people are not free to construct their own identity	57
Disabled people do not see themselves as disabled	58
Disability, citizenship and social inclusion.....	60
Disabled people and social justice	61
Feminist perspectives on citizenship and care	64
Dependence, independence and interdependence	65
Disability, interdependence and employment.....	66
Discussion	67
Chapter Four: Young people’s experiences of transition from school to further education, training and employment – what does the literature tell us?	69
How do young people in the general population experience the transition from childhood to adulthood?.....	70

The changing nature of transition from school to work.....	71
Young people not in education, employment or training.....	74
How do young people with disabilities experience the transition from childhood to adulthood?	76
The experience of further education for young people with disabilities.....	78
Disabled young people's experiences of employment.....	80
The agency v structure debate.....	82
Is the notion of transition still relevant for young people today?	86
The benefits of employment.....	89
The advantages and disadvantages of supported employment	90
Discussion	94
Chapter Five: Methodology – a user-friendly, participatory approach?	97
Different ways of knowing.....	97
Participatory and emancipatory disability research	100
Aims and objectives of the research.....	103
Research Methods – the case for the qualitative research paradigm	104
The use of qualitative research methods	104
Biographical Research	106
A case study approach.....	108
User Involvement.....	109
Ethical consideration when conducting research alongside people with learning disabilities	110
Communication issues	111
In-depth interviews with young people with learning disabilities	112
Obtaining informed consent and understanding the research process	113
Confidentiality and anonymity.....	115
Sample selection and recruiting an appropriate sample.....	115
Inclusion/ exclusion criteria	117
Recruiting an appropriate sample.....	118
Glasgow	118
Renfrewshire	119
Obtaining informed consent.....	119
Introducing the research participants	122
Research Sites	122
Indicators of deprivation	122
Availability of post-school services	125
Further education	125
Training courses and employment services	126
Participant characteristics.....	126
Research Design.....	128
In-depth interviews with the young people.....	128
Significant other interviews	129
Key informant interviews.....	130
Positioning the researcher	131
Analysis of data.....	133
Dissemination.....	137
Discussion	138
Chapter Six: The lived experience of transitions for young people with moderate learning difficulties	140
Routes taken by young people with learning difficulties upon leaving school.....	140
Factors that have influenced the choices made and routes taken by young people with learning disabilities upon leaving school	143
Self-confidence	144
Young people's perceived involvement in the decision making process	146

Participation in school link courses.....	147
Territorial Issues.....	148
Influence of parents.....	149
Finances and benefits	152
Young people's experiences of further education, training and employment	154
Experiences of Further Education.....	155
Experiences of Training and Employment.....	158
Motivations for employment and type of work undertaken.....	158
Expectations in relation to employment and the world of work	161
Features which contribute to a successful work placement	162
Matching young people's job aspirations with job placements	162
Having a supportive employer	164
Provision of appropriate support for young people and employers	165
Effectiveness of training and employment programmes.....	167
Potential for exploitation.....	167
Potential for social inclusion.....	168
Three models of transition	170
The Logical Transition.....	170
The chaotic transition.....	172
The Disengaged Transition	174
Discussion	176
Chapter Seven: The impact of the label “learning disability” on young people’s transitional experiences and identity creation.....	178
Characteristics of the young people who took part in the research.....	178
Aspirations- The Same As You?.....	180
Young people's aspirations	180
Parents' aspirations	184
Experiences of mainstream and special schools	186
How do young people view and internalise their “learning disability”?	192
Competing perspectives and resultant tensions	196
Continued relevance of the label “learning disability”	202
Discussion	204
Chapter Eight: Post-school services for young people with learning disabilities – taking responsibility for successful transitions	206
Use of services by young people in the sample	206
Opinions on the quality of training and employment programmes	207
Case Study: Get Ready for Work.....	209
Misunderstanding the nature of the programme	210
Availability of services by area.....	211
Need for greater flexibility.....	212
Issues raised by service providers.....	214
Responsibility.....	214
Planning for transition.....	218
Joint working.....	219
Opinions on the potential impact of the Beattie Report.....	223
Key Workers and Inclusiveness Projects	223
Key trends in policy and practice.....	227
Redefinition of group – move from learning disability to additional support needs	227
Increased focus on inclusion and mainstreaming of services	230
Reconfiguration of traditional day services	233
Increasing focus on employability	235
Discussion	237
Chapter Nine: Conclusions and implications	239
Critical reflection on the research process	239

The development of inclusive research methods	241
The use of innovative research methods	242
Impact of gate-keepers on participants recruited	243
Comparison of two geographical areas	243
Discussion of key findings	244
Models of transition	245
Are young people with learning disabilities particularly disadvantaged?	245
Barriers to transition – factors that influence the choices made by young people.....	247
Are young people with learning disabilities enjoying greater social inclusion than previously?	248
Is the concept of transition still a useful one?	249
Policy implications.....	249
Who should be responsible for the provision of on-going support?	250
Should employment be regarded as the panacea?	251
How can we understand and give value to the transitional experiences of young people with learning disabilities?	253
Discussion	254
Priorities for future research and development	258
Appendices	260

List of Tables

Table 1 – Number of Pilot Interviews Completed in Each Setting.....	116
Table 2 – Comparison of Indicators of Deprivation in Glasgow and Renfrew Districts. Source: 1991 Census.....	123
Table 3 – Numbers of Young People by First Post-School Destination in Glasgow and Renfrewshire	127
Table 4 – Number of Young People by Last Known Post-School Destination in Glasgow and Renfrewshire	128
Table 5 – Number of Significant Other Interviews Completed by Role.....	130
Table 6 – Numbers of Young People by Last Known Post-School Destination in Glasgow and Renfrewshire	144
Table 7 – Number of Recipients of Welfare Benefits by Benefit Received	152
Table 8 – Number of Young People that have Participated in Training/ Employment Programmes Since Leaving School	159
Table 9 – Typical Tasks by Workplace/ Job Title	161
Table 10 - Young People who were currently or had previously been on training programmes	207

List of Figures

Figure 0-1 Post school destinations of MLD school and other school leavers. Figures provided by Careers Scotland142

Acknowledgement

In memory of my mum Cathy MacIntyre who died on 20th October 2005. A greatly missed friend, her constant pride in my work and unfailing encouragement enabled me to carry on through some difficult times.

I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Alison Petch and Professor Sheila Riddell for their support during what turned out to be a long process. Their guidance and encouragement was very much appreciated. They gave me confidence in my ability to write and I would not have been able to produce a piece of work of this standard without their assistance. I would like to thank Idem Lewis in his capacity of Research Advisor. I enjoyed working with him and hope that his input has made this work more relevant to the lives of young people with learning disabilities in Scotland today. I would also like to thank Professor Joan Orme and other colleagues in the Glasgow School of Social Work and Community Care Works for supporting me by giving me time to work on my thesis as well as always showing an interest in my work. I want to thank my Dad Archie, my fiancé Derek and my friends for their faith in my ability to complete this thesis. They have been a constant source of support to me.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank all of the young people and their families, the service providers and policy makers who gave up their time to take part in the research. Without them none of this would have been possible.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the above mentioned thesis embodies the results of my own special work, that it has been composed by myself and that it does not include work forming part of a thesis presented successfully for a degree in this or another University.

Chapter One: Introduction

Young adults with learning disabilities leaving school in the first decade of the twenty first century face a complex array of services. The development of policies and services has been complicated further by the onset of devolution arising after the Scotland Act, 1998, which created the Scottish Parliament. The Parliament has been given devolved responsibility for many key areas including lifelong learning and special educational needs. Indeed, even prior to the onset of devolution, there were growing differences in special educational needs policies north and south of the border (Riddell, et al, 2000; Riddell and Banks, 2001; Riddell, et al 2002b; Riddell, 2004). The Westminster Parliament has reserved responsibility for other areas of significance such as the Benefits System, Welfare to Work policies and Anti-discrimination Legislation. Young adults with learning disabilities are therefore faced with a situation whereby some aspects of their lives will be very similar to their counterparts in the south while other aspects may be very different.

Changing structures of support

It is likely that the majority of young people who have been classified as having a learning disability will go on to some form of further education course after leaving school. Data on the destinations of young people leaving special schools and on those young people with a record of needs leaving mainstream schools is not readily available; however, figures from Glasgow City Council suggested that in 2001, 50 per cent of those young people leaving a special school in Glasgow went on to study at a College of Further Education (Glasgow City Council, 2001). A further 14 per cent of these leavers went on to a training placement, 14 per cent on to unemployment and six per cent into employment. The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act, 1992 placed a duty on the Secretary of State for Scotland to secure adequate and efficient provision of Further Education in Scotland. In doing so he was to “have regard to the requirements of persons over school age with learning difficulties” which was used in a broad sense to include difficulties in learning and barriers to learning (Scottish Executive, 2000b). To encourage this, colleges were to receive an enhanced payment for students with disabilities. This additional weighting for disabled students was further enhanced if they participated in a special needs course (often a two year course referred to as an extension or development course) as opposed to a mainstream course. As a result, disabled students, particularly those with less intensive support needs became financially attractive to further education colleges and a range of courses to attract these students were developed.

During their time at school or further education and upon leaving these environments, young people with learning disabilities are likely to require the guidance of a careers advisor. In Scotland, this guidance was traditionally provided by careers service companies that covered local areas within Scotland, resulting in discrepancies across the country in terms of service provision. The White Paper, *A Smart, Successful Scotland: Ambitions for the Enterprise Networks* (Scottish Executive, 2000a) laid out the plans to develop Careers Scotland as part of an attempt to reduce unemployment and narrow the gap in terms of inequalities. Careers Scotland was developed as a national agency aligning the Careers Service, Education Business Partnerships (EBPs), Adult Guidance Networks (AGNs) and Local Learning Partnerships (LLPs) with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Riddell, 2004). The new agency became operational in April 2002. Careers Scotland now has responsibility for managing the All Age Guidance Projects and the Inclusiveness Projects, funded as a result of the recommendations of the Beattie committee (Scottish Executive, 1999) and Get Ready for Work, the new training programme for 16 and 17 year olds with additional support needs, which replaced the Special Needs Skillseekers Programme. Parallel developments in careers guidance in the rest of the UK took the form of the introduction of the ConneXions Service, which was responsible for all young people aged 13 to 19 in England and Wales, giving particular priority to those young people at greatest risk of not making a “successful” transition to adulthood (Department for Education and Skills, 2001). The service is currently under review as a result of the publication of the Green Paper, *Youth Matters* in 2005 (Department for Education and Skills, 2005) which acknowledged that services did not always meet the needs of all young people or work together as effectively as they should. The aim is now to integrate Connexions with a wider range of services at local level while retaining the Connexions brand.

In addition to the changes that have occurred in relation to careers guidance, changes have occurred at a UK-wide level to the services provided by the Employment Service and the Benefits Agency. Again, these changes are particularly relevant for people with a range of impairments of all ages who wish to enter or move closer to the labour market. The Green Paper *New Ambitions for Our Country: A New Contract for Welfare* (Department of Social Security, 1999) which produced the now infamous statement “work for those who can, security for those who cannot” aimed to remove barriers to work for disabled people. One result of the recommendations made was the creation of JobCentre Plus, a new agency that brought together the existing Jobcentre and Benefits Agency under one roof. Between October 2001 and January 2002, fifty-six pathfinder offices were established. By October 2002 further JobCentre Plus had opened, with the network due to be completed by October

2006 (Riddell, et al 2005). Alongside the creation of the new agency was the introduction of new terms and conditions for benefits claimants. All new benefit claimants now have to attend an initial work-focused interview in order to assist them to overcome any initial barriers to work. Recent proposed changes focussing on those claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) have been outlined in the consultation document *A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work* (Department for Work and Pensions, 2006). The aim is to reform both the benefits system and the ways in which people are supported back to work by reducing by one million the number on incapacity benefits, helping 300,000 lone parents into work and increasing by one million the number of older workers.

JobCentre Plus continues to provide a range of employment programmes geared towards the needs of disabled people, including the New Deal for Disabled People and the Work Preparation Programme. These programmes will be discussed in more depth later in chapter two. The role of frontline JobCentre Plus staff has become increasingly focused on providing assessment and guidance and a relatively small amount of time is spent liaising with employers and offering support to disabled people in the field (Riddell, 2004).

Young people with learning disabilities are making the transition from school to further education, training and employment against a backcloth of re-structured services. This restructuring may be seen as part of an overall plan to rationalise services in order to make best use of resources. The re-organisation of the careers service is part of an attempt to provide more equitable services across the country. In addition, the changes to the structure of the employment and benefits agencies represent an attempt to smooth the transition from inactivity to employment, hence removing some of the barriers faced by disabled people seeking work. On the other hand, as with the introduction of any new service, the changes have introduced an element of confusion felt by service users and staff alike. The infancy of the services needs to be borne in mind when considering the experiences of young people with learning disabilities.

Understanding the experiences of young people with learning disabilities making the transition from school to further education, training and employment

A considerable amount of research has been carried out to explore the experiences of young people making the transition from school to further education, training and employment. These transitions are taking place against a backdrop of change in relation to the likely destinations of young people upon leaving school (see for example, Furlong and

Cartmel, 1997; Jones, 2002; Furlong et al, 2003; Webster et al, 2004). The collapse of the youth labour market in the 1980s has resulted in an increasing number of young people staying on at school and then moving on to further and higher education. This has been referred to as the “disengaged worker effect” (see for example Furlong et al 2003). It should not only be understood as stemming from the collapse of the youth labour market, however, but must be attributed to a range of push and pull factors. These include a greater range and availability of further education and training courses which offer young people greater choice and flexibility. The number of young people not in education, employment or training (now commonly known as the NEET group) has risen in recent times, although it has remained relatively constant since 1999, with 13.8 per cent of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (Scottish Executive, 2005). The NEET group is larger in Scotland than the rest of the UK. In England, only 10.4 per cent of 16-18 years are part of this group. These changes have resulted in increasingly complex and extended transitions for young people in the general population.

By contrast, relatively little research has been conducted to examine the experiences of young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from school to further education, training or employment. Those studies that have been carried out suggest that young people with a range of disabilities face similar difficulties to young people in the general population, with a range of additional barriers to overcome (see for example, Ward et al, 1991; Riddell et al, 2001; Pascall and Hendey 2002; Stalker, 2003). Young people with learning disabilities, like young people in the general population, are making the transition from school to further education, training and employment at a time of change in policy direction. Proponents of the disability movement and the social model of disability have been influential in raising the expectations of what should be possible for people with disabilities. Policies of inclusion within education have meant that young people with disabilities are increasingly educated within mainstream settings (Department for Education and Skills, 2001; Riddell and Banks, 2001). The closure of long stay hospitals has resulted in increasing numbers of adults with disabilities living in the community (Stalker and Hunter 1999). In addition, the reconfiguration of day services by local authorities across Scotland will lead to an increasing number of community based activities for adults with learning disabilities as opposed to traditional day centres or adult resource centres (see for example, Glasgow City Council 2000). The net result is an increasing number of people with disabilities being visible within the community and participating in mainstream settings. The review of learning disability services, *The Same As You?* (Scottish Executive, 2000b) has been particularly influential in recommending that people with learning disabilities in Scotland should be afforded the same opportunities as their

non-disabled counterparts in relation to education, employment, living arrangements, health care, leisure opportunities and transport.

It has become increasingly expected that young people with learning disabilities should be able to attain (and sustain) a placement in further education, training or employment, with appropriate support. The Scottish Executive (and the national government at Westminster) has therefore focused on improving the “employability” of young people with learning disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. To this end, a range of policy initiatives have been introduced at both a Scotland and UK-wide level including the New Deal for 18-24 year olds, the Beattie Inclusiveness Projects and the Get Ready for Work training programme.

Given the changes that have occurred in relation to the nature of transition and to the structure of support services available, it would appear to be essential to better understand the experiences of young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from school to further education, training and employment. This thesis attempts to facilitate that understanding by presenting in detail the experiences of twenty young people with moderate learning disabilities who were in the process of making the transition from school to further education, training and employment, having left school in 2000. Ten of the young people came from the City of Glasgow, Scotland’s largest conurbation. The other ten came from the smaller, neighbouring Local Authority areas of Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire. In addition to presenting the experiences of the young people with moderate learning disabilities, the thesis will draw on the thoughts and experiences of a range of “significant others” identified by the young people including parents, careers advisors, college lecturers and employers. The expertise of a range of key informants including representatives from the Scottish Executive, Local Authority Social Work and Education departments, Further Education, Careers Scotland, JobCentre Plus and the voluntary sector was also sought. The research aimed to address the following questions:

- What are the experiences of young adults with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood?
- What factors have influenced the choices made by young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood?
- What themes can be identified from the literature about the transitional process for young adults with learning disabilities compared to the transitional process for other young adults?
- What is the range of outcomes experienced by school leavers identified as having special needs in Glasgow and Renfrewshire?
- What impact will policy and service changes have on the lives of young adults with learning disabilities?

By addressing these issues, this thesis will contribute to existing knowledge in this area. By positioning the young people with learning disabilities at the centre of the research the current study has adopted a participatory model (Walmsley, 2001; Ramcharan and Grant, 2001). The young people were empowered to tell their stories and were able to select the “significant others” who contributed to this process. In addition, to ensure relevance to young people with learning disabilities, the research was conducted in partnership with a research advisor, a young man who himself has learning disabilities. He was able to provide advice at key points of the research.

A note on terminology

The decision has been made to use the term “learning disability” throughout the thesis. Other common terminology currently in use includes “learning difficulty” while, in the American literature, the terms “intellectual impairment” and “mental retardation” are widely used. “Learning disability” and “learning difficulty” are often used interchangeably although some disability writers have expressed a preference for the term “learning difficulty” (see for example, Chappell, 1992,1997; Goodley, 2001a, 2001b;) which they perhaps regard as having less negative connotations. The term “learning disability” has been adopted here in order to maintain consistency with much of the British writing in the field. In addition, the majority of policy documents and service provision within the UK use the term “learning disability” so using the term here avoids confusion.

In terms of the *definition* of what constitutes a learning disability, further confusion lies (See Diesfield, 1999; Klotz, 2001; Ho, 2004). It has been noted in the literature that the concept of “learning disability” is relatively difficult to define and there are many different definitions currently in use. Some of the more medicalised definitions continue to rely on IQ testing. Other definitions take a more functional approach, focusing on areas of difficulty in comparison with the general population. According to Diesfield, (1999:23):

‘Learning disability’ is not an absolute term but a socially relative one and it reflects an expectation of those mental capacities which are required for ‘normal functioning’ in society. Therefore, labelling people as ‘handicapped’ is an indicator of what can be tolerated in mainstream settings.

In a recent consultation document issued by the Department for Education and Skills (2002) new categories and definitions of special educational needs were introduced to aid planning and policy development. Moderate Learning Difficulty was described as:

...developmental delay across a number of areas. Pupils with moderate learning difficulty will have attainments below expected levels in most subjects in the curriculum. Pupils have difficulty in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in many cases will have speech and language difficulties associated with intellectual delay. A few may also have low self esteem, low levels of concentration, under-developed social skills and have behavioural, emotional and social difficulty and/ or physical disability that affect their learning abilities.

(Department for Education and Skills, 2002: 8)

In the response to the consultation, there were a number of concerns that the description of moderate learning disability (MLD) was too broad, however according to the DfES (2002) it remains the most difficult description to give a clear boundary too. Indeed, according to Higgins et al (2002) the formal definition of what constitutes learning disabilities is in constant flux. They suggested that the definition changes according to evolving legislations and other eligibility requirements (See also Ho, 2004).

The difficulty, according to Riddell and Banks (2001) arises when policy makers have used different definitions of learning disability and so are talking about different populations, thus leading to confusion (see also Mabbett, 2005). Riddell and colleagues (2001) recommend adopting an “operational definition”. In the current study, the definition used by Careers Scotland has been adopted (this would seem like a logical decision given that Careers Scotland assisted with the recruitment of the young people). Therefore, the young people who participated in the sample have been classified as having a moderate learning disability by Psychological Services. They will have attended a school for young people with moderate learning disabilities (MLD school) or will have attended a mainstream school with a record of needs which states a diagnosis of moderate learning disability.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter two outlines the policy areas of relevance to this group of young people. This was a rather complex task, which is perhaps understandable given the increasingly complex nature of transitions. The chapter begins by outlining relevant policy developments within

the field of education before going on to examine government policy in the fields of further education, training and employment, at both a Scotland and UK level. As well as examining policies to enhance the employability of the population more generally, the chapter looks in some detail at policy developments that relate specifically to people with a range of disabilities. Mapping this complex policy area and raising questions about the relevance and usefulness of particular policies sets the scene for the remainder of the thesis.

Chapters three and four move on to identify the existing literature within the field. Chapter three begins with a critical assessment of the social model of disability questioning whether it offers a useful way of understanding the experiences of young people with learning disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood. The ways in which disabled people construct a disabled identity are also discussed in this chapter and it becomes apparent that this is by no means a straightforward process, but one which involves both internal and external struggles for those involved. Alternative ways of understanding the experiences of this group are also discussed with an exploration of theories of citizenship more generally and feminist theories of citizenship in particular.

Chapter four moves on to look in detail at previous research on youth transitions, drawing in particular on literature from the youth studies tradition. A wealth of research has been conducted on young people making the transition from childhood to adulthood in the general population. As mentioned above, this research suggests that transitions are increasingly complex and protracted. The available literature on the transition from childhood to adulthood for young people with learning disabilities is also examined and it is suggested that these young people face a range of additional barriers and complications as they negotiate this time of change. Changes in the way in which young people make transitions have led some writers in the field to question the notion of transition and new models and theories of transition have been developed. The chapter concludes by suggesting that in spite of the difficulties in making transitions, paid employment continues to the ultimate marker of adulthood for many young people and briefly examines the literature around employability and supported employment as a vehicle for attaining this goal.

Chapter five outlines in detail the chosen methodology of the current study. It begins by describing the various theoretical perspectives that influenced the development of the study, in particular, postmodern and feminist perspectives. It then goes on to outline the specific issues that were considered in order to ensure that the research process was as

inclusive and participatory as possible for the young people who agreed to take part. The chapter then examines the ethical considerations involved in working with vulnerable groups more generally and young people with learning disabilities in particular before offering a critical reflection on the whole process.

Chapters six, seven and eight comprise the findings chapters of the thesis. Chapter six looks in detail at the experiences of the young people as they make the transition from school to further education, training or employment. Drawing primarily on the interviews with young people and also the “significant other” interviews, the chapter outlines the routes taken by young people and identifies the factors that influence (or restrict) the choices that young people make upon leaving school and the barriers they face in terms of making transitions. The chapter then goes on to present three models of transition that have been developed in accordance with the experiences of the young people. These models should be useful in policy terms as they highlight the ways in which each group of young people require different policy responses.

Chapter seven changes focus somewhat to look at the ways in which being labelled as having a “learning disability” impacts upon the transitional experiences of the young people in the sample. Drawing on the literature, the chapter explores the ways in which being so-labelled impacts upon young people’s identity creation before drawing on the interviews with young people and their families to look at the impact on young people’s aspirations. The chapter then concludes by looking in more detail at the differing experiences of young people who attended mainstream and special schools.

Chapter eight, which is the last findings chapter, looks in more detail at the potential impact of policy changes on young people’s transitional experiences. As well as highlighting the experiences of young people, this chapter looks in more detail at the views of a number of key informants. The chapter begins by outlining the use of services by young people in the sample before exploring in more detail some of the salient issues identified by key informants. It becomes apparent that the area is crowded in terms of service provision and this has resulted in confusion not only around what services are available but around who should take responsibility for providing certain services. The chapter ends with a discussion around the potential impact of key policy changes such as the introduction of the Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004.

Finally, chapter nine brings together the main conclusions that have been identified during the course of the thesis and highlights some of the implications of these conclusions, both

for young people and their families as well as policy makers and service providers. Empowering young people to voice their opinions about their experiences and the services they have received since leaving school has the potential to teach us a great deal about what works and what does not work in terms of service provision. By bringing together the key findings and areas of significance identified throughout the thesis, this final chapter not only contributes to existing knowledge about young people's transitions, but aims to provide a starting point for considering the development of new services for this group of young people.

Chapter Two: Setting the scene – key policy developments and trends

The two key areas of this thesis, namely transitions and disability are currently highly topical among policy makers and practitioners across Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. This is a result of a growing awareness of the issues faced by disabled people in their day to day lives, and particularly at times of transition. This awareness has arisen in a large part from the campaigns of the disability movement, although other trends such as the increasing costs of incapacity related benefits to the Treasury have further catapulted the issues into the spotlight. Growing awareness and a growing interest in the lives of people with learning disabilities and other impairments has resulted in major policy developments in this area in recent years.

The aim of the thesis, which was to look at opportunities for young people with learning disabilities after leaving school, has meant that relevant policy developments straddle a number of key areas. These include education policy, learning disability policy and services, welfare to work policies, the social inclusion and social justice agenda as well as anti-discrimination legislation. This chapter will highlight the key areas of policy development before finally discussing the potential impact of trends identified for this group of young people. Because of the wide ranging nature of this policy review, it will not be possible to focus on each of the relevant areas outlined above in great detail. Particular attention however, is given to the areas of greatest significance; the developments arising as a result of the recommendations of the Beattie committee (Scottish Executive, 1999a), the review of learning disability services in Scotland, entitled *The Same As You?* (Scottish Executive, 2000b), and developments in relation to welfare to work policy.

Education: A move towards greater inclusion?

The transition process starts while young people are still at school. Until very recently, procedures for preparing for this transition were governed by the Education (Scotland) Act, 1980. This Act placed a duty on Education Authorities to provide adequate and efficient school education for their area including for children with special educational needs (SEN). Authorities had a duty placed on them to find out which children in their area had special educational needs that needed to be reviewed. They had to open and keep a Record of Needs for any child, who following an assessment was deemed as having SEN. The Act also placed a duty on Authorities to provide a future needs assessment for any child with a

SEN who they felt might benefit from Local Authority services after leaving school. Children attending both mainstream and special schools were entitled to be assessed for a Record of Needs.

In recent years there has been a move towards a much more inclusive education policy throughout the United Kingdom (Riddell et al, 2000; Riddell, et al 2002b). In England and Wales, one of the key features of the 1996 Education Act was the clear expectation that pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs (a similar document to the Record of Needs) would be educated in mainstream schools. However, a parent's wish for their child to be educated in a mainstream setting could still be refused in a small minority of cases where "the child's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children" (Department for Education and Skills, 2001:35). In Scotland, the Executive wished to see a larger number of children educated in mainstream schools, while still recognising the importance of special units and schools for a small number of children with more complex or profound needs (Riddell and Banks, 2001). The Standards in Scotland's Schools (etc) Act, 2000 required all children to be educated in mainstream schools unless it would not be suited to the ability of the child; it would be inappropriate for the provision of effective education to other children with whom the child would be educated; or it would result in unreasonable public expenditure being occurred. Although these developments may be viewed as a step forward in terms of inclusion some might argue that they do not go far enough. In Scotland, for example, the Executive is not specific in terms of the number of children they wish to see educated in mainstream schools, making progress difficult to measure. In addition, clauses about the effective education of other children could perhaps be used by some Education Authorities or Departments as a "get-out clause".

Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004

The move towards greater inclusion within mainstream education has been accompanied by a redefinition of the group of young people classed as having SEN. The introduction of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, which was passed in 2004 and came into force on 14th November 2005, has emphasised inclusion as one of its key principles but has also resulted in the replacement of the category SEN with a new category of Additional Support Needs (ASN). This category covers a much broader group of children and young people. As well as children and young people with a range of disabilities, the ASN category includes children with Emotional, Social and Behavioural (ESB) problems, asylum seeker and refugee children, traveller children and children

leaving local authority care. This arguably better reflects the changing make up of modern society but this is a potentially large group of children and young people, many of whom may require intensive support at various times during their educational career and beyond. The resource implications therefore are likely to be significant. The Scottish Executive in the explanatory document that accompanied the Bill, *Moving Forward! Additional Support for Learning* (Scottish Executive, 2003b) explained their vision as:

we wish to see an education system that is inclusive, welcomes diversity and provides an equal opportunity for all our children to develop their personality, skills and abilities to their fullest potential.

(Scottish Executive 2003b)

The Bill arose due to concerns that existing assessment and recording systems for children with SEN were outdated and overly bureaucratic. The Executive began a review of the system of assessment and recording with the publication of the document *Assessing our children's educational needs: the way forward* in May 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2001a). This consultation document received 148 responses, the vast majority of which suggested that the Record of Needs procedure required amendment and improvement. As a result the ASL Act 2004, has introduced several new measures. As well as widening the definition of young people from those with SEN to those with ASNs, the Act will see the abolition of the Record of Needs. This will be replaced by a new Co-ordinated Support Plan, however only children and young people who are likely to need services from agencies other than the Education Department will be eligible for one of these. Education Authorities will still have a duty to identify those children with additional support needs and address these needs (Scottish Executive, 2005f). However:

they [Education Authorities] will not have to formally assess every child to establish whether they have any additional support needs but they will be expected to take steps to ensure that the reasons for a child's lack of progress are identified and appropriate action is taken.

(Scottish Executive, 2003c)

In addition to these measures, the right of appeal for parents will be strengthened through a new system of mediation, appeals and tribunals. Alongside these strengthened rights for parents however, is a greater emphasis on parent's roles and responsibilities in their child's education, thus emphasising the commitment of New Labour to linking rights with obligations. Riddell (2004) has identified some areas of concern with this new legislation. In particular there may be new difficulties in ensuring that a child with ASN is correctly

identified given that Education Authorities are no longer expected to formally assess children in all cases. Furthermore it is no longer necessary to have a multi-professional assessment of a child's needs and this may lead to incorrect diagnosis (Riddell, 2004). She points to research on the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which shows that in the majority of cases health and social work professionals were not involved in the assessments (see also Millward et al, 2002; Kane et al 2003 for a more detailed discussion). Since co-ordinated support plans take on many of the features of IEPs it is likely that multi-professional involvement will decrease. Riddell (2004) argues that there is a danger that the nature of assessment conducted and the nature of the professionals involved will pre-determine the nature of the needs identified.

There is also a danger that shifting responsibility on to parents and strengthening their rights of appeal may lead to greater inequalities among young people. Riddell (2004) refers to research on the SEN trials in England, established under the 1993 Education Act that suggests that rates of appeal are higher in the London Boroughs, the South East and parts of the North West than other parts of the country. Parents from minority ethnic groups are particularly unlikely to appeal (Riddell, 2004). It would seem therefore that the ASN Act which has been designed to result in greater inclusion and equality for children and young people may actually result in confusion and inequality. Widening the category of young people with ASN may result in greater numbers of children competing for scarce resources. At the same time confusion arises because not all children with disabilities will have a co-ordinated support plan and not all children with a co-ordinated support plan will be disabled. This may lead to inequalities that will be exacerbated by whether parents decide to appeal decisions made by the Education Authority or not. The growing amount of administration and bureaucracy created by the existence of various education plans for different children might best be addressed by offering an assessment and education plan to all children who want one regardless of disability.

How a child is categorised within the school education system may have knock on effects in terms of the services they receive upon leaving school. In line with the new category of additional support needs, the Beattie report outlined recommendations to improve post-school provision for disadvantaged young people, including those with disabilities. It is to post-school provision that the remainder of this chapter will now turn.

Post-sixteen education, training and employment policy – the Beattie Report

The Beattie Committee was established to take forward the government's commitment to increasing the participation and attainment of young people in post school education, training and employment set out in the White Paper *Opportunity Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 1998). Although not targeted directly at young people with learning disabilities, the committee focused on those young people who need additional support to participate and live up to their potential in the post-school period. A particular focus of attention was young people who were disadvantaged or disaffected and "in danger of slipping out of society" (Scottish Executive, 1999a). This included young people with learning disabilities as well as young people with physical disabilities, mental health problems, low educational attainment, poor basic skills and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Again this can be seen as widening the group to be covered by the legislation away from the traditional notions and definitions of disability and special educational needs.

The key recommendation of the report was that the principle of inclusiveness should underpin all post-school guidance, education and training. Key issues identified were the transitions from school to college or training and ultimately onto employment; the assessment and identification of education and training needs; staff development and training; adequacy and appropriateness of provision; arrangements for transition and progression; and involving employers. The committee made around eighty recommendations all based around the core principle of inclusiveness. It was suggested that all young people on leaving school should have access to adequate and appropriate learning provision within a learning environment matching their needs, abilities and wishes (Scottish Executive, 1999a: 2.1).

The recommendations led to the establishment of seventeen Inclusiveness Projects across the country to correspond with the old careers service companies who had responsibility for managing the projects (responsibility has since been assumed by Careers Scotland, who are currently in the process of mainstreaming the projects to ensure equity across the country). The Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department allocated £15million in April 2001 to the establishment of the projects, which led to the establishment of key worker teams across the country. Key workers were appointed to each area to offer support to young people. They were thought to offer a single point of contact and would guide and support the young person. Part of their role was to act on the

young person's behalf in negotiating and agreeing the most appropriate packages of provision (Scottish Executive, 1999a). The main focus of the key worker was on employability and their role was to be complemented by that of the mentor who would offer support on a more informal basis to the young person and their family or carer. Although the key worker schemes are becoming increasingly well established, the idea of the mentor has not taken off to the same extent in Scotland. This is a more popular idea in the rest of the UK. Interestingly, the report stated that key workers would be appointed in each area to offer support to young people who "needed it" (Scottish Executive, 1999a). However, demand had far outweighed supply and most areas have had to establish eligibility criteria for the service such as young care leavers. This might lead some people to question how inclusive the service actually is.

The report identified the provision of guidance and support at times of transition as being of critical importance. Evidence from focus groups carried out on behalf of the Beattie committee suggested that guidance and support can often come too late. As a result, it was recommended that preparation for transition should occur as soon as possible. In addition the committee recognised that on-going support for young people at times of transition was essential and recommended that colleges and training providers in collaboration with Careers Scotland and other agencies identified ways in which on-going support and guidance could be enhanced (Scottish Executive, 1999a).

To this end, several relevant developments have occurred. These include the development of Get Ready for Work, a new training programme for sixteen and seventeen year olds with additional support needs which replaces the Special Needs Skillseekers programme. There has also been the introduction of the BRITE initiative, which offers national training opportunities to all colleges in Scotland, the distribution of and support for an assistive technology work station for each college in Scotland, as well as the creation of a virtual staffroom for all Further Education staff (see <http://www.brite.ac.uk>). This was designed to improve staff skills, create equal access across the sector for clients and support inclusion. In addition, funding has been made available to contribute towards the development of a Post-School Psychological Service (PSPS). Sixteen pathfinder projects have been set up across Local Authority areas in Scotland and between 2004 and 2006 they will demonstrate service delivery at local, cluster and strategic level. The consultation by the national development officers (Boyle, et al, 2003) highlighted support from key stakeholders for a post-school psychological service. Resource limitations however, meant that the input would be likely to be at a strategic level rather than case work with individual young people. Boyle and colleagues, (2003), envisioned the aim of a Post-

school Psychological Service to promote better outcomes for young people, by supporting young people's transitions by enhanced continuity and progression beyond school. In addition the PSPS would complement assessment and advice provided by colleges, training providers or Careers Scotland staff, taking into account younger people's life issues. However given that the role is likely to be a strategic one, the existing staff shortages within educational psychology and the unlikelihood of significant additional resources being made available, it is not clear how the PSPS can meet its aims.

As yet, little research has been conducted into the progress being made towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Beattie Committee or to look at the effectiveness of those developments outlined above; however progress has been monitored by the National Action Group and independent evaluations of the effectiveness of the inclusiveness projects and the supported employment projects were commissioned (See Adams and Stewart, 2005; Scottish Executive, 2005b; Scottish Executive, 2005e). The progress report of the National Action Group (Scottish Executive, 2003d) suggested that:

a great deal has already been achieved...However there are still far too many young people who slip through the net. And this is clearly a challenge that we continue to face.

(Scottish Executive, 2003d)

The report highlighted what it termed a "number of highly positive developments" such as the BRITE Initiative outlined above. It recognised that some developments such as transitions to employment and mentoring were still in their very early stages and that more needed to be done to improve certain areas such as the monitoring of the impact of the developments in terms of tracking the activities and outcomes for the young people. To this extent, Careers Scotland has developed a Performance Management System in an attempt to generate information about hard and soft outcomes (Scottish Executive, 2003d). However, as Riddell and colleagues (2005) note, this information has not always been collected in a consistent and coherent way. It has been particularly difficult to measure progress in terms of soft outcomes such as increasing self-confidence. Work continues to improve ways of measuring outcomes.

The report also highlighted seven priority areas for further development. These included the continued development of key worker support for vulnerable young people. One of the main priorities for Careers Scotland was to use the experience of the pilot projects to make inclusiveness a core function of the organisation. Another priority identified by the report

was the need to ensure appropriate training provision. In particular it was identified that that there was a need for an improved quality assurance framework and key performance indicators for hard outcomes such as employment and training and softer indicators of client progression such as increased self-confidence or motivation. Although the Enterprise Networks commissioned a formal evaluation of Get Ready for Work, completed in 2003, it has been difficult to access concrete figures relating to the potential impact of the programme (see <http://www.scotish-enterprise.com>). Improving transitions to employment was also identified as a priority. To this end supported employment projects became operational in seven of the Inclusiveness projects in April 2003. The developments in relation to supported employment were at an earlier stage than most of the developments stemming from the Beattie recommendations as a result of greater than anticipated difficulties in starting up the projects, and in particular finding supported employment placements for the young people involved.

Independent evaluations of the Inclusiveness projects and the supported employment projects were commissioned in 2003. The national evaluation of the Inclusiveness projects reported a largely successful picture although projects had under-estimated the scale of the task and had not achieved all that they had intended within the time given (Scottish Executive, 2003e). The figures available showed that inclusiveness clients had made 7611 entries into employment, training and educational outcomes during the first years of operation. However, these figures must be treated with some caution as the data is based upon client interventions which could be multiple in the case of a single client. In other words, if the client has used more than one service they are counted more than once. Also, Riddell and colleagues (2005) point out that it is not clear whether these outcomes can only be attributed to the success of the projects as no baseline data is currently available. In addition, the data has suggested that sustained entries of more than three months into employment, training and educational outcomes have been achieved in 6550 instances. This suggests that the inclusiveness projects are succeeding in achieving a high proportion of sustainable outcomes – 86 per cent of all entries – for their clients (Scottish Executive, 2003e). Given the well documented difficulties that this client group have experienced in the past in terms of sustaining placements, (see for example Hendey and Pascall, 2002, 2004; Morris, 2002; Stalker, 2002; Hirst and Baldwin, 1994) this would appear to be a significant achievement.

Overall, the report has suggested that the Inclusiveness Projects have added value by developing local partnership networks aimed at improving service provision for young people who would otherwise have been at significant risk of “falling through gaps” in the

existing service infrastructure. They have also assisted in the development of tools, systems and products designed to assist young people making the transition from school or care and they have provided a sharper focus on employability within existing services (Scottish Executive, 2003e). The key worker approach has been particularly valued by clients, with over 70 per cent of clients rejecting the statement that their key worker was “just another worker they had to see”. The report suggests that this may have been due to the flexibility and intensity of support offered by key workers. Three quarters of clients had seen their key worker at least once a fortnight and over 40 per cent had seen them more often than this. Over 70 per cent of clients were very satisfied with the support received from the key worker (Scottish Executive, 2003e: iii).

The final report, published by the Scottish Executive in 2005 (Scottish Executive, 2005b) painted a similar report to that outlined in the interim report described here although the figures that suggest that the service helps clients achieve and sustain hard targets such as paid employment are qualified somewhat. Overall, clients have shown considerable progress in terms of soft skills such as increased self confidence (in 88 per cent of cases) and possess greater employability (such as improvements in self-esteem, leadership, time-management, motivation and emotional control). Despite this, hard targets or positive outcomes continued to elude many of the clients. Although the proportion of clients in employment increased from 15 per cent to 20 per cent, the number becoming unemployed also increased from 18 per cent to 35 per cent over the same period (Scottish Executive, 2005b).

The evaluation of the Supported Employment Pilot Projects in eight areas across Scotland reported that in spite of initial delays good progress had been made in terms of developing innovative models of practice at local levels (Scottish Executive, 2003f). The report commended the involvement of Enable in most projects in the initial stages to raise capacity and promote learning and understanding. However it would appear that there continued to exist a lack of understanding overall about supported employment and the role of the pilots in particular. At the time of the evaluation the programme was significantly below its anticipated target outcome levels, although these were likely to be reviewed. This may be due in part to the late start dates of many of the projects. However, another possible reason may be the concept of “job-readiness” (Scottish Executive, 2003f). The original guidance provided by the Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (SEETLLD) explained that clients receiving support were expected to be near “job ready”. The evaluation found a number of instances where client were far from job ready. This may stem from a lack of understanding around the concept

of job-readiness but may also arise from ethical issues around turning clients away. This represents a crucial dilemma for service providers in terms of the client group to be targeted and shall be returned to later in the chapter. The report, although highlighting some instances of success, would appear to raise some questions as to the appropriateness of the supported employment model for young people with additional support needs. Despite these findings however, supported employment is regarded by many policy makers and service providers as the way forward.

A later report evaluating the pilots, published by the Scottish Executive in 2005 (Scottish Executive, 2005e) painted a broadly similar picture. The projects continued to perform below their targets as a result of delays in getting started and a lack of clarity around the definition of job-readiness, which often resulted in inappropriate referrals being made. In 2003-2004 a total of 342 clients had participated with 146 entering a supported employment opportunity of which 90 had sustained for three months or longer (Scottish Executive, 2005e). At first glance these figures do not appear particularly encouraging but there are wider benefits such as an improvement in terms of soft and vocational skills and a better understanding of the world of work. Overall, it would appear that supported employment is being marketed as something most appropriate for those who are job-ready. There has been a modification of the traditional model of supported employment to better suit the needs of the client group. There has been a focus on preparation for employment with significant support in the first two or three days in work, with less intensive support thereafter. This raises questions as to whether this new model of supported employment is appropriate for client groups such as young people with learning disabilities and creates dilemmas as to which groups of young people should be targeted by policy-makers.

The developments stemming from the recommendations of the Beattie committee have clearly had some success in terms of introducing more inclusive services to assist young people who are in danger of “slipping through the net” to make the transition from school to further education, training and employment. The work of initiative such as the Inclusiveness projects and the BRITE Initiative can be seen as making an important contribution to the Social Justice targets identified by the Scottish Executive as part of their Social Justice Agenda, laid out in *A Smart, Successful Scotland: Ambitions for the Enterprise Networks* (Scottish Executive, 2000a). Progress towards these social justice milestones is measured every year as part of the Executive’s commitment to social justice. While there has been some successes, for example, the proportion of people in employment, education and training has increased in the last six years in Scotland and the rest of the UK and the difference between unemployment in the worst 10 per cent of areas

in Scotland and the Scottish average has fallen from just over 20 per cent to under six per cent (Scottish Executive 2003a), there is still room for considerable improvement. Scotland has a higher proportion of sixteen to nineteen year olds not in employment, education or training (NEET). Scotland also has a higher unemployment rate of sixteen to twenty four year olds than the rest of the UK (13.6 per cent and 10.5 per cent respectively) and is twenty-first in a sample of thirty-one OECD countries (Scottish Executive, 2003a). It would appear therefore that although things may be moving in the right direction, even more needs to be done to assist young people into further education, training and employment. To this end the Scottish Executive launched six *Closing the Gap* objectives in July 2004 in order to increase the chances of sustained employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; to improve the confidence and skills of the most disadvantaged children and young people and to reduce the vulnerability of low income families to financial exclusion and multiple debts (Scottish Executive, 2004) As mentioned above this creates dilemmas as to which group of young people should be the focus of policy intervention. This is a debate that will be developed further later in the chapter. One thing that does remain clear however is the very definite focus on employability by the various projects and service interventions. This reflects New Labour's overall goal of encouraging as many people as possible into employment and is also apparent within disability policy such as the *Same As You?* (Scottish Executive, 2000b).

Disability policy and how it relates to further education, training and employment

The Same as You?

The *Same As You?* (SAY) the national review of learning disability services in Scotland was published in 2000. It looked at health and social care services and also at education, employment and other day opportunities. The key focus of the review was on lifestyles and the key principle was that people with learning disabilities should be able to lead normal lives. A series of goals were set out that suggested that people with learning disabilities should be able to be included, better understood and supported by the communities in which they live; have information about their needs and services available so they can take part in decisions about them; be at the centre of decision making and have more control over their care; have the same opportunities as others to get a job, develop as individuals, spend time with family and friends, enjoy life and get the extra support they need to do this; use local services where possible and special services if they need them. To these ends the review recommended changes in a number of areas. They recommended

that local authorities and health boards should draw up Partnership in Practice agreements by 2001. These agreements were to include needs assessments for young people who were planning to leave school and would need to use adult services as well as plans for developing and commissioning accommodation and social support. The review also recommended the introduction of Local Area Co-ordinators whose role would be to co-ordinate services and provide information, provide support for families and organise funding. The Local Area Co-ordinator would also be responsible for producing Personal Life Plans for all adults with learning disabilities (who wanted one). These plans would aid long term planning and would replace community care assessments. The Plan would describe how the person with learning disabilities, their family and professionals would work together to help the person lead a fuller life. It was recommended that everyone who wanted a plan should have one (Scottish Executive, 2000b). A recent Scottish Executive statistical release shows progress that has been made to date in each of these areas. In 2004, a Local Area Co-ordination service was provided by 23 (of 32) Local Authorities in Scotland. This had risen from 12 in 2003 (Scottish Executive, 2005a). In addition, 24 per cent of adults known to Local Authorities had a personal life plan or person centred plan (Scottish Executive, 2005a)

As mentioned above, a key focus of the review was to improve employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. It was recommended that Local Authorities should put more effort into developing employment services for people with learning disabilities and it was demonstrated that this could be cost-effective. A day centre place costs around £7000 a year, compared with £3200 for a Training for Work placement (funded by Scottish Enterprise) and £4760 for a Work Step place (funded by the Department of Work and Pensions and run by JobCentre Plus (Scottish Executive, 2000b). Of course, these types of placement are time limited and may only be suitable for those capable of progressing into open employment (Riddell et al, 2005) however such was the commitment of the national review to expanding employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities, that a short life working group on employment was established (Scottish Executive, 2003g). The working group focused on the barriers faced by people with learning disabilities entering the labour market and recommended the changes that would be needed to reduce these barriers. The report recommended a fairer and simpler tax system as well as the promotion of non-discrimination and equality, suggesting that more changes are needed than simply providing employment services to assist disabled people into work. Key recommendations included the need for JobCentre Plus to increase their efforts to engage with people with learning disabilities. In addition, Career Scotland should be more pro-active in including people with learning disabilities in mainstream provision. Support should start at school,

enabling people with learning disabilities to think about employment prospects from an earlier stage and allowing them to try part time jobs (Scottish Executive, 2003g). The need for closer partnership working between Local Authorities, employers, voluntary organisations, trade unions, the Department for Work and Pensions, Careers Scotland, people with a learning disability and their families was identified as being crucial to taking the recommendations forward (Scottish Executive, 2003g). Figures from the Scottish Executive (2005a) suggest that some progress has been made in terms of developing employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. In 2004, 3205 adults with learning disabilities engaged in some sort of employment in Scotland. Only 28 per cent of these were in open employment with the rest engaged in voluntary work (37 per cent) or non-open employment (35 per cent). The majority (59 per cent) worked between 0 and 15 hours each week. 26 per cent worked between 16 and 30 hours each week and 15 per cent worked longer than 30 hours per week (Scottish Executive, 2005a).

Equal Access to Employment

Much of the broad recommendations made by short life working group on employment are echoed in a consultation document produced by Glasgow City Council at the end of 2003 entitled *Equal Access to Employment* (Glasgow City Council, 2003). This document was produced to discuss the future of employment and vocational rehabilitation services for people with a range of health and social care needs within the city. The goal of the strategy was to ensure that:

every adult in Glasgow regardless of age, gender, background, ethnicity, personal or health history should have the same opportunity as everyone else in the city to obtain and hold down meaningful and paid work.

(Glasgow City Council, 2003:1)

In order to achieve this goal it was recognised that an increased emphasis on partnership working between the public agencies, the voluntary sector and employers would be needed. People with health or social care needs would be enabled where possible to progress to real jobs in the labour market, offering the same employment conditions and opportunities for career enhancement enjoyed by the rest of the work force. To enable this, the health and social care sector should refocus its energies to re-align its resources to provide people with the health and social care support needed to enter and sustain employment rather than providing services in vocational and employment skills.

In parallel with the short life working group, the consultation document recommended that wherever possible users of health and social care services should be moved to mainstream employment and training projects and these projects would be responsible for placing people in jobs. The document proposed the establishment of nine Equal Access Teams across the city, whose main role would be to bridge the gap between care managers and mainstream employment and training agencies. The Equal Access Teams would use the “supported employment model” to help people access the labour market and sustain employment, although the level and nature of the support would vary according to the needs of each person (Glasgow City Council, 2003). Nine Equal Access managers have recently been appointed and a mapping exercise has been undertaken in order to create a comprehensive database of employment and training opportunities across the city. In addition, European funding has been secured to fund RE: FOCUS a project that will pilot new and innovative ways of working with particular groups and between organisations and employers (<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk>)

While a move towards mainstreaming should be regarded as broadly commendable, approaches such as the two outlined here do not appear to consider the ability of mainstream services to cope with the needs of people with health and social care needs seeking employment. As mentioned above, programmes such as Work Preparation or Training for Work that are offered by mainstream services are time limited and are funded according to the outcomes that they achieve. As a result, they are likely to target their services at those people closest to the labour market. In an apparent contradiction to these recommendations, JobCentre Plus has adopted a specialist approach to their Incapacity Benefit Pilots. This can be explained partly in terms of staff lacking the confidence to discuss employment issues with people with disabilities (see for example, Thornton, 2003). While there is clearly a case for the re-training of frontline staff to work more effectively with people with disabilities, there is also a need to recognise the potential difficulties in providing a service to meet the needs of those closest to the labour market as well as to those with more intensive support needs. What has become clear from the discussion thus far is the increasing move towards improving employability for all sections of the population, using mainstream services where possible. The next section outlines briefly the mainstream services that are available to assist people with disabilities wishing to move into paid work.

The role of mainstream employment services in assisting people with disabilities into employment

New Deal for Disabled People

Stafford (2003) has described the New Deal for Disabled People as New Labour's main employment programme for people in receipt of Incapacity Benefit (IB). The programme was extended nationally after a period of piloting in June 2001. There are now around sixty job brokers across the country who are organisations from the not-for profit public, private and voluntary sector such as Capability Scotland. The role of the job broker is to work in close contact with the disabled person who will have been referred to them by a Disability Employment Advisor (DEA). The job broker will liaise with employers to secure a work placement for the person and will provide support and monitoring during the course of that placement. NDDP is an entirely voluntary programme and take up has been relatively low at only seven per cent during the pilots (Stafford, 2003). Some clients did not take part because they were too ill but others, not identifying themselves as disabled, did not see the relevance of the programme for them. Levels of awareness of the scheme were also relatively modest with only half of the eligible population having heard of the programme one year after the national extension. In terms of employment outcomes, between July 2001 and September 2002 there were 27,850 registrations with job brokers of whom 22 per cent had moved into employment including 1,400 into sustainable employment. Again there is no way to be certain that these moves into employment would not have occurred anyway. Corden and colleagues, (2003), found relatively high satisfaction among clients who had participated in NDDP. Job brokers were often instrumental in raising client confidence and motivation through working on a one to one basis. However, client satisfaction tended to diminish when their expectations of the programme were unmet. In particular, clients tended to be disappointed in the level of proactiveness of job brokers in terms of finding work for them (Corden, et al, 2003).

There was a tendency for participants on the programme to be closer to the labour market. During the pilot stages employment became the main programme outcome. This led to Personal Advisors only taking on those clients who were closest to the labour market. This is exacerbated by the funding regime for the national expansion which has led some job brokers to again prioritise those clients who were job ready as they required less support and were more likely to generate an outcome related payment (Stafford, 2003; Corden et al, 2003). All of this raises questions for those who are further away from the labour

market and one of the main criticisms of the programme is that it does not offer enough support to those who are in greatest need.

Some younger people with disabilities may prefer to use the New Deal for Young People as opposed to NDDP, particularly if they do not identify themselves as disabled (see chapter three for a more detailed discussion of the disabled identity). Evaluations of the New Deal for Young People have also been conducted in recent years (see Bonjour et al, 2002 for more detail). The New Deal for Young People has four main strands, employment, voluntary sector, full time education and the environmental task force. Young people may choose which programme they wish to go on. According to the findings of Bonjour and colleagues, (2002), the employment and voluntary sector programmes were the best performers overall in terms of employment outcomes. However, the full time education and training option and the environmental task force option were effective in improving the employability of more disadvantaged entrants underlying the benefits of multifaceted programmes for long term unemployed people. The findings that those with labour market problems tend to make more progress in relation to employability measures than those with personal or social problems suggest there may be a need to reconsider the way in which those with the latter kinds of problems are assisted by New Deal. Again this raises the dilemma of who the target client group should be.

Work Preparation Programme

Other employment programmes face similar dilemmas. One example is the Work Preparation programme which is JobCentre Plus' main rehabilitation and retention programme. The programme is designed to develop capacity and confidence, overcome obstacles and explore alternative employment through short term work trials (Riddell, et al, 2003). Training is not a core element of the programme but it may include job-specific instruction which is necessary for a client to perform the tasks of the job. Like the NDDP its budget is relatively modest and capped. In 2001-02, the budget allocated was £1.2million (Riddell et al, 2005). In 2002/03 expenditure on the NDDP was £30million. By comparison the budget for the New Deal for Lone Parents was £80million and that for young people was £270million (Stanley, 2003). This suggests that although the employment of people with disabilities is heralded as a high priority within policy rhetoric, this is not always matched in terms of funding. Riddell and colleagues conducted an evaluation of the Work Preparation Programme (see Riddell, et al, 2002a; Riddell, et al 2003). In terms of characteristics of clients using the service, they found that those with

physical disabilities accounted for the largest proportion of clients, with those with sensory impairments making up the smallest group; the length of placement ranged from one week to sixteen weeks, with a mean length of five weeks; those categorised as having mental health problems tended to attend for two weeks or less, while the average placement for someone with a learning disability was on the whole longer.

In terms of employment outcomes, only 20 per cent of people who participated gained employment at the end of it and for significant numbers there were subsequent problems with job retention (Riddell, et al, 2002a). A further 12 per cent required further education or training and 68 per cent had unknown or unsuccessful outcomes (Riddell et al, 2005). Of course, at first glance these outcomes appear relatively disappointing; however, much depends upon the definition of successful or unsuccessful outcome that have been used. These measures may not take into account soft outcomes such as increased self confidence and therefore progress is not being measured. Riddell and colleagues, (2002a), encountered some confusion around what the purpose of work preparation was. Service users often believed that the purpose of work preparation was to get them into a job and were disappointed when this outcome was not achieved. Employers on the other hand were somewhat alarmed when they discovered that some service users were hoping for a job at the end of the placement (Riddell et al, 2002a).

Demand for the programme has increased and in future priority may be given to those most likely to achieve a positive outcome within 13 weeks of completion and those who have not undertaken a work preparation programme within the last two years, again creating dilemmas for service providers. Riddell et al (2002a; 2003) found differing views about which group should be targeted. Disability Service Team (DST) managers felt the service should be targeted at those closest to the labour market but there was a moral imperative not to turn those away with more significant impairments. It was suggested that two programmes might be developed, one for those people who were almost work ready and one offering more intensive support for those unlikely to find work in the immediate future. For those with more intensive needs, much longer than thirteen week programmes are likely to be needed. Other programmes of significantly longer duration do exist within Scotland. Training for Work, funded by Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise offers skills based training but it is not always possible for individuals to obtain places on these programmes due to high demand.

New Futures Fund

One potential option for those with more intensive support needs may be the projects funded by the New Futures Fund (see www.scottish-enterprise.com). The New Futures Fund is led and managed by Scottish Enterprise. It was launched in 1998 to target problems of disadvantage and social exclusion, particularly in relation to the labour market. Funding was initially until March 2002 (Phase one and two) and was then extended for another three years (Phase three) with a budget of £15million. By the end of Phase Three, projects will have had to secure mainstream funding. The fund was developed in recognition of the fact that a number of vulnerable and excluded individuals were not coming forward to use the New Deal programme and that mainstream programmes were failing many marginalised people (Scottish Enterprise, 2002). The target group are those people aged 16-24 and other marginalised groups such as lone parents on income support and people on Incapacity Benefit. The programme is essentially pre-vocational in nature and offers support and encouragement for those who are a considerable distance from the labour market. An evaluation of Phase Two of the New Futures Fund found that clients felt that NFF services differed from national programmes and agencies in terms of the attitudes of staff, the level and nature of support on offer and the way that support was delivered. Clients appreciated the fact that attendance was voluntary, the lack of deadlines and less weight on achieving outcomes (Scottish Enterprise, 2002).

Of course the dangers with this type of project where there are no financial incentives or targets to move people on is that clients and service providers may be less inclined to encourage people to move on, thus progress is likely to be achieved at a much slower rate. While this may be appropriate for those with intensive support needs who are furthest away from the labour market, the evidence suggests that such a strategy may not always be successful. As part of the phase two evaluation (Scottish Enterprise 2002), a survey of clients leaving NFF was conducted. Although clients reported high levels of satisfaction with the projects - three quarters reported that NFF helped to build their self-confidence and motivation and around half felt the projects had been a lot of help in increasing their chance of finding work – the statistics reporting the outcomes for clients after leaving the projects painted a less positive picture. 21 per cent of clients got a job, 12 per cent moved into some form of further or higher education or training, 14 per cent joined a government programme such as the New Deal, 10 per cent undertook some form of voluntary work, 35 per cent were not looking for work and three per cent were unemployed. The proportion of those who were economically inactive, at 35 per cent, is fairly high but the report suggests

that given the very disadvantaged starting position of a typical NFF participant, this has to be expected (Scottish Enterprise, 2002).

From the discussion of employment programmes, certain trends and dilemmas are becoming increasingly apparent. Most of the writers who have evaluated the programmes outlined above are in broad agreement that the programmes do not go far enough in terms of support offered to disabled people. The criticisms take a variety of forms including the fact that many of the programmes such as Work Preparation do not offer sufficient time scales to enable disabled people to establish themselves in the workplace. This may be attributed to funding mechanisms which put pressure on service providers to ensure quick turnover of clients but can also be linked to the fact that the majority of employment programmes are supply side measures. The 1944 Disabled Person's Act focused on the employment of disabled people and introduced the Quota System whereby employers had to employ a certain percentage of disabled people as part of their workforce. Although the quota system was not taken seriously by many employers and few prosecutions were ever made, it was an excellent example of a demand side measure where the onus was on the employer and work place to change their practices and facilitate the employment of disabled people. The quota system was abolished with the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995 and in recent years there has been a clear shift towards the supply side measures outlined above. Supply side measures focus on the deficits or perceived lack of work skills among disabled people and the task is to improve these to enable disabled people to fit in with the existing workplace. Despite the lip service paid to social inclusion and the social model of disability, it is not clear how easily these supply side measures sit alongside these. Barnes, (2003), puts this well:

over the years politicians and policy makers have adopted the language of inclusion and posited what at first glance seems like social model solutions to the problems associated with disability in the workplace for example, the New Deal Programme and the DDA...but policy remains largely centred on the supply rather than the demand side of labour...policies which target and highlight functional limits of individuals with perceived impairments are prioritised and supported at the expense of those which draw attention to and seek to resolve the stark inequalities of the social organisation of work.

(Barnes, 2003:8)

Increasingly, disability writers are suggesting that in order for employment programmes to be successful in enabling people with disabilities to move into employment, they must go hand in hand with moves to reform the benefit system and make employment more financially attractive to disabled people (Bauman, 1988; Barnes, 2003). The New Labour

government has pledged to move people off Incapacity Benefits where possible (see Department for Work and Pensions, 2006 for the most recent position on this) and the introduction of the National Minimum Wage and Disabled Person's Tax Credit may be seen as a partial recognition of the need to make employment more financially attractive to disabled people.

The Benefit System and how it assists or hinders disabled people from working

Incapacity Benefit and other related benefits

The government at Westminster has laid out its plans to tackle the growing increase in Incapacity Benefit claimants in the Green Paper Pathways to Work: Helping Disabled People into Employment (Department for Work and Pensions, 2002) and A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work. The House of Commons Select Committee (2003) set out the scale of the task as the figures below show:

- Approximately half of disabled people in the UK are economically inactive, compared with 15% of the non-disabled population
- In Spring 2002 the employment rate for disabled people was 48% compared with an overall employment rate of 74.6%
- In the last 20 years the number claiming Incapacity benefit has trebled. There are 2.7 million incapacity type claimants
- In November 2002 there were 2.38 million Incapacity Benefit claimants and 45% of these had been on benefit for five years or more
- The number of incapacity claimants dwarfs the number of unemployment benefit claimants which are falling
- Expenditure on incapacity benefit is currently over £16 billion, compared to £4 billion on Job Seekers Allowance

The problem is particularly significant in Glasgow as highlighted by a project entitled The Glasgow Challenge (See McGregor et al, 2003). The project highlighted that within Glasgow some 90,000 of the jobless population are claiming a non-job seekers allowance key benefit such as Incapacity Benefit. These figures include 71,000 sick or disabled people and 17,000 lone parents. Key barriers to finding employment for this group were identified as poor physical health, poor mental health, physical disability, lack of childcare, benefits and debt issues, employer attitudes and behaviours and issues around coping with work. Over half of those surveyed for the project reported five or more barriers (McGregor et al, 2003). McGregor and colleagues argued that in order to address these barriers, significant gaps in services needed to be filled. These included increasing support

around transitions into work and in-work, and making services for disabled people more work focussed.

In a bid to tackle some of these issues, the Green Paper (Department for Work and Pensions 2002) focused on four key issues including increasing the frequency of work focused interviews for new and recent IB claimants; providing a wider range of access to help address key health and non-health related obstacles; improving financial incentives to enable clients to see that they are better off in work; and providing more support for people with health problems move from incapacity related benefits onto job-seekers allowance. A programme to tackle these measures got underway in October 2003 in six JobCentre Plus districts across the UK, including one of the case study areas in the current study. These pilots have extended the Work Focused Interview approach, making it compulsory to attend a number of work related interviews to plan a route back to independence with a Personal Advisor. Other changes in the pilot areas will include improved referral routes between these work focused interviews and pre-existing sources of social support, the establishment of work focused rehabilitation pilots in conjunction with the NHS and new incentives to encourage recipients into work (Stanley, 2003). The pilots have embraced a specialist approach and specialist Incapacity Benefit Personal Advisors are being recruited. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this appears to go against the mainstreaming approach of the JobCentre Plus (see Thornton, 2003). The argument appears to be that it is impossible for a generalist advisor to be sufficiently well informed about medical conditions and their effects, the disability benefits system and the range of external specialist service. On the other hand as Thornton (2003) points out:

boosting the role of specialist advisors risks labelling the person as someone “different” who needs “special handling”. Strategies for attitudinal change among mainstream advisors, backed by working with disabled colleagues must be tried.

(Thornton, 2003:11)

In addition to this movement away from mainstreaming, the Green Paper has been criticised for, like the employment services, “not going far enough” (Stanley, 2003). It makes little mention of employers and their responsibilities and how they might be supported in fulfilling them. This could be considered a weakness given that the report of the Glasgow Challenge Project (McGregor et al, 2003) emphasises the key role for employers in assisting disabled people into employment. It can be argued the system is fundamentally flawed as a result of the continued emphasis on the dichotomy between

those capable and incapable of work. Such rigid boundaries result in those being classified as “incapable” having to take a considerable risk to move into employment. By doing so they are declaring themselves to be “capable” and therefore no longer entitled to Incapacity Benefits (Select Committee on Work and Pensions, 2003; Schneider et al, 2001). There is a need to recognise a work continuum rather than a binary where people are able to work or not. Some limited attempts to do so can be seen in schemes such as the payment of £40 per week to Incapacity Benefit claimants if they return to work and are earning less than £15,000 per year. This additional payment is payable for fifty-two weeks and is designed to help IB claimants cope with the financial disruption of moving back into employment (Riddell, et al, 2005). The proposals outlined in the most recent Green Paper, *A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering people to Work* (Department for Work and Pensions, 2006) will attempt to remove this dichotomy by transforming the Personal Capability Assessment process so that it focuses on people’s capacity to work rather than just their entitlements to benefits. There will be a tailored, active system that addresses each individual’s capacity rather than a model that writes people off as completely incapable of work. Those who are exempt will be deemed so on the basis of the severity of the impact of their illness on their ability to function, rather than as the result of having a specific condition. In addition GPs and primary care teams will be supported in the key role they play in helping people back to work. For those on existing benefits, the level of their benefits will be protected should they enter work and find that they need to return to benefits (Department for Work and Pensions, 2006).

National Minimum Wage

The National Minimum Wage (NMW) may be regarded as an incentive to make employment more financially attractive for disadvantaged and low paid workers. Although not directly targeting disabled people, certain advocates hoped that disabled workers would benefit financially from the new legislation. There were concerns from some organisations such as MENCAP and MIND that the introduction of the legislation may mean that the jobs of employees with low levels of productivity (including those with disabilities) might be jeopardised as it would not make sense financially to employ them. However the Low Pay Commission argued that disabled workers should be treated in the same way as other employees in order to recognise their value to employers and to promote social inclusion (Burchardt and McKnight, 2003). Schneider and colleagues (2001) and Burchardt and McKnight (2003) both undertook research to examine the impact of the NMW on disabled workers. Both groups of researchers reported broadly similar findings and argued that excluding disabled workers from the provisions of the NMW could not be justified. There

was no evidence to suggest that disabled workers lost their jobs as a result of the NMW and some groups of disabled workers did benefit financially. However there was some suggestion that disabled workers (especially males) reduced their hours worked around the time of the introduction of the NMW although this seems to be part of a wider trend and may be influenced by wider policy changes such as the introduction of Disabled Person's Tax Credit (Burchardt and McKnight, 2003).

Paradoxically, there was some evidence to suggest that the intersection between benefits and wages meant that many disabled workers were no better off even after the introduction of the NMW. Schneider et al (2001) have provided a detailed discussion of the way in which the NMW interacts with Income Support in particular to provide a disincentive to work. The regulations of Income Support (such as the £15 earnings disregard) have not been adjusted to take into account the NMW. As a result every pound extra earned over the £15 disregard earned as a result of the NMW will be deducted from benefits. It would appear that the effect of policy changes such as the NMW and employment services to encourage disabled people into employment will continue to be limited by their interaction with the benefits system. Although attempts are being made to encourage people off Incapacity Benefit into paid employment, the system continues to be based on inflexible binaries that require disabled people to take a risk (although this problem has recently been recognised by the government). Disabled people fear they will be financially worse off in work and attempts to introduce flexibility into the system such as the new "permitted work" rules do not appear to do enough to alleviate these fears. As Schneider et al (2001) comment in relation to the National Minimum Wage:

notwithstanding the positive impact of NMW on many people, it would be paradoxical if a measure that was designed to benefit the poorest workers should continue to limit the choices of the most vulnerable

(Schneider et al, 2001:746).

Anti-discrimination legislation

Disability Discrimination Act

As discussed in the previous section providing employment services to assist disabled people into employment are unlikely to be effective unless they are accompanied by a reform of the benefits system. Likewise to be used to greatest effect, employment services need to go hand-in-hand with anti-discrimination legislation. Young people with

disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood not only need to be protected by anti-discrimination legislation in the workplace but also in places of further education and training. Part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 extends the provisions of the Act to cover Further and Higher Education Institutions as well as Local Education Authorities and Local Authorities in relation to adult education and youth services. In addition, from April 2004, the Act was extended to cover previously exempted areas from the employment provision such as previously excluded occupations and small employers. The Disability Act 2003 announced in the Queens Speech in November 2003, places a duty on public sector bodies to positively promote equality for disabled people in line with the Race Relations Amendment Act, 2000.

The effectiveness of the DDA has been monitored closely by the Disability Rights Commission and independent evaluations have been carried out. It would appear that awareness of the Act is growing and people are making increasing use of it. Meagre et al (2003) point out that cases being brought have steadily increased since the Act's inception in 1995, although the success rate for such cases is extremely low. The vast majority of cases are withdrawn or settled before they even reach court (Meagre et al, 2003). The Act would appear to be more successful in assisting those already in employment rather than those trying to move into the labour market. It is very difficult to prove that discrimination has occurred at the recruitment stage and cases are less likely to be brought here. Although there has been a very slight rise in the employment rate of disabled people, (from 45.1 per cent to 48.8 per cent) it is very difficult to know whether this is attributable to the DDA or to other factors such as employment programmes (Riddell, et al, 2005). The main criticism of the Act relates to the difficulties faced by people with disabilities both in terms of meeting the definitions of disability under the Act and proving that discrimination has occurred (Gooding, 2003). The onus is very much on the disabled person not only to prove that they are disabled (which can be difficult in the case of invisible disabilities) but that discrimination has occurred as a result of their disability. Even when a disabled person can establish they have been treated less favourably and as a result of their disability, there is a legal stipulation that the disability is sustained and long term (Roulstone, 2003). Claimants therefore have multiple hurdles to overcome in order to bring a successful claim under the Act. Even then employers may not be prosecuted if they can prove the discrimination was justified. Unlike other anti-discrimination legislation, for some disabled people the legislation must appear designed to make their claim as difficult as possible to prove. The situation may improve as a result of the European Framework Directive which was due to come into effect in October 2004. This Directive states that treatment against a disabled person cannot be justified if it amounts to direct

discrimination. This is defined as treating a disabled person less favourably on the grounds of their disability than as a person not having that disability whose relevant circumstances are the same or not materially different from those of the disabled person (Gooding, 2003).

Most writers would appear to agree that the DDA has achieved some degree of success (See Gooding, 2003; Meagre, 2003, Riddell, et al 2005). However by promoting equal opportunities the legislation may not do enough to enable some disabled people to access further education, training or employment and enjoy successful outcomes however these may be defined. For some people to access these areas they might need more than equal opportunities; those with more significant impairments may need extra support in the form of positive discrimination. To this end, demand side rather than supply side measures may be required.

Discussion

The aim of this chapter has been to highlight policy areas and developments of significance for young people with learning disabilities making the transition from school to further education, training or employment. By adopting an approach that followed the route that may be taken by young people as they leave the education system and move on to an eventually destination of employment, this chapter has shown the ways in which key policies may assist or hinder young people's progress. During the course of the chapter some themes and trends have emerged. Within the education system, there have been increasing moves towards inclusion accompanied by changing definitions of the target group. There has been a move away from the traditional notion of Special Educational Needs towards a much broader definition of Additional Support Needs which better reflects today's society and recognises the common issues and barriers that children and young people with a range of support needs face. Broadening the client group to such an extent is likely to have financial implications and there is likely to be a much wider group of young people competing for scarce resources. This may result in services being prioritised for particular groups of young people. Such dilemmas are echoed within adult employment services.

A recurring question throughout the chapter relates to whether services should focus on those people closest to the labour market. Funding mechanisms and targets placed on services by governing bodies have made this an almost inevitable outcome. In addition, the growing focus on supply side measures mean that those people who find it easiest to adapt and fit in to the current labour market are more likely to enjoy successful outcomes.

Services such as New Deal for Disabled People and Work Preparation may find their structures make them less able to deal with those people who need more support. Supply side measures echo the principle of normalisation and its claims that disabled people should attempt to fit in to society as much as possible. The obligation is on the individual to change; in this case they must acquire work related skills and undergo lengthy periods of training to increase their employability. Much less attention is paid to tackling barriers to employment such as the attitudes of employers or the benefits system as may be advocated by the social model of disability.

To this end there has been an increasing recognition initially among disability writers and increasingly among policy makers that supply side measures alone will be ineffective for many disabled people. In order to facilitate greater inclusion within the work place for people with disabilities, training programmes and employment services must be accompanied by a reformed, more flexible benefits system which sees the transition from benefits to employment as a continuum and more effective anti-discrimination legislation. The New Labour government has pledged to move people off Incapacity Benefit into employment and increasingly the focus is on encouraging disabled people into employment. As yet, this commitment has not been given the financial backing required to be successful and expenditure on disability programmes falls short of spending on other groups such as lone parents and young people. In addition, despite the rhetoric many policies appear to be influenced by a medical definition of disability where the focus is on individual impairment rather than the societal barrier to employment. New Labour continues to emphasise the link between rights and obligations and debates around citizenship often point to employment as a defining feature. Chapter Three will revisit theories around the social model of disability and will explore theories of social inclusion and citizenship to assess the potential impact of these for young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Chapter Three – Frameworks for understanding the experiences of people with learning disabilities

In the previous chapter key policy developments as they relate to young people with learning disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood were outlined and it was suggested that many of them focus on those disabled people closest to the labour market. There is a growing rhetoric of commitment to the social model of disability and this is echoed in policies of inclusion for people with disabilities in areas such as education. The government has made a commitment to tackle and reduce social exclusion for disadvantaged groups; however, such policies and commitments continue to centre on employment as the route out of poverty, raising questions for those for whom finding and holding down paid employment continues to be problematic. It would appear that certain areas continue to be dominated by a medical model of disability whereby disability is seen as an individual, essentially private problem or personal tragedy. This is particularly clear in relation to the benefits system where inflexible binary categories of “able to work” and “not able to work” continue to apply. Thus the focus is on the rehabilitation of the individual to enable them to work rather than on tackling the barriers created by society that make finding and holding down paid employment difficult for many people with disabilities. Stalker and colleagues (1999) in a survey of voluntary organisations noted a failure to think through and accept the full implications of the social model. They suggested that in some cases the ethos of paternalism traditional to the voluntary sector has resulted in the articulation of fashionable ideas without a subsequent shift in underlying attitudes (Stalker et al, 1999:26).

Despite the continual influence of these medical categories, the social model has undoubtedly made a significant contribution to the ways in which disabled people are viewed and treated in society today. This chapter will begin by briefly revisiting the historical development of the social model of disability, looking at the ways in which different ways of viewing disabled people have been reflected in policy developments. The chapter will then highlight the growing critique of the social model, questioning its relevance for young people with learning disabilities. The chapter will then turn to theories of inclusion and citizenship to assess whether an adequate framework for understanding the experiences of young people with learning disabilities, particularly in relation to further education, training and employment lies within these theories.

The historical development of the social model of disability

The development of the social model of disability alongside the growth of the disability movement since the 1970s has been well documented in the literature by academics and disability activists alike (for example, Finkelstein, 1981; Oliver, 1990, 1996; Morris, 1991; Barnes et al, 1996, 1999; and Shakespeare, 1998). It is not the purpose of this chapter to revisit these discussions in any great detail. However it is important to highlight the impact that the disability movement in general and the social model of disability in particular have had in terms of changing the way in which disabled people are viewed and treated in society.

Prior to the 1970s a medical or individual model of disability dominated (and arguably still does in some spheres such as psychology). This model traces its roots back to the late nineteenth century and is based on the premise that disability stems from impairment or illness and is the result of a personal tragedy. Attention is focused on the individual and the ways in which he or she can be treated or rehabilitated to fit into society. Medical and rehabilitation professionals have a key role to play in this process and it has been argued that it is in the interests of these groups of professionals to maintain the view of disability as personal tragedy in order to validate their own role in society (see for example, Oliver, 1996). This notion of a medical or individual model of disability can be seen clearly to influence social and public policy over the last two centuries. The Eugenics Movement of the early 20th Century that argued for the sterilisation of “mentally defected” or “mentally retarded” adult women can be seen as a classic example of a movement that was influenced by a medical model of disability. Examples of legislation at that time that were influenced by the medical model of disability include the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, which made provision for the detention of women with mental deficiencies who bore illegitimate children in long-stay hospitals. It can perhaps be seen as testimony to the disability movement and the social model of disability that such a movement can now be seen as shocking, yet, even today, the abortion of an impaired foetus may be seen in many quarters as an acceptable practice (See Swain and French, 2000, for an interesting discussion around whether it is “better to die than be disabled”).

Policies of segregation and institutionalisation for people with a range of disabilities that prevailed for much of the last century were also influenced by a medical model of disability. Until relatively recently it was common practice for people with disabilities to

live outside their communities in long-stay hospitals (Stalker and Hunter, 1999). The government move to close these hospitals (see for example Whoriskey, 2003) can be viewed as a largely positive development – although there are complex arguments around the pros and cons of this (see Cattermole et al, 1990; Stalker and Hunter, 1999; Forrester-Jones et al, 2002 for a more detailed discussion) – and one that was influenced by the social model of disability. Likewise the move towards mainstream education for young people with a range of disabilities has meant that it is no longer acceptable to segregate young people in special settings, unless there is a “good reason” (i.e. the education of that child or other children will suffer) (Department for Education and Skills, 2001). It can be argued therefore that the social model of disability has been prominent in terms of influencing policy and has had an impact upon the ways in which people with disabilities are viewed by society as a whole. A quote from Albrecht sums this up well:

the social meanings given to impairment and disability shape public and institutional responses to these conditions...

(Quoted in Hales, G. (ed), 1996: 67).

However, the process has been more complex than a simple move from a medical model to a social model of disability and elements of the medical model are still significant in today's society. The previous chapter and the introduction to this chapter both suggested that the medical model of disability has been influential in relation to welfare to work policies, whereby a simple binary distinction between being able to work and not able to work has resulted in an inflexibility that has created barriers for disabled people who wish to move into the labour market. Likewise, the social model of disability has not been without its critics, particularly among “second-wave” disability writers who argue that conceptually, the social model may not be a useful tool to assist in understanding the experiences of all groups of disabled people.

The social model and its critics

Broadly speaking there have been two main interpretations of the social model of disability. Priestly (1999) has differentiated between materialist and idealist approaches. Materialist approaches such as those of Oliver, (1990, 1996), and Finkelstein, (1981), focused on the structural and material barriers in society that result in disability. They argued that the mode of production influences cultural values and representations which

then legitimise the social relations required by a particular mode of production (Priestly, 1999). So, for example, in relation to 19th Century industrial capitalism, a set of social relations developed that excluded most people with impairments from equal participation in the labour force. Idealist approaches on the other hand, focus on cultural representations and disabling attitudes and draw heavily on social constructionist writings and the work of feminist writers. Shakespeare (1996) called for the social model to be further developed to take into account not just material discrimination but also the prejudice that is reflected in cultural representation, language and socialisation.

It could perhaps be argued that it is at this point of divergence that some of the problems with the social model of disability lie. Materialist accounts emphasise commonality of experience and writers such as Oliver (1996), while acknowledging issues of diversity, have argued that focusing on the different experiences of different impairment groups weakens and undermines the strength of the argument and may lead to fragmentation and disunity:

denial of pain of impairment has not been a denial but a pragmatic attempt to identify and address issues that can be changed through collective action rather than medical or professional treatment

(Oliver, 1996:35).

As a result, certain writers have increasingly argued that the social model of disability does not adequately represent their experiences as a result of not taking their impairment into account. French (1993) has argued that her visual impairment imposes certain social restrictions that cannot be resolved by the application of the principles of the social model of disability. While Morris (1991) has argued that:

while environmental barriers and social attitudes are a crucial part of our experience of disability - and do indeed disable us – to suggest that this is all there is to it is to deny the personal experience or intellectual restrictions of illness, or the fear of dying

(Morris, 1991:10).

In a similar vein, Morris (1991) has argued that the early self-organisation of disabled people was dominated by men, with women's experiences not being taken into account. This argument has parallels with earlier arguments within the feminist movement whereby

the experiences of black and disabled women were not adequately considered and were seen as something of an add-on. Second wave feminist writers from a post-structuralist and postmodernist feminist tradition have brought these debates to the forefront of the feminist agenda (see Fawcett, 2000 for a more detailed discussion).

The main criticisms of the social model of disability appear therefore to relate to the tendency of the model to ignore or gloss over issues around difference (in relation to gender, race, class and geographical impairment) and personal experience and a refusal to acknowledge the significance of impairment. Crow (1996) argues for a reformulated social model that fully integrates disability with impairment. She suggests that within the disability movement there has been a tendency to focus on the social model to such an extent that impairment is seen as something which is “irrelevant, neutral and sometimes positive but never as the quandary it really is” (Crow, 1996: 58). Thomas (2002a) has argued for an acknowledgement of “impairment effects”, that is an acknowledgement that impairments can have direct and restricting impacts on people’s social lives. She argues that:

the relegation of impairment to the realm of the biological is an example of untenable dualistic thinking; impairment is naturalised when it should be seen as social

(Thomas, 2002b: 53).

In other words impairment and its effects are also socially constructed and should be acknowledged as such. What is required according to Thomas (2002a, 2002b) is a theorisation of disability that acknowledges culture, difference and impairment. This is nothing new and as Goodley (2001a) points out, earlier writing by “first-wave” disability writers acknowledged the need for a theory of disability that incorporated a theory of impairment. Abberley (1986), for example, argued for the development of a social theory of impairment as a crucial component of a social theory of disability and as far back as the early 1980’s recognised the need to emphasise the social origins of impairment (Goodley, 2001a). Oliver (1996), in defence of the social model emphasised that it is not a social theory but can contribute to a social theory of disability that must also contain a theory of impairment. Indeed, it would seem to be worth highlighting that models of disability are not synonymous with theory. They should be seen as aids to understanding and may help to generate an explanation but they do not in themselves constitute an explanation (see Llewellyn and Hogan 2000, for a more detailed discussion of the use of models).

To summarise then, the social model of disability has been increasingly criticised for its failure to acknowledge the role of impairment and calls have been made for the development of a theory of disability that contains a theory of impairment. The majority of disability writers, academics and activists would stand by most of the principles of the social model of disability, arguing instead for a re-working of the social model that incorporates personal experience, difference and impairment. Shakespeare and Watson (1997) again draw on feminist and post-modern accounts to point out that recognition of difference within the disability community is “long overdue”. A quote by Pinder (1997) sums this up well:

...cannot a more holistic version of the social model, one which fully recognises the ways in which agency and structure are intricately knit together and which acknowledges that we are both producers and products of our social and cultural world, enhance the impact of a movement committed to valuing and enhancing human life? As feminists have discovered, the experiences of difference within difference, the multiple voices which are in our midst need to be more fully recognised

(Pinder, 1997: 304).

Learning disability and the social model

Turning to look specifically at ways of understanding the experiences of people with learning disabilities, the previous section has shown that the social model has not offered an adequate way of understanding the experiences of different impairment groups. This would appear to be particularly true of people with learning disabilities as has been pointed out by several writers (see for example, Chappell, 1992, 1997 and Goodley, 2001a). The social model does not adequately capture the experiences of people with learning disabilities. At best their experiences are marginalised, at worst ignored (Chappell 1992, 1997). According to Chappell (1997), the social model has had a limited impact in the field of learning disabilities primarily as a result of its focus on the body as the site of impairment and its neglect of the significance of impairment discussed above. In addition there is the absence, to date, of written theorising from the personal to the political by people with learning disabilities. It would seem that people with learning disabilities have been less likely to be involved in social movements such as the disability movement and so their voices are less likely to have been heard.

Indeed, much of the writing on the social model of disability has ignored the experience of learning disability, focusing largely on the experiences of those with physical and sensory impairments. There would appear to be a “hierarchy of impairments” (Deal, 2003) with learning disability at the bottom of the “pecking order”. Deal (2003) points out people with physical disabilities may be annoyed at being labelled as having a learning disability, while Triango (cited in Deal, 2003) in an American study showed that from a scale of twenty-one impairments, mental retardation, alcoholism and mental illness were the “least preferred”. It would seem likely that culture is a significant factor in influencing attitudes towards different impairment groups. According to Finkelstein (1993) this is exacerbated by disabled people who falsely believe that by distancing themselves from other groups, viewed as lower in the hierarchy, the individual or sub-group can:

Consider themselves as only a variation in the pattern of normality, while the others, lower down the scale can be regarded as really disabled

(Finkelstein, 1993: 13).

This is supported by Humphrey (2000) who found that among a trade union disability subgroup there was a tendency to treat only tangible impairments as bone fide disabilities, marginalising those with non-apparent impairments such learning disabilities or mental health problems. She argues that the reluctance or refusal of the social model of disability to differentiate between impairments by identifying them bolsters up the claims by people with apparent impairments that they represent all disabled people.

Goodley (2001a) suggests that the reason for the exclusion of people with learning disabilities from the social model of disability is because learning disability remains tacitly conceived of as a biological deficit. The crux of his argument is that social structures, practices and relations naturalise the position of people with learning disabilities, conceptualising them in terms of an a priori notion of “mentally impaired”. Learning disabilities can therefore be understood as a social phenomenon created by culture, politics and society. What is needed therefore is less focus on prescribed incompetence and more focus on the exclusion, discrimination and stigmatisation of people labelled as having a learning disability.

This discussion raises questions about the position of people with learning disabilities both within the disability movement and within the social model of disability. It would appear that the social model has been found lacking as an aid to understanding the experiences of

particular groups of disabled people but this would seem to be particularly true for people with learning disabilities. This can be attributed in a large part to the reluctance to acknowledge the experiences of disabled people that are impairment specific. However, it would appear that learning disability is treated differently to other forms of impairment by disabled and non-disabled people alike. There remains an implicit assumption that learning disability or mental impairment is inherently biological and this can be attributed largely to cultural factors that influence attitudes towards different impairments. If demands for a social theory of disability that acknowledges impairment as a social and political phenomenon are realised, then learning disability must also be included in this theory. In other words, there is a need to recognise learning disability as a:

Fundamentally social, cultural, political, historical, discursive and relational phenomenon rather than sensitively recognising the existence of an individual's "naturalised impairment"

(Goodley, 2001a: 210).

The result of all this for people with learning disabilities is that they are left feeling unsure of where they fit in (see Humphrey, 2001). As a result, some people with learning disabilities have become organised politically and have formed a new social movement, the self-advocacy movement (see Goodley, 2001b; Armstrong, 2002 for a more detailed discussion of the self-advocacy movement) that enables marginalised voices to be heard and positive disabled identities to be established. For others, the creation of identity becomes problematic. Despite campaigning against exclusion and oppression, the disability movement and the social model of disability can themselves be essentialist and exclusionary. As a result people with learning disabilities may find it difficult to and indeed may not wish to identify as disabled. As Armstrong says:

for people with learning difficulties the distinction between impairment and disability is both depoliticising and oppressive in that it obfuscates the way in which the concept of learning difficulties is embedded in social-cultural notions of "ability" and "competence"...the identification of learning difficulties as an impairment serves to legitimise the exclusion of those so-labelled from participation in the "normal" democratic activities of social and political life.

(Armstrong, 2002: 340)

The creation of a disabled identity will be discussed briefly in the following section.

Learning disability and the creation of a disabled identity

One of the key features of the disability movement is that it has enabled and encouraged people with disabilities to subscribe to the notion of a disabled identity, a positive way of sharing experiences and reaffirming values, as well as campaigning for common goals. Indeed, widespread discontent and a clear set of values helped to facilitate organisational cohesion within the disability movement (Priestly, 1999). According to Swain and Cameron, (1999), for many disabled people, a disabled identity offers a positive self-regard in moving from a personal tragedy view to a social model of disability. They suggest that “coming out” for disabled people is a process of redefining one’s personal identity by rejecting what is defined as normal, positively recognising impairment and embracing disability as a valid social identity (Swain and Cameron, 1999). By doing so, identities are re-written and a counter-narrative is produced that serves to weaken the dominant, often oppressive social narrative (Thomas, 1999b).

The process of identity creation is far from straightforward and according to Riddell and Watson (2001) more complex and complicated theories of identity have emerged, particularly since the 1990s. Post-structuralist thinkers, for example, have emphasised that far from possessing one simple, fixed identity individuals are constantly engaged in negotiating their identity (Riddell and Watson, 2001). Hall (1996) defines identity as never unified and increasingly fragmented and fractured. He suggests that identities are:

never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions...identities are constructed within not outside representation.

(Hall, 1996: 4)

Interestingly, he sees identity as being more a product of difference and exclusion than a sign of an identical, naturally constituted unity. Bauman (1996) also notes the fluid nature of identity in post-modern society, pointing out that the modern problem was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, while the post-modern problem is how to avoid fixation and keep one’s options open (Bauman, 1996). It would appear to be broadly accepted that identity creation is the result of a series of social and cultural processes and that identity is often fluid and fragmented. Vogler, (2000) however, points out that there is a need to take into account not just sociological processes but also the strong emotions involved in identity creation such as love, hate, shame and anger, all of which tend to be

overlooked by sociology but are likely to be highly significant for people coming out as disabled (see Vogler, 2000 for a more detailed discussion of social identity and emotion and Scheff, 2000 for an interesting account of shame).

Again it is important to raise the question of how this discussion around identity and identity creation affects people with disabilities generally and people with learning disabilities in particular. There would appear to be three main arguments. Firstly, that postmodernism has enabled disabled people to develop a counter-culture to celebrate their identity as disabled, as discussed above. Secondly, that disabled people are not free to take risks and construct identities and have disabled identities imposed on them. The final position argues that disabled people do not identify with or wish to have a disabled identity.

Disabled people are free to construct their own identities

This argument is broadly exemplified in the work of Hughes (2000) who draws on the work of Bauman to suggest that postmodernism has created favourable conditions for disabled people to create valued social identities. Modernity was a normalising culture where fear of the other or the stranger was a fear of incorporating impurity into the body. Within modernity, disability is seen as a personal tragedy and therefore the stranger (or disabled person) is deserving of a sympathetic response. Post-modernity has resulted in impairment being transformed from a symbol of disorder and tragedy into nothing out of the ordinary, another example of difference. It would appear therefore that postmodernity is likely to be a more favourable condition for disabled people than modernity. Difference is more widely accepted and so more disabled people may choose a disabled identity. However, Hughes (2000) qualifies this by pointing out that the criteria for inclusion in post-modern culture is the ability and willingness to consume. Unless disabled people have the resources and inclination to participate in cultures of consumption they will continue to be marginalised (Hughes, 2000: 580). Postmodernism therefore poses threats to as well as offering opportunities to disabled people and this should be borne in mind.

Those who choose a disabled identity, such as those in the self-advocacy movement can be seen to be resisting the dominant, disabling culture in society (Goodley, 2001b). Goodley, argues that self-advocacy has the power to generate cultural capital, in other words, the meanings and possibilities for identity formation, creating or building a resilient identity. Swain and French (2000) speak of moving towards an affirmation model of disability whereby assumptions of personal tragedy are challenged alongside a rejection of

assumptions of dependency and abnormality. The affirmation model is based on a rejection of the notion that everyone in society accepts the dominant cultural norms with regard to ability and appearance (Darling, 2003).

All of this suggests that disabled people are free to construct a disabled identity and that this is a positive development, enhancing individual self-esteem and collective solidarity. The second argument identified however would suggest that disabled people do not have the freedom to create their own identity but instead have a disabled identity imposed on them.

Disabled people are not free to construct their own identity

Baron et al (1999) with reference to people with learning disabilities, found that identities were imposed upon the people who took part in their study rather than being constructed by the actors themselves, as has been suggested by post-modern theorists. While none of those in their research referred to themselves as having a “learning disability”, the discourses of their every day life constituted them as such. Baron and colleagues (1999) point to economic engagement as central to the development of adult identities (this has parallels to Hughes’ (2000) argument above whereby disabled people must be able to participate in the culture of consumption or continue to be marginalised). Those excluded from the labour market and other adult roles are denied access to established identity codes and social networks, interpersonal contexts and skills (Baron et al, 1999: 496). Giddens (1991) has suggested that we are free to choose our own identity and can ignore or reject identities fostered on us as a result of ascribed characteristics (Giddens, 1991). Yet, far from being free to establish their own identities, the research participants were controlled by various discourses such as the law, social work, education and the family, all of which imposed the identity of learning disability on them, making it impossible for them to negotiate more autonomous identities. The people with learning disabilities in the study lacked the cultural, social and economic resources necessary to choose their own identity. Going back to Hall’s (1996) argument outlined earlier, Baron and colleagues (1999) argue that:

the ‘endlessly performative self’ of post-modernity (Hall, 1996:1) would appear to be predicted on already powerful social position rather than being a truth for all in the emerging epoch of accumulation.

(Baron, et al, 1999: 498)

In other words, the most marginalised people in society, including those with learning disabilities, do not have the power or resources to choose or negotiate their own identity but instead have a negative disabled identity imposed on them. Baron et al (1999) do appear to recognise the usefulness of new social movements such as the self-advocacy movement in reforming identities; however, they argue that without significant changes in economic relations, people with learning disabilities will find it difficult to articulate a positive disabled identity as the basis for further economic and social participation (Baron, et al 1998). In a similar vein, Reeve (2002), drawing on the work of Foucault, suggests that “the gaze” and “self surveillance” are particularly powerful for describing the manner in which the bodies of disabled people are controlled by non-disabled people. However, she suggests that this control is not complete and disabled people can (sometimes) resist these particular “technologies of power” as well as transform themselves to generate different selves, or positive disabled identities.

Disabled people do not see themselves as disabled

According to Veck (2002), creating a positive social identity is an act of “psychic defence” from those who feel excluded from mainstream society. In order to diminish the pain that they feel at being excluded from society, disabled people may choose to “dis-identify” themselves from these social relations and seek and discover other sources of identity (Veck, 2002). Equally, some disabled people may choose not to identify themselves as disabled (although, of course this identity may be imposed on them by other dominant groups in society). Watson, (2002) for example, found that impairment was not seen as important to his informants’ sense of self or identity. Identity was about establishing a sense of unity between themselves and non-disabled people. Impairment was a fact of life for the informants in his study and therefore did not impinge on their sense of self. For some people in order to identify as “normal” impairment was sidelined, but for others “normality” was redefined. Arguably denial of disability or impairment could reproduce disablist practices and some from the disability movement might argue that this represents a state of self-alienation. Indeed, Darling (2003) suggests that in many cases the desire to avoid stigma is a key motivating factor in the rejection of a disabled identity. However, for many in Watson’s (2002) study, disability is simply not the most salient part of their identity. Instead they tend to see themselves as “normal” people who happen to have a disability. Vernon (1999) points out that disabled people (and of course others) have to negotiate multiple identities. In relation to oppression, she suggests that the effects of several stigmatised identities are often multiplied and can be experienced simultaneously or singly depending on the context. The experience of disability or any other form of

oppression may also be modified by the presence of some other privileged identity such as higher social class status. She argues that:

impairment which is a precondition of disability settles upon anyone but the effect on an individual is very largely modified, minimised or exacerbated by who that person is in terms of ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age and class.

(Vernon, 1999: 395)

Different identities therefore interact to affect people's experiences of oppression. Some people may refuse to accept a disabled identity but this does not necessarily mean they are denying their impairment, instead they may simply be acknowledging that other aspects of their identity – as woman or mother, for example – are more important. Watson (2002) sums up by suggesting that although a common disabled identity is desirable, the fact that disabled people do not share a common religion, common political beliefs, a common social class and so on, make it unsustainable.

It would appear therefore that the whole notion of a common disabled identity is far more complex than it first appears. From a positive identity that people are free to choose, to a negative identity imposed on people to one that is denied altogether, Reeve (2002) may be correct in her contention that it may be appropriate to move away from the idea of a single fixed disability identity to acknowledge the different ways in which disabled people are free to negotiate and indeed accept disabled identities.

A common disabled identity and the social model of disability more generally do not appear to offer the best ways of understanding the experiences of all disabled people and particularly those with learning disabilities. However, the positive features of the social model of disability should not be forgotten and the model as a whole should not be abandoned. Instead, a more inclusive model that acknowledges experience, impairment and difference is needed. This may assist in understanding the experiences of all disabled people. Another key argument made by the disability movement is that disabled people should be entitled to citizenship rights. Oliver (1996) draws on the work of TH Marshall who defined citizenship in terms of political rights, social rights and civil rights to argue that disabled people are not accorded the full range of rights that are accorded to citizens. Given the re-emphasis of citizenship on the political agenda, the remainder of this chapter introduces theories of citizenship and social inclusion in order to assess whether or not they offer a fruitful way of understanding the experiences of people with disabilities, particularly in relation to further education, training and employment.

Disability, citizenship and social inclusion

Since being elected in 1997 the New Labour government have emphasised the bond between rights and obligations. In order to receive the full rights of citizenship, people must fulfil certain obligations. New Labour has drawn on the work of Lawrence Mead who in respect of the welfare state argues that:

the social programmes that support the needy rarely set standards for them. Recipients seldom have to work or otherwise function in return for support.

(Mead, quoted in Lund, 1999: 451)

Initially it may appear that the growing emphasis on citizenship by the government is a positive development for disabled people. Indeed, as mentioned above disability writers such as Oliver (1996) have used arguments around citizenship to argue for equal rights for disabled people. However, the link between citizenship rights and obligations has continued to emphasise paid employment as a key duty or obligation in order to gain entitlement to certain benefits or rights. The promotion of social inclusion by the elevation of obligation remains an important element of New Labour's thinking in the third way (Lund, 1999). Examples include the duty of those on Job Seekers Allowance to actively seek paid employment and the allocation of a personal advisor to all new benefit claimants. New Labour has continued to argue that paid work is the way out of poverty or social inclusion. Despite the now infamous slogan of "work for those who can, welfare for those who cannot" (discussed in more detail in the previous chapter), it would appear that policy measures designed to assist those not in paid employment have not been adequate to alleviate poverty. Indeed, Britain has entered the twenty-first century with the gap between rich and poor wider than at any time since the Second World War (Jackson, et al, 2004). According to Stepney et al (1999) although New Labour recognise that labour markets are increasingly fragmented and casualised, and therefore earnings more unreliable, it continues to believe that the government can provide the right mix of incentives, penalties and guidance to steer people living in poverty into formal employment (Stepney et al, 1999). For disabled people these policies appear not to have been successful and various research projects show the continued social exclusion and poverty faced by disabled people (see for example, Watson and Riddell; 1998; Jenkins and Rigg, 2003; Burchardt, 2003; Trade Union Congress, 2003; Smith et al, 2004). These studies and reports show that disabled people are more likely to be living in poverty and

are less likely to be in paid employment. This is offset by the greater costs of living faced by disabled people.

All of this raises questions about the position of disabled people in relation to rights, entitlements and citizenship. Lund (1999) has drawn on the work of Marshall (1981) who argued that the services offered to disabled people were inspired by compassion rather than interest. As a result, the rights of disabled people are moral rights borne from compassion. These rights, it is argued, are weaker than those rights attached to obligations. As a result disabled people can only claim full citizenship rights if these rights are attached to corresponding obligations such as a duty to participate in paid employment (see also Hyde, 2000). To make matters even more difficult, Stepney et al (1999) highlight the point that central to New Labour's programme on poverty is the idea that equality must be based on equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome, thus putting disabled people and other marginalised groups at a disadvantage (as disabled people would be likely to require additional support to achieve equality of outcome). Indeed, the identical treatment of disabled people may actually serve to perpetuate the effects of past discrimination if additional action is not taken (Northway, 1997). The links between rights and obligations are apparent in New Labour's welfare reforms in relation to disabled people. Social security has been gradually tightened and new work related programmes have been introduced (Drake 2000). The government has restructured social security so the system focuses more narrowly on people with very severe impairments, older disabled people and disabled children. For disabled people of working age, the system has become increasingly oriented towards entry into the workforce (Drake, 2000). These reforms were discussed at length in the previous chapter and, as mentioned previously, have resulted in a shift in focus from supply and demand side measures to a focus on supply side measures only (Hyde, 2000). Hyde has argued that this is likely to perpetuate the longstanding exclusion of disabled people from work.

Disabled people and social justice

This discussion around the position of disabled people and the difference between moral rights borne from compassion and citizenship rights borne from obligation can be linked to the literature on social capital and social justice. Social Justice, as a concept, has been used by New Labour and the Scottish Executive to describe a policy agenda that has previously been expressed as concerns with social inclusion. It is concerned with the distribution of goods and burdens throughout society and not just the position of poor people or disadvantaged groups (Goodlad et al, 2003). Social justice requires individuals

to be responsible for developing their full potential, thus emphasising a shift away from state responsibility to individual responsibility. However, it is productive, not human potential that must be maximised and so formal economic activity must take precedence over cultural, political, environmental, social or even nurturing activities (Stepney et al, 1999). Again this raises questions about the position of disabled people within this analysis as some of the activities central to their lives are unlikely to be highly valued within the social justice agenda.

Social injustice can be said to occur when the norms, values or practices of certain groups in society, such as disabled people are not valued or recognised (see Witcher, 2003 for a more detailed discussion). Social injustice can be rectified when disabled people achieve the equality of status and resources required to enable them to participate in key institutions of society including the family and the labour market (Goodlad, 2003). However because status and resources are linked to citizenship rights, disabled people are likely to be disadvantaged because these rights are linked to participation in paid employment. Tension also emerges here between the interests of individuals and groups and the interests of the economy overall as the example of Lifelong Learning shows. Riddell et al (1999a) discuss lifelong learning with wider reference to different types of capital. Putnam (2000) describes three different types of capital. Physical capital includes buildings, plant and equipment; human capital includes people, skills, knowledge and experience; and social capital includes social networks and norms of trust and reciprocity. Riddell et al (1999a) argue that lifelong learning is routed in the domain of human capital with social capital envisaged as contributing indirectly to economic growth. The intrinsic value of learning is seen to be of secondary importance:

the economistic view of lifelong learning suggests that investment in education and training should be commensurate with an individual's capacity to contribute to the wider economic good.

(Riddell, et al, 1999a: 449)

This is likely to have particular implications for people with disabilities as it would appear that investment in this group of people is less likely if they cannot contribute to the economic growth of society. If a necessary condition for the generation of social capital is reciprocity then many people with disabilities will be excluded because they are deemed as lacking in the resources to return the help that is given to them (Riddell, et al 1999b). As Riddell, et al (1999a) people with learning disabilities (and other disabilities) are resource

intensive and are unlikely to be highly productive. They are, it can be crudely argued, a bad investment.

On a more positive note, within a social capital perspective, the emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between citizen and community continues; however, rather than highlighting the importance of wage labour as the route to income, status and relationships, a social capital perspective also points to informal roles and relationships (Bates et al, 2004). A social capital perspective acknowledges other ways of participating in the community, for example by volunteering or through leisure pursuits (see Corden and Ellis, 2004, for a more detailed discussion of the benefits of volunteering) and might therefore provide a more useful perspective for understanding the experiences of disabled people. A social capital perspective also acknowledges the importance of the quality of social relationships. Presence in the community does not build social capital if there are few opportunities for networking and relationship building (Bates and Davis, 2004).

In summary, theories of citizenship and social justice do not appear to offer a great deal of hope to people with disabilities. Indeed, Walmsley (1991) has argued that “citizenship, as it has traditionally been conceived has seemed an impossible status for people with learning disabilities”. The emphasis on rights and obligations while initially promising, serve to further exclude disabled people as a result of the continued focus on paid employment, not only as the way out of poverty but as the key to other rights and services. A focus on supply side measures that are intended to deal with individuals rather than attempting to deal with disabling employment practices means that those disabled people unable to work have to rely on moral rights borne from compassion. As the literature points out, these rights appear to be weaker and so disabled individuals may not have access to the full rights of citizenship. In addition investment in the human and social capital of disabled people is more problematic as they are less likely to offer a productive return on the investment. The position of young people with learning disabilities is further problematised when considering the precarious position of young people within traditional debates around citizenship (see Jones and Wallace, 1992; Williamson, 1997; Allatt, 1997 for a more detailed discussion). Young people are often regarded as having fewer rights than full, active adult citizens. For young people, education is commonly regarded as an important gateway to citizenship. Williamson sums up well the position of young people in the following quote:

young people's rights have been steadily eroded over the last two decades...their status has always been problematic as they formally achieve a variety of legal rights at different chronological ages but their social rights have clearly been curtailed, raising questions about their capacity to exercise even their formally conferred legal rights.

(Williamson, 1997:205)

On a more positive note, however, a social capital perspective that focuses on informal roles and relationships and acknowledges other ways of participating in the community offers hope for disabled people of all ages. Alternative roles and ways of participating in society other than paid employment should be valued. Indeed, Morris (2001) in a survey of young disabled people asked what the concept social exclusion meant to them. The findings revealed significant differences between the young people's understanding and the mainstream concept of social exclusion. For young people in the study, social exclusion was about not being listened to, having no friends, finding it difficult to do the kind of things that non-disabled people their age do, being made to feel that they have no contribution to make and they are a burden, feeling unsafe, being harassed and bullied, not having enough money or control over their money (Morris, 2001). A wider more inclusive perspective of citizenship and social exclusion is needed. To this end, feminist perspectives on citizenship are helpful.

Feminist perspectives on citizenship and care

Feminist writers have argued that the concept of citizenship, as outlined in the previous section, with its focus on waged labour as the key to rights and entitlements has been oppressive to women. Svenhuijsen (2000) has drawn on the work of Giddens (1998) and has argued that he repeats an outdated division between the category of "self-sufficient workers" and "dependent others" based on the independent male worker as the paradigm for citizenship (Svenhuijsen, 2000:19). However, Harris (2002) has pointed to the ways in which caring is a socially constructed concept with the subject position of the carer varying with changes in welfare regime (Harris, 2002). As mentioned earlier, the strategy adopted by New Labour has been to focus on social inclusion through paid employment. As a result, unpaid work has been de-valued, although Harris (2002) has argued that the work done by carers is an exception to this rule as caring is represented as a valued activity and an expression of citizenship obligation. Not all writers would agree with Harris' position that caring is a valued activity. Indeed, others such as Svenhuijsen (2000) would argue that caring as an activity is not valued enough. Again using the work of Giddens (1998) as an example, she argues that he fails to address the importance of caring in society.

The emphasis on caring as a citizenship obligation has led to tension between carers and those being cared for (see Walmsley, 1991; Harris, 2002; Watson et al, 2004). Harris has argued that it has led to:

a situation whereby carer's voices are privileged over the voices of cared-for people with the former being portrayed as virtuously active and the latter seen as a drain on resources.

(Harris, 2002: 277)

Watson et al, (2004) point out that over-simplistic binaries such as “carers” and “dependent people” obscure the reciprocity in human relationships and the “unpredictability, mutability and often multiple subjectivities of all our lives” (Watson et al, 2004: 344). Williams (2001) puts it well when she points out that at different times and in different places and in different ways we will all need to be cared for.

Dependence, independence and interdependence

It would seem apparent therefore that what is required is a more inclusive approach that takes as its starting point the recognition that the whole may comprise many parts but nonetheless they form part of the whole and should be regarded as such (Northway, 1997: 164). The dominant model of citizenship is based solely on active participation, usefulness and self-reliance from which many recipients of care or other disabled people will feel excluded (Harris, 2002). A more inclusive approach or model takes into account the different roles played by different people within society and values each of these roles. It is increasingly recognised that binary concepts of independence and dependence or “carer” and “dependent person” (Watson, et al, 2004) are overly simplistic and do not offer a helpful way of understanding the experiences of women or other groups in society. Feminists and disability writers have pointed to the concept of interdependence as a more useful way to understand the experiences of women and disabled people. A feminist ethics of care (see for example Orme, 2002) would argue that individuals can only exist because they are members of various networks of care and responsibility:

a democratic ethic of care starts off from the idea that everyone needs care and is capable of care giving and that a democratic society should enable its members to give both these activities a meaningful place in their lives if they want.

(Svenhuijsen, 2000: 16)

Watson and colleagues (2004) have developed the concept of “needsapes” to encourage a more critical viewing of taken for granted notions of needs and dependency. The concept encourages an appreciation of the ways in which need and dependency are always ongoing aspects of all our lives and goes some way towards marrying the tensions that have developed between “the carers” and “dependent people”.

In line with feminist arguments then, disability writers would argue for renewed concepts of independence and interdependence. For disabled people, independence is not about self-care activities such as being able to cook and wash for ones self. It is about being in control of and making decisions about one’s life (Morris, 1991; Reindal, 1999). Reindal (1999) argues that if the human condition is viewed as one of interdependency and vulnerability this leads to an understanding of independence as partnership. Independence therefore becomes a two-way responsibility and not solely an individual ability. Disability writers have used the notion of interdependence to lend an understanding to the relationship between disabled people and employment.

Disability, interdependence and employment

Barnes (2001) in a particularly helpful article has used the concept of interdependence to show the ways in which disabled people are both producers and consumers of a vast array of services. Rather than being viewed as passive recipients of services, disabled people should be seen as consumers of services, which some able-bodied people depend on for their livelihood. In addition, although some disabled people may not be able to participate in paid employment, the introduction of innovative schemes such as Direct Payments has resulted in disabled people becoming employers. Again this highlights the interdependency between disabled and non-disabled people. Barnes (2001) argues for a “radical reformulation of the meaning of and the organisation of work” (Barnes, 2001: 444). Linking with the discussion around citizenship and caring above, Barnes (2001) points out that work is a social creation and so what is considered work at one point in time may not be perceived as work in another. Presently, work is organised around a set of principles that value the pursuit and maximisation of profit, waged labour and competition between individual workers. Barnes argues that when work is organised around a different set of principles, namely social necessity, obligation and interdependence, disabled people can be included rather than excluded. The likelihood in there being a shift in the principles around which work is organised is questionable, however, particularly in light of the dawn of what Castells (1997) has referred to as “the informational age”. According to Sapey

(2000), although industrialisation was exclusionary it was accompanied by the hegemony of care which gave rise to the concept of deservingness. Within the informational economy, it is questionable whether notions of care will survive as the relative security of collective bargaining, a key feature of industrialisation, is replaced by the relative insecurity of individualism characteristic of the informational age (Sapey, 2000) (see also Jolly 2000 and Roulstone, 2002 for a more detailed discussion). The informational age can be socially excluding and as discussed earlier, it stands to reason that disabled people will be excluded if they continue to be perceived as economically unproductive.

These discussions around inclusion and exclusion from the labour market should not be restricted to disabled people but should also include other disadvantaged groups such as single mothers, minority ethnic groups, the over fifties and the under twenty fives. A new understanding of work is clearly needed that incorporates an understanding of the informal economy (see Drake, 2000), the work of carers and the role of disabled people in both consuming and employing services.

Discussion

The aim of this chapter has been to introduce key frameworks for understanding disability generally and learning disability in particular. The development of the social model of disability was traced and the strengths and weaknesses of this model were highlighted. In particular it has been noted that a more inclusive approach needs to be taken acknowledging the importance of impairment, difference and personal experience. Theories of social inclusion and citizenship were then introduced in an effort to understand the experiences of disabled people in relation to paid employment, rights and obligations. What is apparent is that disabled people and in particular people with learning disabilities are absent in a significant amount of theorising. The value placed on paid employment at the expense of other forms of social activity results in the continued exclusion of people with disabilities. Writers from a feminist tradition and disability perspective offer some hope to disabled people by highlighting the value of the concept of interdependence which offers new ways of understanding relationships, paid work and unpaid work such as care.

Despite the promise of the concept of interdependence and the plea for new understandings of paid employment and citizenship, people with disabilities continue to be excluded and devalued. One way in which disabled people can overcome this exclusion is by adopting a positive disability identity and forming new social movements such as the self-advocacy movement. However, as the literature shows, this is not straightforward and there are

interesting debates and discussions around how free disabled people are to create their own identity and to what extent this is imposed on them by dominant groups in society, and indeed whether disabled people even want to or need to identify with other groups of disabled people. Perhaps Stalker et al (1999) are right in concluding that:

it may be that none of the available models are sufficient in themselves to account for all the experiences of people with learning disabilities and that drawing on them eclectically provides a fuller and more useful account.

(Stalker, et al 1999:24)

As Stalker and colleagues suggest until a new model or framework for understanding disability is developed that encapsulates the experiences of all groups of disabled people, it would be prudent to use the positive features from each of the frameworks outlined in this chapter to aid our understanding of disability. What these models do help us appreciate is the ways in which disabled people are excluded from participation in various aspects of society. The next chapter turns to look at the experiences of young people making the transition from childhood to adulthood, focusing particularly on their experiences of further education, training and employment. It will also attempt to highlight the ways in which the experiences of young people with learning disabilities are similar to or differ from those young people in the general population.

Chapter Four: Young people's experiences of transition from school to further education, training and employment – what does the literature tell us?

The previous chapter introduced two key theoretical areas and it was suggested that these might be helpful in terms of understanding the perspectives of people with disabilities in relation to further education, training and employment. Firstly writings in the field of disability studies were explored before going on to assess the usefulness of concepts of social inclusion, exclusion and citizenship. Overall, it was suggested that although both areas offered many useful aspects to contribute to an understanding of disabled people's experiences, neither was sufficiently adequate as a framework to aid understanding of disabled people's experiences. It was suggested, in agreement with Stalker and colleagues (1999) that the positive aspects of each framework or model should be used in order to provide the most powerful explanatory framework for understanding experience.

It has become clear that the subject matter of the thesis, namely young people with learning disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood is broad ranging, covering a variety of areas at both a theoretical and more practical level. Chapter two and chapter three have helped to set the scene by giving an overview of relevant policy material as well as introducing relevant theoretical concepts. This chapter will add to the picture already painted by drawing on the sociological literature, taken mainly from the youth studies transition. This is a well established tradition and it is clear that it has much to offer for this thesis, particularly in relation to understanding how young people actually experience the transition from childhood to adulthood and the factors that may or may not influence such transitions. According to Bynner et al (1997) youth research has its roots in developments which took place in the 1960s, particularly the emergence of young people as an important consumer group, which established an interest in the factors that influence young people's actions, behaviour, choices and the decision-making process. This has resulted in the establishment of a comprehensive body of literature that has explored various aspects of the transition from childhood to adulthood.

This chapter will attempt to do several things. Firstly, it will outline the nature of transition for young people within the general population drawing on the findings of some of the key pieces of research within this area. Secondly, the chapter will look at the relevance of these findings for young people with learning disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood. Although a significantly smaller amount of

research has focused on young people with disabilities, work in this area will be used to identify some of the key similarities and differences in the transitional experience for this group of young people. Current sociological debates that focus on the nature of transitions for young people today will then be highlighted. These debates raise questions as to the involvement of young people in the decision-making process. Are young people “free-agents”, able to make decisions about their future or are they limited by structural factors such as social class, gender, ethnicity and indeed, disability (see Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). Such debates raise interesting questions in relation to the decision-making process for young people with learning disabilities and lead to discussions around the relevance of the concept of transition for young people in “late-modern” society.

The remaining section of this chapter will turn its focus to literature around employment, employability and supported employment for people with disabilities. From what has come before in the previous chapters, it is clear that employment remains a key marker of adulthood and something for disabled people to aspire to. This is reflected in the policy decisions outlined in chapter two. This remaining section will identify what is perceived to be the benefits of employment for people with learning disabilities and will examine the literature on supported employment, which is regarded by policy-makers, practitioners and others as the vehicle to achieving this.

How do young people in the general population experience the transition from childhood to adulthood?

It is generally well accepted that the nature of the transition from childhood to adulthood has changed for young people since the early 1980s. Within the literature it has been possible to distinguish between three different types of transition. Firstly, the transition from school to work (or more accurately the transition from school to post-school destination - this incorporates further education, training and employment as well as the potential for unemployment). Secondly there is the transition from the family home to a home of one's own (see Jones and Wallace, 1992; Jones, 1998), and finally the transition from the family of origin to the family of choice. These three different types of transition have often been treated separately within the literature although it is increasingly recognised that activity within one area of transition is likely to have a knock-on effect to other areas. As the main area of interest of the thesis is opportunities for young people with learning disabilities after leaving school, the school to post-school transition will be focused on.

The changing nature of transition from school to work

Evans and Furlong (1997) introduced the use of the metaphors of niches, pathways, trajectories or navigations in an attempt to illustrate the changing nature of transition from the 1960s until the present time. In the 1960's the metaphor of niches was commonly used to show how young people fulfilled a series of normative tasks which were thought to guarantee successful integration into adult life (Evans and Furlong, 1997). At this time transitions were relatively short and straightforward and the majority of young people left school at the age of sixteen. Generally there were three routes – extended careers which involved a period in higher education, short term careers in jobs which provided a period of training and finally careerless occupations in semi or unskilled jobs involving no training. Young people went down one of these routes thus filling their niche in society.

As youth unemployment increased during the late 1970s and early 1980s, transitions became more complex as post-compulsory education, unemployment and job creation schemes became more common. The processes of job allocation became less efficient and the patterns of social reproduction became more complex (Evans and Furlong, 1997). Notions of pathways or bridges into work became more common. By the 1980s the image of career trajectories suggested that labour market destinations were determined largely by social forces outside the control of the individual actor. The collapse of the youth labour market meant transitions had to be explained in terms of structural factors such as social class, race and gender rather than by reference to individual characteristics and aspirations (Evans and Furlong, 1997). Clearly this has implications for young people with some form of disability. Finally, in the 1990s the metaphor of navigations suggested that successful transitions depended on individual skills and capability as well as external risks and the ability to judge them. Furlong and Cartmel (1997) drew on the work of Giddens (1991) and Beck (1992) who suggested that young people today negotiate transitions in a risk society where the individual ability to negotiate risks affects outcomes. When assessing unsuccessful transitions, young people are likely to look inwards and blame themselves. While acknowledging the growing prominence of the individual in this viewpoint, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) and many other writers (see for example Bates and Riseborough, 1993; Coles, 1995) still acknowledge the importance of various structural factors such as social class, educational attainment, gender and locality in determining outcomes. The debate around the roles of structure and agency in youth transitions is one which has taken on increasing significance, particularly in more recent sociological writings. This is something that will be discussed in greater depth later in the chapter.

It has been well documented within the literature that the transition from childhood to adulthood, particularly in the school to post-school arena has grown increasingly protracted, complex and unstable (Wallace, 1987; Coles, 1995; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; Johnston et al 2000). Pias (2000) referred to these processes as the “yo-yo-isation of the transition to adulthood” (p220). This has been attributed in large part to the collapse of the youth labour market in the early 1980s as mentioned above. In addition, the recession of the early 1990s affected profoundly the routes taken by young people at the end of compulsory schooling and there was a sharp fall in the number of young people in full time jobs, apprenticeships and youth training schemes (Payne, 1995). Young people leaving school today face greater uncertainty in terms of finding and keeping a job. The government response to this crisis in the youth labour market was to introduce a host of training schemes for young people in order to avoid large-scale youth unemployment (see for example Coles, 1995; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; Bynner et al, 1997). Young people who would previously have left school and moved straight into work increasingly found themselves participating in a youth training scheme. The government youth training scheme is currently known as Skillseekers but has previously been referred to as Youth Training and YTS, having been the subject of re-branding on several occasions. These changes have not simply been about re-branding but have included attempts to introduce, for example, greater flexibility and support, to both young people and employers in an attempt to make the scheme appear more attractive (see Raffe, 1988; Ashton and Lowe, 1991; Payne, 1995 for a more detailed discussion of youth training). A parallel development has been to encourage young people to stay in full time education for as long as possible, thus deferring their entry into the labour market and their economic independence (Jones, 2002). Such has been the success of this measure that Bynner et al (2002) found that young people staying on in education become better off only to a limited extent. The economic returns to education can be seen to decline as increasing numbers of young people have achieved the highest level of qualifications.

During the course of the 1990s, a range of studies highlighted the difficulties faced by young people making the transition from school to post-school destinations. Many of these studies arose as a result of large-scale funding into this area as a result of the ESRC 16-19 initiative. These studies mainly found that during the 1980s and throughout the 1990s Britain remained a land of “unequal opportunity” for young people (Roberts, 1995). Young people’s opportunities were thought to be influenced heavily not only by social class but also by locality (as well as to some extent by gender and ethnicity). Roberts (1995) found that the qualifications earned by age 16 proved to be the best single predictor of the direction that an individual’s career would take and in particular, whether they

would remain in full time education and on which course. He also noted that opportunities were limited by locality. In Swindon, for example, the opportunities were very different to other areas studied. Unemployment was far lower and one in three young people were likely to make a direct transition from school to employment compared to one in ten in Liverpool, Sheffield and Kirkcaldy. Ashton and colleagues (1990) also found locality to be an important contributing factor to employment chances. However they saw this as being independent of personal attributes and social class. Indeed social class was found to be a less important variable than locality in influencing the level at which young people enter the labour market (see also Johnston, et al, 2000 for a discussion of the significance of locality).

Early findings suggested that in areas where unemployment was higher, young people were likely to be disproportionately affected. Ashton and Maguire (1986), for example, found that the unemployment rate for young people was twice that of the overall rate in each area studied. Similarly, White and McRae (1989) found that unemployment varied by region and disproportionately affected young people. Young unemployed people in their sample tended to be concentrated in areas of declining employment. Ninety per cent came from manual, junior non-manual and the personal services sectors. They tended to come from large, single parent families and black and minority ethnic groups tended to be over-represented despite not being less qualified than the group as a whole.

Overall then the earlier literature on youth transitions suggests that the transition from school to work is more protracted and complex than previously. This is in some part attributed to the collapse of the youth labour market. The routes taken by young people after the age of 16 are heavily influenced by structural factors including social class, gender, ethnicity, locality and educational attainment. Social class, educational attainment and local labour markets have been identified as the key factors. The influential role of parents has been identified both in terms of their own social mobility and attitudes and the advice they pass on to their children (Morrow and Richards, 1996). Employers play a significant role in terms of demanding a more highly skilled workforce (Maguire and Maguire, 1996). Conversely, studies have suggested that they do not view qualifications highly when taking on young people.

This increasingly protracted and complex transition from school to further education, training and employment has a knock on effect on the other areas of transition identified in the introduction to this chapter. Jones (1995) for example, has illustrated the ways in which leaving home has changed, partly as a result of the more complex routes faced by

young people leaving school. Young people are increasingly staying in the family home for longer and are financially dependent on their parents for longer. In addition, the route out of the family home is increasingly complex and many young people experience cycles of leaving home and returning (perhaps for periods of study for example).

Young people not in education, employment or training

More recent studies highlight similar difficulties for young people making the transition from school to work. Of particular concern is the growing number of young people not in further education, employment or training. Payne (1995), in an analysis of the England and Wales Youth Cohort Survey, found an increasing proportion of young people outside full-time education, work or training. The most recent figures suggest that 13.4 per cent of 16-18 year olds are not in education, employment or training in Scotland, with a figure of 10.4 per cent in England (Scottish Executive 2005c). Williamson (1997) has identified the concept of “status zero” to describe this group of young people and in particular, the situation of 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training and are not normally entitled to benefits. To all intents and purposes, this group of young people who are not engaged in any formal, structured, daily activity, yet are not entitled to any welfare benefits, do not exist.

Those young people most at risk of not being engaged in further education, training or employment (often referred to as the NEET group) are early school leavers with low levels of attainment (see Howison, 2003 for an analysis of the Scottish School Leavers Survey). Howison found small social class differences in early leavers’ destinations, mainly in their chances of being employed or unemployed. Young people were less likely to be in a job if one or more parents were unemployed. Other factors that predicted early leavers’ destinations were living with a lone parent, having been a serious truant whilst at school, having been a “winter leaver” and local area unemployment. Other risk factors include deprivation, financial exclusion, low attainment, weak family and other support networks, stigma and debt adversity (Scottish Executive, 2005c).

Raffe (2003) has pointed out that for many young people, being NEET is part of a wider pattern of disadvantage and powerlessness which may need to be tackled on a broader front. Being NEET is associated with a background of educational and social disadvantage and it seems likely to contribute to future disadvantage. This is supported by the findings of Webster et al (2004) who revisited two samples of young people who had previously

experienced disadvantage and social exclusion around the time of transition from school to post-school destinations. They found that:

despite continued commitment to finding and keeping a job, most [of the sample] were still experiencing poor, low waged, intermittent work at the bottom of the labour market...after obtaining poor school qualifications, further poor training and education had not improved their employment prospects...this had ramifications in other aspects of their lives, resulting in social exclusion.

(Webster, et al, 2004: V)

It would seem therefore that those young people who have experienced difficulties in making transitions at an earlier age are likely to experience future disadvantage. Perhaps what is most worrying is what appears to be the increasing polarisation of young people at the time of transition and beyond (see Bynner et al, 2002; Jones, 2002). Jones has described this divergence as increasing polarisation between young people who experience extended transitions and those who make accelerated transitions, between the rich and the poor and between those with qualifications and those without. More and more young people are taking longer paths into the labour market, which were previously associated with the educated middle class in Britain (extended transitions). However, there is an identifiable disadvantaged group of working class young people who are missing out on the extension and expansion of education (accelerated transitions). Although the growth in part time and flexible employment has benefited some young people, it has not benefited everyone equally (Canny, 2001). Those young people in continued, full time education have benefited to a much greater extent than other young people. Unqualified young people faced an increased risk of social exclusion and marginalisation as the bond between educational attainment and labour market success is tightened. According to Bynner (2001) British transitions are characterised by increasing flexibility (see also Raffe et al, 1998) in terms of outcomes, pathways and choices. Not everyone can take advantage of this increased flexibility, which favours those who want to keep their options open and those who have the resources to recover if the choices they make work out badly (see Furlong et al, 2003). Those whose situation prevents them taking advantage of this flexibility risk being steadily squeezed from the system (as can be seen from the situation of those not in education, employment or training discussed above).

Those young people who form the NEET group are currently an extremely high priority for the Scottish Executive (see for example, *More choices, more chances*, Scottish Executive, 2006) and various policy initiatives have been and continue to be introduced to assist them to move into further education, training and employment (as discussed in more detail in Chapter Two). The introduction of the category NEET, alongside the introduction of the label Additional Support Needs (ASN) has implications for ways of understanding disability (see chapter three for a more detailed discussion). It could be argued that such categories represent a movement away from medical discourses of disability where the focus is on individual impairment towards a social model where social and environmental factors as the causes of disadvantage are given greater consideration. The overall affect of the introduction of these new categories has been to widen the group of young people who warrant attention from policy makers and service providers. On the one hand, this can be viewed positively, as young people with disabilities may be less stigmatised for receiving additional help and support. On the other hand, young people with disabilities are likely to have to compete with an increasing number of young people for scarce resources (see for example, Riddell, 2004).

In a society of declining employment opportunities for young people and increasingly high demands for qualifications, the future prospects for young people with a range of disabilities (who may be unable to take advantage of the new, flexible transitions) must be called into question. The following section of this chapter will turn to look more specifically at the transitional experiences of young people with learning disabilities, drawing on the more limited literature available in this area.

How do young people with disabilities experience the transition from childhood to adulthood?

A significant proportion of the youth studies literature that has examined the transitional experiences of young people in the general population has explored the impact of a range of structural factors on these experiences. These include the impact of social class, gender, ethnicity and locality. Very few of these studies have identified disability as a significant factor or explored its impact in any depth. However, a growing body of literature has set out to examine the transitional experiences of young people with a range of disabilities in a range of arenas including the labour market and housing. This body of literature again emphasises the changing nature of transition for young people. The difficulties faced by young people as a result of the increasingly complicated, unstable and protracted nature of transition are likely to be exacerbated for many disabled people. A range of studies

carried out during the 1980s and early 1990s found that young disabled people were at a significant disadvantage in the labour market. Walker (1982) for example, in a sample of eighteen year olds with a range of disabilities drawn from the National Child Development Study, found that those young disabled people who did have employment tended to be concentrated in a narrow range of low skilled jobs which were often insecure, repetitive and unrewarding with poor conditions. Likewise, Anderson and Clarke (1982) highlighted the inadequate preparation that disabled young people were offered in the transition between school and work (see also Fish and McGinty, 1992). Young people in their study were much less likely than the general population to have a paid job, set up households of their own, marry or have a family.

Hirst and Baldwin (1994) in the largest national survey of young disabled people of its time found that disabled people were only half as likely to be in employment as a comparison group of non-disabled people. In addition, half of the disabled young people either attended day centres or had no formal weekday activities. They also found differences between disabled people with different kinds of impairments (see also Hirst, 1987; Clark and Hirst, 1989) where the most severely disabled were the most severely disadvantaged. Those disabled young people who did manage to attain paid work were most likely to be junior non-manual workers engaged in clerical and sales occupations (30 per cent) or unskilled (19 per cent) and semi-skilled (19 per cent) manual workers in catering, cleaning or manufacturing.

Data from these early studies illustrates well the difficulties faced by young people with a range of disabilities not only in relation to finding a place in the labour market but also in respect of other aspects of transition such as living independently and establishing a family of one's own. The experiences of young disabled people would appear to mirror, to some extent, the changing nature of the transitional experience for young people in the general population. However, the difficulties faced by young people generally appear to be exacerbated for young disabled people, with the most severely disabled also being the most severely disadvantaged (Hirst and Baldwin, 1994). According to Ward et al (1991):

young people with special educational needs (SEN) are no different from their able-bodied peers in that they experience all of the usual problems confronting adolescents as they exit the formal school system...in addition, they experience problems associated with the specific nature of their disability.

(Ward, et al, 1991: 132)

At the time much of the research discussed above was carried out, the most likely outcome for young people leaving school with a disability was to attend a day centre or adult training centre, where they could expect to spend much of their adult life. Research has been highly critical of the role of day centres in the lives of young people. Barnes (1990) for example, argued that although day centres were regarded by many policy-makers and practitioners as training centres, in actual fact they acted as 'holding centres' which did not accompany their aim of preparing people for open or sheltered employment. Research by Riddell et al (2001) would appear to support these findings. Participants in their research valued contact with their friends at the day centre. However they found the activities that they did there neither interesting nor stimulating.

In recent years, a range of policy measures that have been outlined and discussed in some detail in chapter two resulted in changing expectations for people with learning disabilities (and other disabilities) at a number of levels. A range of initiatives such as the reconfiguration of local authority day services (see Glasgow City Council, 2000 for a discussion of this at a local level) and the introduction of a range of measures to encourage disabled people into the labour market such as the New Deal for Disabled People meant that disabled people, their families, policy makers and practitioners expected more than life in an adult training centre. The report of the short term working group on employment (Scottish Executive, 2003g), that was formed as a result of recommendations from the Same As You? (Scottish Executive, 2000b) stated that:

people with learning disabilities have an expectation of employment. They no longer have just wishes and dreams.

(Scottish Executive, 2003g)

Such developments were influenced to some extent by the theoretical perspectives introduced in chapter three. The disability movement has campaigned for many years for the inclusion of disabled people in mainstream society – in mainstream education, training and employment and this would appear to have influenced policy developments in this arena.

The experience of further education for young people with disabilities

If policy developments outlined above and in previous chapters have been successful, young people with learning disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood

should now be experiencing mainstream further education, training and employment to a much greater extent. Although this might indeed be the case, recent research that has explored the experiences of young adults with disabilities has highlighted continued difficulties for young adults with a range of disabilities in making the transition from school to further education, training or employment. According to Mitchell (1999), post-school training has become a significant part of many disabled young people's lives, partly due to the expansion of further education (see also Riddell, et al, 2001). This is supported by figures from Glasgow City Council (2001) which illustrate that fifty per cent of young people leaving special school in Glasgow, in 2000, moved on to further education after leaving school. According to Mitchell (1999) for those young people who had previously attended a special school Further Education College provided an opportunity to move on to a more adult, mainstream environment. However, in reality, young people's experiences of college continued to be separately organised and managed. Often, there was little non-disabled peer interaction and work experience (a key feature of many college courses) was not open to everyone (Mitchell, 1999). Wider socio-economic factors such as work placements available and the support offered by employers were important excluding mechanisms. In addition, the opportunity structure was frequently mediated and interpreted by professional assessments and judgements of what was regarded as feasible.

These findings are supported by other research in this area. Riddell et al (2001) in their study of the Learning Society for adults with learning disabilities found that in two of the fieldwork areas studied, few choices were available to young people with learning difficulties. They were allocated college places rather than choosing from different options. Indeed, they argued that the Local Enterprise Companies and Further Education providers were informed by a utilitarian model of social justice which resulted in the marginalization of young people with learning difficulties. The increasing marketization of further education has targeted additional resources on those with special needs but this has not balanced out disadvantages suffered by people with disabilities in the labour market. If anything, the targeting of young people with learning disabilities further disadvantages them by labelling them as 'special' and removing them from the mainstream. Premium funding, which was provided for the education of students with additional support needs has in some cases led to an increase in segregated provision (Watson et al, 2003). In-depth case studies highlighted further problems within post-school education and training for young people with learning difficulties. Riddell et al (2001) found that education tended to be in segregated settings allowing little contact with non-disabled peers. Indeed, Riddell and colleagues (2005) have pointed out Further Education Colleges are less inclusive than mainstream schools where disabled students

would be expected to spend at least part of their day with their peers. In addition, the absence of supported and open employment opportunities for young people with learning difficulties meant the most likely destination after college was an adult training centre, despite the policy rhetoric and changing expectations outlined above. Similarly, Watson and Farmakopoulou (2003) found that despite the attempts of government policies for inclusive learning, the majority of provision for disabled students in colleges remained segregated. In addition, certain groups of students appeared to have been in the same class over several years or appeared to move from one segregated course to another within the same or different colleges. Such courses did not always lead to qualifications and the main benefits of college appeared to be social. Indeed, research by Pitt and Curtin (2004) found that for disabled students attending a specialist further education college, far from feeling socially segregated, it appeared that there were positive personal and social affects of being with similarly disabled people (these young people had previously reported experiences of bullying whilst attending mainstream school).

The research suggests that the primary benefit of further education for disabled young people appears to be social and Watson and Farmakopoulou (2003) suggest that the emphasis of further education should perhaps shift from human to social capital principles such as citizenship, capacity building and empowerment. The difficulties for young disabled people in terms of gaining marketable skills relating to qualifications and employability within a mainstream setting have been highlighted. Yet, in spite of these difficulties, young disabled people continue to aspire to employment (as do disadvantaged young people within the general population) (see Mitchell, 1999; Smyth and McConkey, 2003; Burchardt, 2005 for a discussion of disabled young people's aspirations in relation to paid employment and Banks and Ullah 1988; Wallace, 1992; Johnston et al 2000 for a more detailed discussion of the aspirations of disadvantaged young people in the general population) and overall, have an optimistic and pragmatic view of the future (see Connors and Stalker, 2002). Recent research on the transitional experiences of young disabled people suggests that the transition to paid employment continues to be problematic.

Disabled young people's experiences of employment

Young disabled people continue to face a range of barriers in terms of finding and sustaining paid employment. Morris (2002b), in a review of research on young disabled people's transitions suggested that the variability of support services to assist young disabled people into employment, such as supported employment projects, is a significant factor. The availability of such projects vary locally and many projects are short term and

insecure. In addition, specialist schools and colleges appear to lack information about such opportunities as they rarely refer young disabled people to supported employment agencies (Morris, 2002b), the end result being that young disabled people are “hurtling into a void” upon leaving school (Morris, 1999). Often the attitudes and low expectations of disabled people, their families and various practitioners result in employment not being considered as a serious option, particularly for those with more significant impairments. A similar picture emerged for young disabled people making the transition from childhood to adulthood in Scotland (Stalker, 2002). The benefits system was identified as a significant barrier which can often deter young disabled people looking for work or lead their parents to discourage them from doing so. This is particularly the case when the young person’s benefits make up a substantial proportion of the household income (Weston, 2002).

These findings are supported by the work of Pascall and Hendey (2002; 2004) who examined the transitional experiences of young people with a range of disabilities in relation to both paid employment and independent living. They identified a range of barriers to paid employment for people with disabilities including a lack of qualifications, employer attitudes and the benefits system. They also pointed out that young people with disabilities found it extremely difficult to achieve both paid employment and independent living. The benefits system had a crucial role to play and respondents in their study felt that the benefits system was often at the heart of their difficulties in combining different aspects of adult status. The type of work available meant that young people were unlikely to earn enough to pay for accommodation and personal assistance costs, making benefits an attractive option in this respect. Those young people who were able to combine different aspects of adult status were likely to have “exceptional parents” who were likely to be in higher occupational categories, with social, cultural and economic resources to assist their child make a prolonged transition to adulthood.

To sum up, it would appear that young people with disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood face similar difficulties to young people in the general population. The collapse of the youth labour market and the recession of the early 1990s have meant that the type of work traditionally done by young people is no longer readily available. In addition to the collapse of the youth labour market, it must be appreciated that globalization has changed the nature of employment (see Jolly, 2000; Roulstone, 2002). Disabled workers are entering an increasingly risk based employment domain where the type of work available is increasingly short-term and part-time, with a growth in self-employment. The labour market is increasingly flexible and although this might bring some advantages to disabled workers in terms of ability to adapt working hours and so on,

it is likely that increasingly flexibility within the labour market will actually result in employees having to satisfy increasingly stringent criteria to retain employment (Jolly, 2000). Declining employment opportunities for young people generally have occurred at a time when there is a growing expectation of participation in the labour market for people with disabilities. As a result of this changing rhetoric, young adults with disabilities are no longer expected to leave school for a life in an adult training centre. Instead, they are expected to enjoy the opportunities of further education, training and employment available to all young people. However, what the research has shown is that the difficulties faced by young people generally are exacerbated for young people with disabilities. Disabled young people are less likely to sustain paid employment (Hirst and Baldwin, 1994), live independently (Pascall and Hendey, 2002, 2004) or marry and have children (May and Simpson, 2003). In relation to further education, training and employment (the main focus of the thesis), they face a range of barriers outlined above that relate to their status as a disabled person. Young disabled people continue to experience segregation within further education and negative attitudes, low expectations and a lack of appropriate support services mean that employment is not even considered a viable option in every case. Young disabled people who do continue to aspire to find employment face barriers in the form of a lack of suitable employment opportunities, a lack of qualifications and the benefits system. According to Bignall and Butt (2000), although there has been a great deal of rhetoric about opening up choices to young disabled people, in practice the structures of education and training channel them down particular routes which may not reflect their own aspirations. Bignall and Butt argue that for young disabled people choice is very structured. This reflects a key debate within recent sociological writings on youth transitions, namely whether young people are free agents, able to exercise choice and agency or whether they are constrained by a range of structural factors. The following section of this chapter will introduce this debate in a little more detail.

The agency v structure debate

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, writers such as Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) have argued that we increasingly live in what can be termed “a risk society”. Risk is regarded by many as one of the most salient features of post or late modern society, acting as an organising principle that impacts upon life chances in such a way as to weaken the effects of social structures such as class and gender (Green et al, 2000). Increasingly it can be argued, we live in a society where life chances are determined by individualization as opposed to social structures. Individuals (young people) are increasingly seen as reflexive agents who negotiate their own pathways into adulthood (Brannen et al, 2002). It can be

argued that late modernity is characterised by the emergence of new forms of inequality based on the uneven distribution of risks rather than resources (Cohen and Ainley, 2000). One of the key features of individualization theory is that individuals are free agents who are able to make choices and are responsible for their own actions. Such a viewpoint is helpful for policy-makers who can pass responsibility for inequality and exclusion on to individuals, families and communities. Indeed, according to Greener (2002) if the government were to admit that agency might be constrained by certain circumstances this would allow dependency to be legitimised. Current welfare policies therefore operate under an assumption of highly reflexive and active behaviour by individuals.

However, for a number of theorists the situation is more complex. Although many radical changes have occurred that can be explained to a large extent by Beck's powerful theory of individualization, these theorists would argue that such changes are dwarfed by powerful continuities, particularly in terms of patterns of inequality (Furlong, 2000). They argue that late modern society is still a polarized society, where traditional inequalities remain, albeit in an individualised form. In other words risk is now experienced and addressed individually even though it may result from wider socio-economic processes beyond each individual (Green et al, 2000). Individuals are likely to look inwards and blame themselves even though the difficulties they are facing are likely to have arisen from wider social or economic structures (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; see also Reile, 2004). Therefore it is not possible to ignore the social and structural determinants of risk that remain in late modernity (Green et al, 2000).

Not all young people are able to negotiate risk in the same way and one of the key objectives of current writings within the youth studies tradition is to understand the different ways that individuals experience similar circumstances. This can be explained partly by the fact that different young people have different resources to draw on which help determine whether or not they can negotiate risk effectively. Indeed, Brannen and Nilsen (2002) argue that current economic trends suggest that only the best qualified young people will have the opportunity to make plans for the future. They argue that only certain groups – the relatively privileged young whose education is likely to lead to better career opportunities - are really free to make choices. For other groups of young people “the old order of collectivism prevails” (p531). Thomson et al (2002) argue that in order to really understand how young people experience situations it is necessary to look not only at the resources young people have to draw on but also the structural factors that might constrain or influence young people:

individuals are not entirely determined by their circumstances and faced with difficult conditions will respond differently, sometimes confounding expectations through a combination of timing, fortune and the deployment of individual skill. While all of these resources in turn are to some extent structured by circumstance, in combination they transcend both determination and prediction.

(Thomson et al, 2002: 338)

In an attempt to assist understanding they have introduced the conceptual tool, the “critical moment” (Thomson et al, 2002). This concept allows an understanding of individual actions based not only on the social and economic environments that frame individuals life stories but also allows the personal and cultural resources on which young people are able to draw to be taken into account, thus enabling an understanding of situations where different young people might react very differently to similar circumstances. Like Brannen and Nilsen (2002), Thomson, et al (2002), although acknowledging the potential for individual choice, control and agency, point out that only some individuals have the requisite resources and opportunities to make these choices. Similarly, Furlong and colleagues (2003) have developed a new model to illustrate the ways in which young people draw on different resources to secure employment. They suggest that young people draw on a variety of resources including qualifications, training, skills, knowledge and family resources; however, aspects of personal agency such as initiative and motivation are also essential to this process. Young people can draw on other resources to compensate for deficits but when a resource deficit is combined with weak personal agency, there is a significant chance of “negative outcomes” (Furlong et al, 2003).

Young people’s experiences of risk would appear therefore to be grounded within the social characteristics of age, gender and race, locality and educational attainment. For young people in Green and colleagues study (2000), for example, risk was experienced and managed locally. Place continued to be a significant feature in the development of their identities. Overall, young people would appear to have greater freedom to develop identities and this can be viewed in a largely positive way (see also chapter three for more discussion around the development of a disabled identity). These identities are enhanced by “risk reputations” (Green et al 2000: 113) but while some of these identities are deliberately acquired, others are bestowed upon the individual regardless of their attempts to avoid the negative association (as with the learning disability identity, which for many young people has negative connotations). The ability of an individual to negotiate risks and create a positive identity of their own choosing depends very much on the resources upon which they are able to draw. Cote (2002) has developed the concept of the identity

capital model in an attempt to aid understanding of this process. In order to create a positive identity, young people must acquire identity capital. This involves the utilization of resources by means of various strategies.

To sum up, the debate around the roles of agency and structure in relation to the transition from childhood to adulthood has been well rehearsed within the youth studies literature as outlined above. Although firm agreement has yet to be reached among academics in the field, it would appear that structure and agency both have some role to play in terms of understanding and conceptualising young people's experiences of transition. It cannot be denied that late or post modern society is one which can be defined in terms of increasing individualisation. To some extent the experiences of all young people are increasingly similar. The collapse of the youth labour market has resulted in extended, non-linear transitions for many young people, with many more young people staying on in full-time education or training than was the case previously. Yet, in spite of these increasing similarities, young people continue to experience transitions in different ways. This has been explained to some extent by the fact that not all young people are able to negotiate risks in the same way. Those young people who are able to draw on appropriate resources most readily are likely to be able to negotiate risks and create positive identities. The ability of young people to draw on resources and hence negotiate risk continues to be best understood in terms of social or economic factors including locality, educational attainment, gender, ethnicity and class. Thus although individuals are increasingly free to negotiate risk and create identities this ability continues to be constrained by a range of structural factors.

The implications of this for young people with disabilities are considerable. Young people with disabilities are likely to be among the group of marginalized young people who find it difficult to negotiate risk and create positive identities. They are unlikely to have the identity or social capital to draw on to create positive identities. In chapter three, Baron and colleagues (1999) drew on theories of social capital to illustrate how people with learning disabilities tend to have a disabled identity imposed on them by other people. Likewise, Raffo and Reeves (2000) use the concept of "individualized systems of social capital" in an attempt to explain how young people negotiate risk and adopt strategies of accommodation and resistance when making the transition from childhood to adulthood. These individualized systems of social capital are context specific and are often embedded in locality and are mediated by gender, ethnicity, social class and disability. In addition, these systems of social capital are affected by the ability of individuals to access external, material and symbolic resources. Marginalized young people (including those with

disabilities) are more likely to have strong “bonding social capital” (connections between individuals, their families and closest friends) but weak “bridging social capital (associations beyond one’s immediate circle of friends and family) (see Webster, et al, 2000 for a more detailed discussion), thus their ability to access these external resources is likely to be weakened. Therefore, although young people with disabilities are making the transition from childhood to adulthood at a time of arguably greater choice in terms of post-school options available to them, they are restricted in terms of the choices they make. These restrictions are the result of not only socio-economic factors such as educational attainment, locality and indeed disability but also by the ability of young people to access the resources they need to negotiate risk and create identities.

Is the notion of transition still relevant for young people today?

In addition to the debate around young people’s role as reflexive agents in the process of transition from childhood to adulthood, the increasingly complex and changing nature of this process has led some writers to question the continued usefulness of the concept of transition as an aide to understanding young people’s experiences. As discussed throughout this chapter, it is now well accepted that young people’s transitions are increasingly complex, protracted, unstable and perhaps most importantly non-linear. This applies to young people within the general population and would appear to be exacerbated for young people with learning disabilities and other disabilities. The difficulties in attaining and sustaining paid employment and the knock-on effect that this has into other areas of transition such as moving from the family home to a home of one’s own and leaving the family of origin for the family of choice raises questions as to how adult status should now be defined or measured. It would appear that there is no longer a clear cut definition of the point when young people become adults (EGRIS, 2001). Cohen and Ainley (2000) suggest that:

the various phases of life in which age was linked to status have become “uncoupled”...education no longer relates necessarily to work, nor home-making to marriage or marriage to child-rearing.

(Cohen and Ainley, 2000: 81)

It would appear then that youth as a concept can no longer be defined as a passage or bracketed by a particular age range (see also Soares, 2000). Valentine (2003) has emphasised the importance of understanding childhood as a process that shapes us throughout the life course, rather than a fixed or static category that we grow out of.

These new ways of understanding and conceptualising “youth”, “childhood” and “adulthood” have knock on effects for how we understand and conceptualise transitions. Fergusson (2002) for example, has argued that the whole notion of transitions has to be fundamentally rethought, recognising not only that some young people never make transitions but that the categories that define the parameters of transition are now obsolete. For many young people the reality is one of a continuous cycle of temporary work and training course, perhaps with intermittent periods of study. There does not appear to be any clearly defined start or end point. According to Fergusson et al (2000), young people do not necessarily perceive these dislocated transitions in a negative way. Many young people caught in the “studentship/ employee/ consumption” triangle perceive themselves to be exercising choice and using consumption to define themselves in new ways. These young people have normalised the dislocation that they are experiencing. However, as discussed in the previous section, for some young people, particularly those who lack material and affective family support and who have not learned to negotiate systems, they cannot normalise this dislocation and experience anxiety. Fergusson and his colleagues acknowledge that for a small number of young people the discourse of transition is still the most accurate way to describe their experiences. Based on their own empirical research, a small number of young people continued to make relatively straight-forward transitions from childhood to adulthood. For the majority however, they argue that a market or choice discourse is more appropriate to describe their experiences. They argue that:

...movement and choice results in instability and requires a new discursive frame, based on notions of dislocation...for some it has been possible to normalise this dislocation and for new subjectivities to emerge. For another (partially predictable group) dislocation leads to marginalization.

(Fergusson et al, 2000: 303)

Picking up on the debate outlined above, they suggest that for the third group of young people (including the most vulnerable) who have been unable to negotiate risk, a third discourse of dislocation and marginalisation is necessary.

Despite growing difficulties with the concept of transition, it is possible to conclude that as a concept, is still a useful one, but one which has not been sufficiently problematized. It must be borne in mind that youth is a relational concept constructed in relation to adulthood (Wyn and White, 1997; see also Coleman and Hendry 1999 for a more detailed discussion around the concepts of youth and adolescence). The fragmented nature of transitions outlined throughout this chapter challenges the notion that adulthood is a point of arrival. Instead of focusing solely on the transition from school to work, transitions

should be seen as “continued biographic processes” (EGRIS, 2001: 112) that involve formal and informal learning and agency across the life course and across many separate but related areas. Rather than understanding the process of growing up as a movement from dependency towards independence, the concept of interdependence acknowledges the ways in which people relate to and rely upon each other throughout the life course (Wyn and White, 1997; see also chapter three for a more detailed discussion of the concept of interdependence). Transitions are not a one-off or a one-way process and changes associated with growing up such as leaving home and getting a job may or may not be connected and may occur simultaneously, singly or not at all (Valentine, 2003). In addition, in terms of transitions for young people with learning disabilities (and other disabilities) it is important to think beyond narrow interpretations of work and employment. Mitchell (1999) argues that it is necessary to adopt a more flexible perception of transition, one which acknowledges gradual changes across the life course and one which respects the ideas and aspirations of young disabled people and their families.

One of the main difficulties arising from these debates and discussions is that policies and institutions are still based on a linear, undivided status passage between youth and adulthood (EGRIS, 2001). Success or failure is regarded as an individual concern which is often legitimised by the different ways in which young people experience very similar situations. Following on from the discussions in chapter two, it seems clear that if policies are based on an inaccurate understanding of what it means to experience the transition from childhood to adulthood or what it means to be a successful adult, some young people will be set up to fail. Policies that are based on outdated norms of transition may lead to new forms of social exclusion if they ignore the diversity of different patterns of transition or what it means to be an adult (Raffe, 2003b). Yet despite the difficulties identified throughout this chapter for young people making the transition from childhood to adulthood and the realities of attempting to find paid employment within a context of structural unemployment for young people (Ward et al 1991), paid employment continues to be regarded as the ultimate goal and marker of adulthood for all young people (by young people and their families, practitioners and policy makers). This has been reflected by the various policy measures that have been adopted (outlined in chapter two) that have been influenced by theoretical perspectives on disability and citizenship (discussed in chapter three). The remaining sections of this chapter will briefly introduce some literature around employability and supported employment in an attempt to understand the reasons for this.

The benefits of employment

Huxley (2001) has pointed out that everyone has the right to work, regardless of disability and this is enshrined in Article 23 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights which states that:

everyone has a right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(UN Declaration of Human Rights in Huxley, 2001: 367)

Much of the literature on employment and employability has highlighted the benefits of employment in terms of well-being and mental health. Warr (1994) for example has written about the benefits of employment and has highlighted the negative consequences of unemployment for adults (see also Warr, 1983; 1987). Employment is thought to produce personal and health benefits and it has a positive impact on self-esteem, income, social relationships and leisure activities (Huxley, 2001). It is also clear that unemployment causes a decrement in mental health. It increases the risk of suicide and also the use of mental health services (Huxley, 2001). Yet, according to Schneider, (1998a) working for anything other than financial gain is a little understood concept within capitalist societies. For example, volunteering as a means to not only finding paid employment but also generating social contacts and friendships and bringing opportunities to make a social contribution and challenge some of the negative stereotypes of disabled people as passive recipients of care has not been fully exploited in Britain (see Corden and Ellis, 2004 for a more detailed discussion of the benefits of volunteering).

Clearly the benefits of work extend far beyond financial gain. However, the picture is not straightforward and Warr (1994) has pointed out that the range of mental health scores is very wide among both employed and unemployed people. Indeed, in a minority of cases unemployment can give rise to a better mental health than certain forms of employment – jobs which are highly stressful for example. There are some negative aspects to employment that have been identified, particularly for those with mental health problems. According to Schneider (1998a), competition for jobs and the risk of failure can be damaging for an individual's mental health.

Well-being is a notoriously difficult concept to measure. Felce and Perry (1995) break the concept down to include physical well-being, material well-being, social well-being, development and activity (concerned with the possession and use of skills) and emotional

well-being (Felce and Perry, 1995). They have developed a model to measure quality of life, which is defined as an overall general well-being that comprises objective descriptors and subjective evaluations of physical, material, social and emotional well-being together with the extent of personal development and purposeful activity, all weighed by a personal set of values. Warr (1994) points to two distinctive types of well-being – context free well-being and context specific well-being. Adults who have been unemployed for a long period of time may cope with this by reducing their aspiration levels and becoming dependent on a narrower range of activities and as a result feel slightly better but in more wide-ranging terms their mental health is reduced even further. Likewise people in higher level jobs report significantly less job related depression than workers in lower level jobs but also significantly more job-related anxiety (context specific well-being). Therefore the type of work done has to be taken into consideration when assessing whether someone is likely to be better off in relation to their mental health within paid employment. Warr (1994) has further identified certain key features of work and other environments that are assumed to underlie mental health. These include the opportunity for control, the opportunity to use skills, externally generated goals, variety, environmental clarity, the availability of money, physical security, the opportunity for interpersonal contact, and having a valued social position. When considering the type of employment available for young people in general and young people with disabilities in particular as highlighted earlier in the chapter, such a list might raise questions as to the potential value of these jobs for young people's well-being.

Although employment clearly has significant benefits in terms of mental health and well-being, some of the negative consequences of finding and keeping paid employment, outlined throughout the chapter might suggest that supported employment has an important role to play in terms of bridging the gap between work and unemployment for people with learning disabilities, mental health problems and other disabilities (Schneider, 1998a).

The advantages and disadvantages of supported employment

Supported employment can take various forms. Schneider (1998b) has outlined various models of specialist employment for people with mental health problems. These include sheltered work; work crews and enclaves; vocational rehabilitation and training; clubhouses; transitional employment; supported employment; voluntary work; and social firms. Each of the models has slightly different guiding principles, aims and objectives. The principle of supported employment in its true sense involves, placement in open

employment with guidance, support and feedback from a job coach or a member of staff (Schneider, 1998b; see also O'Brien et al, 2000; Wilson; 2003). Job tasks are broken down into small, component parts to allow the person with learning disability to master the job (Wilson, 2003). Generally it is hoped that the job coach will eventually withdraw leaving the person with learning disabilities to work with natural support from work colleagues. The most crucial element of supported employment in the true sense is that the person with learning disabilities or other support needs is paid for the work that they do, hence the slogan "real pay for real work" (Wilson, 2003). There are variations on this true supported employment model with various training schemes and work placements adopting similar methods (although the supported employee/ trainee is unlikely to be paid a real wage in these cases). (See Riddell et al, 2005, for a more detailed discussion of employment schemes available). At present, access to supported employment remains limited. There is an overall shortage of supported employment places but there is also marked geographical variation in terms of availability (O'Brien et al, 2000).

The research on supported employment for adults with a range of disabilities presents a mixed view of the relative advantages and disadvantages. The literature suggests that supported employment can be highly beneficial for people with mental health problems. Loneliness and boredom can be significant problems for people with mental health problems and having something to do is a high priority. Supported employment is ideally placed to meet that need offering structured activity to meet clinical needs (Schneider, 1998b). Research has shown that clinically, people on job placements were hospitalised less frequently than those not working and those on placement tended to use health services less frequently (Schneider, 1998b). However, relatively brief job tenure can be a problem for supported employment clients with mental health problems (Mueser et al, 2001). Brief job tenure is problematic because it can reflect client dissatisfaction with their work. In addition, brief job tenure is likely to prevent job advancement and the ability to earn higher wages. Mueser et al, 2001, found that the best way to improve job tenure was to ensure clients were placed in jobs that matched their preferences. This is also true for other client groups including young people with learning disabilities. In an American study, Siegel et al (1991) found that securing an appropriate job match was one of the most important factors in terms of job success for young people with learning disabilities.

The American literature on supported employment for people with a range of intellectual disabilities paints a positive picture. Overall, in America, it appears that supported employment for adults with severe as well as mild and moderate intellectual impairments brings benefits in a number of areas. Participants are significantly better off in supported

employment than on welfare benefits (Wehmen and Kregel, 1995). Supported employees earn around double the hourly pay rate found in sheltered workshops (Beyer and Kilsby, 1996b). In addition they have enjoyed an enhanced quality of life as a result of increased interaction with other members of the community (Wehmen and Kregel, 1995). (See also Parent et al, 1991; Kregel, 1997; Mank, et al, 1997).

Research in the UK however, has painted a slightly less convincing picture of the benefits of supported employment for adults with learning disabilities. On a positive note, Bass and Drewett (1997) found that supported employment was valued by supported employees and employers alike (see also Weston, 2002). In particular the support provided by job coaches was valued although there was evidence to suggest that natural support systems could be developed earlier in the process (Bass and Drewett, 1997). Indeed, Roulstone et al (2002) found that informal support from colleagues was particularly important for disabled workers.

However, Riddell et al (1999c) drawing on data from the ESRC project 'the meaning of the learning society for adults with learning difficulties' suggested that the economic benefits of supported employment in Scotland (and the rest of the UK) are only marginal. Among three case studies highlighted, only one man, who spent 60 per cent of his week in supported employment was significantly better off (Riddell, et al, 2001). A lack of experience and qualifications means that employees have to go for entry level jobs with low hourly rates of pay (Beyer and Kilsby, 1996b). In addition, many supported employees spend only a small proportion of their week in employment as the most recent figures from the Scottish Executive suggest. Of the 3205 adults with learning disabilities with employment opportunities in Scotland in 2004, only 15 per cent (482) worked for more than 30 hours a week. 26 per cent (833) worked between 16 and 30 hours a week, while the majority, 59 per cent (1890) worked between zero and 15 hours per week (Scottish Executive, 2005a). This can be attributed in part to the restrictions imposed by the benefits system (Beyer and Kilsby, 1996a and O'Brien et al, 2000). Yet the evidence suggests that increased levels of vocational integration are associated with increased presence of people with disabilities within the workplace (Walsh and Lineham, 1997). Those supported employees who work longer hours each week have greater opportunities to attend staff meetings, follow a work schedule similar to the majority of their co-workers and earn wages comparable to their co-workers (Walsh and Lineham, 1997). In addition they are likely to enjoy greater social interaction.

The quality of the social interaction experienced by British supported employees has been called into question. Riddell, et al (2001) found that although each person in their study valued their job highly, the social relationships they had created were superficial and did not extend beyond the working day (Riddell, et al, 2001). The type of interaction experienced is often different to that of non-disabled colleagues. Supported employees were found to be recipients of more befriending, training and information-giving than their non-disabled counterparts (Beyer and Kilsby, 1996b). In addition they were found to receive superficial interaction such as praise and greetings more frequently than non-disabled colleagues and were much less involved in workplace banter such as teasing or joking. Interestingly, a study that compared the cost-effectiveness of a special needs unit with a supported employment project for people with severe intellectual disabilities and high support needs, found that those on the supported employment project had greater social contact with people outside social services but had less social involvement overall (Shearn et al, 2000).

Wilson (2003) has identified the principle of “real jobs” as one of the key difficulties with the supported employment model. The principle of “real jobs” is underpinned by the principles of normalisation and integration. This has resulted in reluctance among job coaches and other voluntary agency staff as well as employers to change components of the job to better meet the abilities of the supported employee. Instead, the onus is on the supported employee to develop the skills required to complete the tasks to a satisfactory level, often resulting in the breakdown of the placement. Wilson (2003) advocates a more careful appreciation of the nature and consequences of impairment in the work situation:

it is clear that many voluntary organisations are perhaps complicit in discriminating against people with cognitive impairments by not questioning the criteria of a “real job” and making sufficient reasonable adjustments to such criteria to enable individuals to work...successful inclusion rests upon the proper restructuring of the tasks they [supported employees] are required to complete.

(Wilson, 2003: 114)

It is clear that supported employment as a model offers many benefits for people with disabilities who wish to make the transition to work but some of these benefits may have been overstated, particularly in the American literature. Despite this, supported employment continues to be regarded as a panacea by British policy-makers. There would appear to be an assumption among policy-makers that supported employment is a part of the process of transition to work and that people with disabilities will eventually be able to

work without support in “real jobs”. However, as Wilson (2003) has pointed out, this might not be the case, particularly if there is reluctance by employers and voluntary organisations to make reasonable adjustments as a result of a perhaps misguided commitment to the principles of normalisation and integration. Jones et al (2002) have some concerns that progression onto open employment may not be possible in every case, particularly for those with more severe impairments. As a result they advocate the availability of support at crucial times in every supported employee’s career. It would appear therefore that a balance needs to be struck between ensuring a throughput from services (where the supported employee is capable and wants to move on) while at the same time ensuring enough support for each supported employee’s unique progression (Taylor et al 2004). Hyde (1998) has suggested that problems relating to progression from supported employment into open employment may relate to the contradictory aims of the model. On the one hand, supported employment aims to provide a supportive environment for workers with low productivity while at the same time integrating disabled people into mainstream employment (Hyde, 1998). Supported employment alone cannot facilitate the inclusion of disabled people into the workplace. Developments in this area must be underpinned by non-punitive, progressive social welfare policies and anti-discrimination legislation (see chapter two) (Gosling and Cotterill, 2000). In addition, consideration must be given to alternatives for those for whom employment remains an unrealistic option.

Discussion

The aim of this chapter has been to introduce several significant areas of literature that can help to develop an understanding of the experiences of young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood, particularly in relation to their participation in further education, training and employment. Although not relating specifically to young people with learning disabilities, the youth studies literature is helpful in terms of understanding the key debates in relation to youth transitions in late or post modern society. Throughout the course of the chapter it has becoming increasingly clear that young people are experiencing ever more complex transitions. Transitions today, for many young people, are non-linear, extended and unstable. Young people face a vast array of choices upon leaving school but these choices are restricted (or enhanced) by social and economic factors as well as by young people’s ability to take advantage of such options by negotiating risks. Although transitions appear to be increasingly complex, those young people with the most resources to draw on are likely to continue to enjoy making linear transitions (see for example, Fergusson et al 2000; Fergusson, 2002; Furlong et al, 2003). The literature would appear to suggest that young people with disabilities make transitions

in much the same way as their non-disabled counterparts, although they face additional difficulties as a result of their disabilities. Young people with learning disabilities growing up in Britain today face something of a paradox. On the one hand changing expectations as a result of policy developments have meant that young disabled people and their families are less likely to accept life in an adult training centre on leaving school. Young disabled people have raised expectations and want to and expect to be “the same as you”. They are now more likely to experience mainstream education, training and employment. Yet, this expansion of opportunities has taken place at a time when the collapse of the youth labour market has resulted in an increased emphasis on educational attainment and qualifications. As young people with disabilities are less likely to attain qualifications this puts them at a disadvantage.

This chapter has shown that young people with disabilities face a number of barriers in terms of finding and keeping paid employment. Yet despite this employment continues to be regarded as the principal marker of adult status by policy makers. Literature on employability and supported employment suggests that although employment brings with it some very clear benefits to adults in the general population as well as those with a range of disabilities, it can also bring with it features which might have a negative impact on mental health. Supported employment is regarded as a panacea and is thought to be the most appropriate way of encouraging labour market participation for people with disabilities. Policy-makers appear undeterred by research findings that question some aspects of the supported employment model in the British context, particularly in relation to financial gain and social interaction. In addition, it would appear that little consideration has been given to alternatives for those young people and adults who find the goal of employment difficult to achieve.

Considering the literature discussed throughout this chapter, it would seem possible to conclude that although young people’s experiences are very different today, the concept of transition remains a useful tool to aid understanding of these experiences, although perhaps with some important qualifications. It is no longer possible to make clear cut distinctions between the periods of youth and adulthood and the concept of transition must be regarded as more of a process rather than something with a beginning and an end. The concept of transition needs to be increasingly flexible in order to recognise the diverse ways in which different groups of young people achieve adulthood. Ultimately, Mitchell (1999) is correct in her pronouncement that a concept of transition is needed that acknowledges gradual changes within the life course and acknowledges the aspirations of young people as well as those of policy makers. Until recognition is given to the diverse nature of

transition for different groups of young people, those young people who experience marginalisation and disadvantage will continue to be regarded as failures.

The aim of this thesis is to build on the existing knowledge by examining the opportunities available for young people with learning disabilities upon leaving school in relation to further education, training and employment, exploring the choices made and factors that influenced these choices. The next chapter will outline the methodological approach that was adopted and will discuss the reasons for this.

Chapter Five: Methodology – a user-friendly, participatory approach?

The previous three chapters have outlined the key policy and theoretical developments as well as significant research in the field of youth transitions, both for young people in the general population and for young people with a range of disabilities. The key debates in each of these chapters have had some influence on the methodological position adopted and the research methods used throughout the course of the study. Chapter two provided contextual information about the issues faced by young people making the transition from childhood to adulthood and outlined the policy responses to these issues. Chapter three, meanwhile, provided alternative frameworks for understanding the experiences of people with disabilities. In particular, the social model of disability was presented and this has influenced both the research design and practice. Finally, chapter four outlined previous research in the area of youth transitions, focusing particularly on further education, training and employment. A key debate within the youth studies literature outlined in this chapter related to the extent to which young people are free to exercise agency or are curtailed by various socio-economic structures. As a result of this, the aim was to adopt a research approach whereby the individual experience was paramount but was located within the social structures that were pertinent to that individual.

This chapter seeks to do several things. It will begin by briefly outlining the methodological perspectives that have influenced the study before discussing the aims and objectives of the research and the methods selected to meet these objectives. The remainder of the chapter will focus in more detail on the research design, introducing the sample and highlighting issues of particular methodological and ethical significance.

Different ways of knowing

One of the main commitments of this piece of research has been to ensure that normally “unheard” or marginalised voices, in this case the voices of young people with learning disabilities, are given the opportunity to be heard. According to a recent piece of research funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and other partners (Hanley, 2005) conventional research methodologies are not always conducive to this. They define conventional research as:

usually concerned with generating reliable, replicable knowledge, replicable knowledge being scientific and rigorous, maintaining objectivity, retaining

distance from its subject matter, being neutral, impartial and avoiding value-based judgements

(Hanley, 2005:2).

Although these are entirely appropriate research principles, associated particularly with the positivist research paradigm, usually involving quantitative research methods (see Hammersley, 1995 for a more detailed discussion of the positivist research paradigm), since the 1960s onwards it has been recognised that alternative ways of viewing the world and, in particular, ways of viewing the participants of research and their relationship with the researcher are equally valid (Guba and Lincoln, 1998 and Williams et al, 1999 provide a helpful account of changing research paradigms).

Feminist perspectives and postmodern perspectives can be largely attributed to influencing disability research but earlier research from the interpretive sociology tradition can also be seen as relevant. Interpretivist sociologists suggest that the study of social phenomena should not be approached in the same way as the study of nature due to basic differences in the subject matter as well as differences in what we want to know about the phenomena (Martin, 2000). Filmer et al, (1972) drawing on the work of Schutz, a well known and often cited phenomenologist, suggest that there are significant differences between the natural world and human life which make using the same methodological tools difficult and undesirable. The natural world, it is argued possesses no intrinsic meaning structure. The social world, on the other hand, is constituted by meaning. The everyday world is experienced and interpreted by its members as an organised universe of meaning. The commonsense interpretations of the actor, together with his experiences combine to form his taken-for-granted orientation towards the world. As a result, the sociologist cannot determine from the outside which facts and events are relevant (Filmer, et al, 1972). In other words, the social world is subjective and not objective.

These observations led those academics categorised here as interpretivists to argue (generally, as there are many forms and variations of this argument) that the only way to understand social life is from the point of view of the actor. The doctrine of Verstehen is of particular significance here. In its strongest form, Verstehen involves reliving the experience of the actor or at least rethinking the actor's thoughts (Martin, 2000). In its weaker forms it involves reconstructing the actor's rationale for acting. Although in its weaker forms it is not necessary to relive the experiences of the actor, it is necessary to understand their thoughts and feelings and in order to do so it is necessary to relate their actions to the cultural contexts in which they took place (Martin, 2000) (See also Winch,

1990 and Martin and MacIntyre, 1994 for a more detailed discussion of interpretive sociology).

Developing these ideas further, researchers coming from a feminist perspective and a postmodern perspective have highlighted the importance of individual experience and represent a belief that knowledge is both local and contingent. Although there is no single feminist research methodology or a single postmodern research methodology there are certain distinguishing characteristics that would appear particularly conducive to conducting disability research. Usher (1997a) for example points out that a key feature of postmodern research is the belief that there is no grand narrative. The aim of postmodernist research is to demonstrate the fallibility of over-arching theories. It allows for a re-focusing on what has been taken for granted, neglected, regarded as insignificant or excluded (Usher, 1997a). Likewise, feminist researchers do not consider feminism to be a method. Instead, they see it as a perspective that can be infiltrated into all disciplines in order to create diverse and innovative approaches. According to Usher (1997b) there are certain key characteristics. Several of these would appear to be particularly relevant here.

Feminist research:

- deconstructs traditional commitments to truth, objectivity and neutrality
- adopts an approach to knowledge creation that recognises that all theories are perspectival
- utilises a multiplicity of research methods
- is open to inter-disciplinary work
- involves the researcher and the people being researched

(taken from Usher, 1997b)

Of particular relevance in relation to disability research is the emphasis in feminist research on personal experience as opposed to the conventional emphasis on scientific method. In addition there is a rejection of the hierarchy of the research relationship (Hammersley, 1995). Importantly, from the point of view of user involvement in research, the boundaries of what constitutes research are opened up and new ways of knowing, new forms of analysis and new texts are created (Usher, 1997b). In addition, there is recognition of the interaction between the researcher and the researched and the impact this might have on knowledge creation. Therefore feminist researchers call for critical reflexivity on the part of the researcher and the researched whereby this relationship is acknowledged and its potential impact explored (see Stanley and Wise, 1990 for a more detailed discussion of feminist research methodologies).

To sum up thus far, research perspectives ranging from interpretive sociology to feminist and postmodern perspectives appear to have paved the way for a more inclusive form of disability research. They have done so by offering new ways of looking at and understanding the social world. They call into question the relevance of grand narratives and shift the focus onto individual experience grounded in the social or cultural context. (Of course, some theorists within the disability movement would criticise this focus on individual experience arguing that focusing on the individual weakens arguments that focus on societal barriers. See chapter two for a more detailed discussion of these issues). These research perspectives have contributed to growing recognition of the power differentials within the research process and have called for greater involvement of research “subjects” within the research process alongside an awareness of the relevance of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Research is not value-free, nor should it claim to be so. Research by its very nature is subjective rather than objective and some would argue the overall aim of feminist research is to be emancipatory (Stanley and Wise, 1990; Hammersley, 1995; Usher, 1997b).

Participatory and emancipatory disability research

For many people with disabilities and other users of social care services, the traditional experience of research has been disempowering. To highlight this point, Gibbs (1999) has drawn on the work of Peter Beresford (1999) who has pointed out that:

the starting point for many service users views of research is as part of a structure of discrimination and oppression; an activity which is both intrusive and disempowering in its own right and which serves the damaging and oppressive purposes of a service system over which they can exert little or no influence or control.

(Beresford, 1999, quoted in Gibb, 1999)

This can be attributed in part to the unequal power relations that are evident within the research process that has been discussed above. The abuse of such power within the research process can manifest itself in an elitist, separatist and patronising approach to those service users involved in the research process (Orme, 2000) (see also Smith, 2004 for a discussion of the power relations between service users and external researchers). Drawing on the feminist and postmodern perspectives outlined above, writers from the field of disability studies have called for more inclusive research with people with disabilities at the heart of this process (See Barnes, 1992; Oliver, 1992; Morris, 1992; Zarb, 1992; Barnes, 1996; Bury, 1996; Shakespeare, 1996). Influenced by the principles of

normalisation and the social model of disability (see Walmsley 2001) such researchers have argued that the only way to produce “un-alienated” research is to fundamentally change the social relations of research production (Oliver, 1992). Oliver (1992) distinguishes between participatory research which he argues has “changed the rules but not the game” and the emancipatory research paradigm. Participatory research, according to Walmsley (2001), can be found in a number of research areas. It is rooted in a long-standing effort to co-opt and understand the “underdog” in a variety of settings (Walmsley, 2001:195). Cocks and Cockram (1995) suggest that in participatory research the research problem may be defined by disabled people or by a non-disabled researcher who then brings it to the attention of disabled people. Disabled people and researchers then work together to analyse the problem, forming alliances that must be under the control and primarily in the interests of disabled people (Cocks and Cockburn, 1995: 32). On the other hand, Oliver draws on the work of Lather, 1987 who argues that emancipatory research must:

illuminate the lived experiences of progressive social groups; it must also be illuminated by their struggles. Theory adequate to change the world must be open-ended, non-dogmatic, informing and grounded in the circumstances of everyday life.

(Lather, 1987, quoted in Oliver, 1992:107)

The key to the emancipatory paradigm is that the researcher puts their skills at the disposal of the researched group. In the case of disability research, control of the research process should lie with disability organisations. According to the British Council of Disabled People (2002), emancipatory research can be characterised by certain key principles. These include:

Control - the research must fully involve disabled people from the beginning to the end of the research process. Non-disabled researchers may be involved but they must be accountable to an advisory group controlled and run by disabled people. **Accountability** – the research procedures and practices must be open and explained. Findings and implications must be disseminated in appropriate forms. **Empowerment** – emancipatory research must attempt to leave disabled people in a better position to confront disabling barriers. The research should produce knowledge, understanding and information that will have some meaningful practical outcomes for disabled people.

(British Council of Disabled People, 2002)

Some, including Oliver (1992) regard participatory research as a necessary step on the road towards emancipatory research but for others the relationship is not quite so

straightforward. In its most extreme form, the argument for emancipatory research would appear to suggest that ideally research should be conducted only by people with disabilities as only they can have the empathy to understand the experiences of disabled people. In addition researchers can only be on the side of disabled people or against them. According to Barnes, (1996), there can be no middle ground. He argues:

there is no independent haven or middle ground when researching oppression: academics and researchers can only be with the oppressors or the oppressed.

(Barnes, 1996: 110)

This view is perhaps a little simplistic and although it certainly attempts to tackle the power relations between disabled people and researchers (see Bury, 1996) it may create a power imbalance between different groups of disabled people. Arguing that research with disabled people can only be conducted by peers who themselves have disabilities is to deny the skills that non-disabled researchers may have to offer. According to Bury (1996):

poorly conducted research helps neither the researchers or those wishing to use it...good research needs people (whether disabled or able-bodied) who are trained properly to do so...

(Bury, 1996: 113)

In the case of people with learning disabilities, for example, Chappell (2000) argues that there remains an important role for non-disabled researchers (see also Walmsley, 2001; Walmsley, 2004). Kiernan (1999) agrees with this stating that:

given that the research process relies heavily on intellectual skills, it is less easily accessible to people with learning disabilities than to groups of disabled people who do not experience intellectual impairment.

(Kiernan, 1999:42)

Chappell (2000) points out that if people with learning disabilities require support in order to conduct research, the roles which non-disabled people play are likely to have significant implications for the way in which the research is undertaken. She suggests that participatory research is more suited than emancipatory research to enable people with learning disabilities to work in partnership with researchers and have greater influence over the process of research (Chappell, 2000). Walmsley (2001) uses the term inclusive research to incorporate both participatory and emancipatory research. This suggests that

the terminology is less important than the over-arching principle, namely that people with learning disabilities are involved in the research process as more than just research subjects or respondents.

The current study certainly aims to be as participatory as possible but probably could not claim to be emancipatory. Walmsley (2001) sees emancipatory research as a form of political action as much as it is research. The emancipatory model presents research as advocacy. As mentioned previously, one of the main aims of the current research project is to understand the lived experiences of young people with learning disabilities from their own perspective. Young people with learning disabilities are viewed as competent social actors who bring meaning to their everyday world. Drawing on the debates outlined in chapter four, this research also aims to understand the ways in which wider social structures influence the experiences of young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. The main aim however is not to bring about changes as would be the case with social action research (see for example, Taylor, 1999 who provides an account of a social action research project that attempted to challenge isolation for deaf and hard of hearing people from minority ethnic communities) – although it is hoped some positive outcomes might stem from the research indirectly at a later stage, if findings are disseminated in an effective manner.

Aims and objectives of the research

The preceding section has attempted to show the ways in which the power relations of the research process are beginning to change to enable more inclusive research involving people with disabilities. Although the emancipatory paradigm is seen as the ultimate goal by many writers this in itself can create an unequal distribution of power between groups of disabled people. This study has adopted a participatory approach to the research project influenced by feminist and postmodern approaches to research, where young people with learning disabilities were viewed as competent social actors. Their individual experiences were paramount to the research but were located within wider socio-economic structures. Young people were viewed as more than simply respondents and various strategies were adopted to ensure the young people were at the centre of the research and had control over the research process. These strategies will be discussed in greater depth throughout the remainder of this chapter.

The overall aim of the research therefore was to understand the experiences of young people with learning disabilities as they made the transition from childhood to adulthood,

focusing particularly on their experiences in the fields of further education, training and employment. The research aimed to follow the progress of two cohorts of young people identified as having moderate learning disabilities in two local authority areas in Scotland, obtaining accounts from young people with learning disabilities about their lived experiences and their aspirations. In addition the research aimed to seek information from a range of key informants and other sources about the services and options that were open to young people with learning disabilities in Scotland. The following research questions were addressed:

- What are the experiences of young adults with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood?
- What factors have influenced the choices made by young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood?
- What themes can be identified from the literature about the transitional process for young adults with learning disabilities compared to the transitional process for other young adults?
- What is the range of outcomes experienced by school leavers identified as having special needs in Glasgow and Renfrewshire?
- What impact will policy and service changes have on the lives of young adults with learning disabilities?

Research Methods – the case for the qualitative research paradigm

The use of qualitative research methods

After much consideration it was felt that research methods from the qualitative or interpretive paradigm were the most appropriate choice of method for this study for a number of reasons. As highlighted above, the overall aim of the research study was to explain and understand the experiences of young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood and explore the often complex processes which influence and shape these transitions. In order to do this the study generated rich, in-depth data based on individuals' own understanding of their experiences and choices they have made. The most appropriate methods to do this were qualitative in nature.

Geertz (1993), the often quoted social anthropologist, has referred to qualitative methods as “thick description”. This is a simple, yet appropriate definition. Qualitative methods encompass a range of methods across a range of disciplines from a variety of schools of thought (Guba and Lincoln 1998). The range of different qualitative research methods have certain common features stemming from a particular philosophical and theoretical approach to the social world. Like the feminist and postmodern perspectives outlined above, they are concerned with social interactions which take place on a daily basis and with the meanings which actors attribute to them. Qualitative research is “pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experiences of people” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:2). It is naturalistic, draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of participants in the study, is emergent and evolving, and is interpretive. Qualitative methods are based on methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data is produced (Mason, 1996). In a similar vein, Marshall and Rossman (1999) argue that qualitative researchers tend to view social worlds, engage in systematic reflection of their own roles, are sensitive to their personal biographies and how they shape the study and rely on complex reasoning that moves dialectically between deduction and induction (Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

Qualitative methods typically focus on individuals, groups, processes or organisations. They are based on methods of analysis and explanation which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context (Mason, 1996). Because this study is interested in individual experiences, it is important to be aware that human actions are significantly influenced by the setting in which they occur and therefore, behaviour should be studied in real life situations. According to Marshall and Rossman, 1999:

one cannot understand human actions without understanding the meaning attributed to these actions. Therefore we need to understand the deeper perspectives captured through face to face interactions.

(Marshall and Rossman, 1999:57)

Although qualitative methods are clearly the most appropriate for this study, they have been criticised in the past and it is worth briefly examining these criticisms. According to Barbour and Featherstone (2000), there has been a reluctance to use the qualitative paradigm in practice which stems from a lack of understanding of its theoretical and philosophical background, concerns about it not being seen as orthodox and a lack of expertise and skills. Funding bodies in particular, have been less than keen to fund qualitative research although that has been changing in more recent times as knowledge

about the qualitative paradigm or paradigms has increased. Criticisms have been made for several reasons. Qualitative studies are not generalizable in the statistical sense. However, their findings may be transferable. In any case, qualitative research does not claim to be representative. It avoids controlling conditions and concentrates on recording the complexity of situations, contexts and interrelations as they occur naturally (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). The reliability and accuracy of qualitative research have also been questioned, partly because simple reliability tests are difficult to perform. However, qualitative researchers are able to demonstrate that data generation and analysis have been appropriate to the research questions and have been thorough, honest and accurate (Mason, 1996).

Biographical Research

A range of qualitative methods have been used in order to generate in-depth, rich data. The concept of auto/biographical research appears to be particularly relevant to this study. According to Roberts (2002), biographical research is:

an exciting, stimulating and fast-moving field which seeks to understand the changing experiences and outlooks of individuals in their daily lives, what they see as important and how to provide interpretations of the accounts they give their past, present and future.

(Roberts, 2002:1)

Of particular relevance here are the ways in which auto/ biographical work can be conceived as a means of examining the “significance of selves” in connection with broader social values. Autobiographical research not only explores the relationship between the researcher and respondent but also the impact of wider social frameworks. Auto/ biographical work deals not only with the individual but also with social definitions. The individual is regarded as acting and experiencing but this takes place within social contexts and structures. Roberts (2002) argues that the dichotomy between the individual and society, between action and structure should be challenged and the individual should be viewed as a “social being”. (See also Gardner, 2001 and Frank, 2002 for a useful discussion of biographical research methods).

The use of auto/biographical research methods which enable individual voices to be heard, such as in-depth interviews can ultimately be empowering if they are carefully set up and sensitively interpreted as they provide opportunities for respondents to articulate their own experiences in their own voices. Events and lives are affirmed as being worth telling and

thus as worth living (Frank, 2002). Being “narratable” implies value and attributes value. However, Gardner (2001) draws on the work of Goffman (1971) to point out that in an interview the researcher is faced with the actors “front-stage presentation”. In other words, the interviewer will be given the persona the respondent is presenting for that particular time-space. The researcher rarely gets to see “backstage” (Gardner, 2001:191). In addition, the respondent may lie – for a number of reasons – or may fail to mention certain issues. The researcher may see certain activities and events and may not be aware of other actors who are crucial in terms of outcomes witnessed. Therefore it is crucial to be aware that any interpretation of what is “going on” is based on highly partial data (see also Barbour, 1998 for a discussion of these issues). The researcher is making judgments about the completeness of the data and the researcher’s own prejudices come into play. This is an important consideration to be taken into account (Barbour, 1998).

There are particular issues that must be considered when research involves people with learning disabilities. Booth and Booth (1996) point out that the guiding principle in involving people with learning disabilities lies with the challenge posed by the inadequacy of method rather than being perceived as a problem for the individual. According to Goodley (1996) narrative and auto/ biographical methods such as those outlined here are entirely appropriate when working on research with people with learning disabilities as they enable people with learning disabilities to build pictures of their lives and experiences. However, care must be taken when turning a section of text into a narrative account and there must be recognition of the potential for the researcher’s translation to “contaminate” the story (Goodley, 1996). For those with severely impaired communication the process of interpretation may convert actions into a language that is not shared with the informant (Stalker, 1998). Auto/ biographical approaches also raise ethical questions over the ownership of the story (Atkinson and Walmsley, 1999) and these can be related to some of the power imbalances discussed earlier in the chapter.

The uncertainties and sometimes ambiguities of biographical knowledge are not problems as such and attempts should not be made to solve them according to benchmarks set out by positivist science (Gardner, 2001). Instead differences should be creatively coped with and should be treated as strengths to be exploited. One potential way to overcome some of these issues is to collect data from a range of sources using a range of techniques. Combining different methods can be advantageous. Different approaches may be used at different stages in the project. Complementary data techniques can be used to “flesh out” aspects identified by another technique (Barbour, 1998:356). Different methods may compensate for shortcomings in another technique. This acknowledges that each method

provides a partial view of the social world being studied. Methods can be combined in order to allow for triangulation of the data. Triangulation brings more than one source to bear on a single point. As a result, data from different sources can be used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:192). Indeed, a key notion in autobiography is that a variety of texts should be investigated without giving an advantage to one but rather to establish the link between different mediums (Roberts, 2002). However, Goodley (1996) argues that the question of whether an informant is telling the “truth” is irrelevant. What is important is why they are telling their story this way.

A case study approach

In order to investigate a variety of “texts”, the current research has adopted a case study approach in order to gather data about twenty young people with moderate learning disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood from a range of different sources. Hammersley and Gomm (2000) define case study research as:

research produced from a relatively small number of cases, even a single case where a range of features are studied from each situation in the process.

(Page 4)

According to Shaw (2003) qualitative case studies offer a method for capturing and reporting individualised outcomes. Indeed, Patton (2002) argues that:

well crafted case studies can tell the stories behind the numbers, capture unintended impacts and ripple effects and illuminate dimensions of desires outcomes that are difficult to quantify.

(Page 152)

Lloyd-Jones (2003) suggests that case studies can be used to test hypotheses and provide explanations and Yin (1994) in his helpful and practical guide to conducting case study research stresses the careful selection of cases that will either replicate or produce contrasting findings in line with the prevailing theory (Yin, 1994). Yet, according to Lloyd-Jones few qualitative researchers have utilized sequential case studies to develop and test theory in a manner similar to experimental method. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this is probably a result of the assumption that the complex pluralistic nature of social life does not rest on universal laws. Gilbert (2004) has argued that the main concern of qualitative case study research is to understand the case in itself rather than

theoretical inference or empirical generalisability, although the wider relevance and transferability of studies may be argued (Gilbert, 2004). Indeed, the use of case studies in this research was to provide as rich and detailed data as possible about young people with learning disabilities while keeping the young person central to the research, rather than about proving or disproving theories. In the current research, a “case” constituted the young person who had agreed to participate in the research. The young person was central to the case, which was then built up to include those people who were significant to the lives of the young person including parents or carers, careers advisors, further education lecturers or tutors, employers, training providers, social workers and voluntary organisations. On average, each “case” involved in-depth interviews with four respondents. The remainder of this chapter looks in more detail at the research design of this particular study, beginning with a consideration of user involvement and ethical issues when working with people with learning disabilities.

User Involvement

In order to fulfil the commitment of the study to be participatory in nature, attempts were made to involve young people with learning disabilities as early in the process as possible. The idea was initially to form an advisory group of young people with learning disabilities who would be involved in all stages of the research process, including designing research instruments, advising on interviewing, analysing data and disseminating information. The decision was taken to make use of pre-existing groups of people with learning disabilities and contact was made with a national organisation of people with learning disabilities who might be able to help. A person specification was drawn up and a contact person within the organisation agreed to contact young people who might have been interested in getting involved in the research. In the event the decision was made to work with one young man with a learning disability in the capacity of research advisor to the project. This young man was involved throughout the project and provided much valuable advice, guidance and insight. On reflection, it was disappointing that it was not possible to set up an advisory group. There were however a number of reasons for this. Financially and logistically this would have been difficult given the nature of the research scholarship available which provided no additional budget for expenses such as travelling. In addition, it would have been necessary to provide training for the advisory team, a large task for a relatively inexperienced researcher with considerable time constraints. Interestingly, shortly after the study began, the national organisation set up a research sub-group of individuals with learning disabilities who were interested in research. They received training to develop their research skills, with the expectation that they would work in

partnership with various individuals and organisations involved in commissioning and carrying out research. If this resource had been available at the time of the research it would have been invaluable.

Initiatives such as this do raise questions of representativeness however. Indeed, the research advisor to this project was very able and had previous experience of acting in an advisory capacity to various government bodies. Barnes and Bennet (1998) attempted to address this problem in their work with frail older people. A review of initiatives that involved older people in community care planning found few examples of the involvement of frail older people as opposed to active older people who were participants in pensioners' action groups and so on. The aim of the project in which they were involved was to enable frail older people to discuss their experiences of growing older and of using health and social care services and to use the outcomes of such discussions to influence service planning and provision (Barnes and Bennet, 1998; Barnes et al, 2003). According to Stalker (1998) the issue of representativeness in research is raised more frequently in relation to disabled people than any other group. Although it is an issue of considerable importance, she argues that it should not be used "as an excuse to avoid asking people to participate at all or else to invite voluntary organisations to speak on their behalf" (p13). It would seem reasonable to argue that someone who themselves has a learning disability is best placed to offer advice on this experience, regardless of whether they are pro-active in an advisory capacity or not.

Working alongside the research advisor proved to be a successful exercise overall at different points in the research process. The details of this exercise will be referred to at various stages throughout the remainder of the chapter. In addition to the involvement of the research advisor efforts were made to hand control of certain aspects of the research process to the young people who took part in the research. Again this is something that will be discussed later in the chapter.

Ethical consideration when conducting research alongside people with learning disabilities

Alongside user involvement, the other area of concern at the outset of the research process related to ethical considerations. According to Lee and Renzetti (1993), participants in research studies need to be protected from harm and their well-being, values, health and dignity should be protected at all times. This is particularly true when the research involves sensitive topics or potentially vulnerable groups of people. The formal process of

applying for ethical approval to the Departmental Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow allowed for greater consideration of ethical issues relating to working with young people with learning disabilities. On consideration of the application, the committee felt that due attention had been given to ensuring the research was ethical and appropriate safeguards were in place to protect both the participants and the researcher. Ethical approval was granted and it was deemed unnecessary to submit the application to any external ethics committees.

The research was informed by ethical guidelines including the Research Governance Framework for Health and Community Care published by the Scottish Executive in 2002. In addition, various writers have provided helpful checklists and guidelines that should be considered when carrying out research with children and young people and/ or people with disabilities (see for example, Ward, 1997; Morris, 1998, Stalker, 1998; Swain et al, 1998; Thomas and O’Kane, 1998; King and Churchill, 2000; Morris, 2002; Barker and Weller, 2003). When working with children, young people and people with disabilities there are certain ethical aspects that take on additional significance although arguably these relate to good research practice and such issues should be given careful consideration in all research, no matter who the participant (Thomas and O’Kane, 1998). Issues of particular relevance to the participants in the current study relate to communication issues, obtaining informed consent, understanding the nature of the research process, confidentiality and anonymity.

Communication issues

The issue of communication is of particular relevance when working with young people with learning disabilities. Writers such as Ward (1997) and Morris (1998; 2002) offer a range of strategies to assist with communication the most important of which would appear to be adopting a flexible approach towards communication. A similar approach should be taken when working with children and young people (Thomas and O’Kane, 1998; Barker and Weller, 2003). At the stage of inviting young people with learning disabilities to take part in the research, it was important that information was available in an accessible form. Previous research with adults with learning disabilities involved developing a communication check in partnership with speech and language therapists from a local Community Learning Disability Team (see Curtice et al, 2001 for more detail). Depending on the results of this check, information was available in different formats, including pictorially. After detailed discussion with staff from Careers Scotland and with the research advisor however, this was felt to be inappropriate for the current sample group

(who had less severe learning disabilities) and so information was made available in an easy-read format.

In-depth interviews with young people with learning disabilities

In accordance with the principles of biographical research outlined earlier in the chapter and in line with the commitment of the research to enable the voices of young people with learning disabilities to be heard, in-depth interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection. Qualitative interviewing can provide the opportunity for participants to explore feelings and aspirations and make sense of events in their lives. However, qualitative interviewing with people with learning disabilities, although not abusive by its very nature is inherently potentially abusive (Swain, et al, 1998). If not conducted properly there is the possibility of exploitation, manipulation, deceit and abuse of power (Swain et al, 1998). Yet on the other hand, the exclusion of voices is also oppressive. These considerations were kept in mind during the course of the interviewing process and every attempt was made to pass as much control as possible to the individual participant.

Much has been written about conducting interviews with people with learning disabilities and other communication needs. Stalker (1998) has pointed out that

in the last ten years or so people with learning disabilities have come to be seen as reliable informants who hold valued opinions and have a right to express them...it is now widely accepted that individuals are the best authority on their own lives, experiences, feelings and views.

(Stalker, 1998: 5)

A number of techniques can be adopted to ensure the interviewing process is as effective as possible. Arguably in terms of good research practice such techniques should be kept in mind when interviewing all respondents, not simply those with learning disabilities. Finlay and Lyons (2002) highlight the concept of acquiescence as one potential difficulty when interviewing people with learning disabilities. Acquiescence relates to the tendency of people with learning disabilities to respond in what they believe to be the appropriate way to a particular question (yes-saying). People are more likely to choose the last answer in a sequence or answer yes (Stalker, 1998). A similar trend referred to as confabulation has reported in relation to research with people with dementia (see for example, Wilkinson, 2001). Finlay and Lyons (2002) identify a number of possible reasons for this trend. They suggest acquiescence is more likely to be found in a situation where people do not have an opinion, when the question is ambiguous, when the person is uncertain of the answer and

when the question structure is complex. Stalker (1998) on the other hand, argues that this occurs because people with learning disabilities are familiar with others controlling their lives rather than not having an opinion. For those people used to having their voices ignored, being asked for their opinion and thoughts may be a novel experience.

When interviewing people with learning disabilities, a more flexible and individually tailored approach may be required. Booth and Booth (1996) recommend being more focussed with questions, progressively focussing the questions and answers, while at the same time reading people's silences. Likewise, Gilbert (2004) argues that in contrast with orthodox approaches where it is usual to have a standardised approach to all respondents in a study, different approaches may be required for different individuals in the same study. Indeed, Sieber (1993) sums it up well when she argues that:

researchers conducting in-depth interviews should not be so concerned with making sure that what goes into every interview is the same to ensure "reliability" and "validity"...they should instead work towards ensuring what comes out is the same in quality. That is, not in terms of content, but in terms of gaining a validly re/constructed re/presentation of "what is" for each subjects situation and her understanding of it.

(Sieber, 1993: 23)

Flexibility is not only required in terms of the ways in which questions are asked but also in terms of rescheduling interviews and taking breaks where appropriate (see Harris and Roberts, 2003). In the case of five participants in the current study, an interview had to be conducted over more than one visit. Overall, this approach brought several benefits, allowing the researcher to spend longer with participants thus offering a greater insight into their lives.

Obtaining informed consent and understanding the research process

According to Swain et al (1998) the concept of informed consent should always be seen as potentially problematic.

the heart of informed consent needs to be seen as problematic. It is a voluntary decision. Researchers put pressure on participants sometimes overt and sometimes more manipulative and unintended.

(Swain et al, 1998: 29)

Obtaining informed consent can be difficult when working with vulnerable groups, and procedures need to be in place which ensure that adequate steps have been taken to provide information in an appropriate manner. Initial difficulties can occur in terms of gaining access to young people in the first place and researchers often have to negotiate with gatekeepers, who although generally having the best interests of young people at heart often feel they are in a position to make decisions on the young person's behalf (see Corra and Willer, 2002 for a discussion on "gate-keepers"). Such issues are tied up with the issue of unequal power relations discussed earlier in the chapter. Foucault (1980) discusses the relationship between knowledge and power in social practices. Professional discourses tend to constitute a privileged knowledge about a group of people from which they themselves are almost universally excluded, giving the professional what they perceive as the right to make decisions on behalf of the group or individual (Williams and Simons, 2005). In the current sample access to young people was negotiated in collaboration with staff from Careers Scotland. Details of the process will be discussed in the following section.

In order to provide young people with the information they required to make a decision as to whether to participate in the research, easy-read information packs were produced (see Appendix A). As well as providing information in an accessible format attempts must be made to ensure the young person understands the research process and the role of the researcher (see Swain et al, 1998). This is complicated by the fact that children and young people's understanding and experience of the world are different from adults (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). In addition, Stalker (1998) points out that the distinction between a friendly relationship and a working relationship may become blurred. This is particularly true for people with learning disabilities who may misunderstand the research relationship. They are in a particularly vulnerable position given that they often experience loneliness or isolation.

researchers may think it is clear that they are working in a friendly way within the framework of a working relationship but respondents may interpret such friendliness at a more personal level...researchers have a clear responsibility to think carefully about the way in which they approach people, to give clear messages about what is being offered and what is being asked.

(Stalker, 1998: 11)

Confidentiality and anonymity

As with all research, guarantees must be made to ensure the confidentiality of participants. This was set out in the original ethics application and young people were provided with assurances at the outset of the research that they would not be named in any reports or publications arising from the research and that all data would be stored carefully and securely within locked filing cabinets. Barker and Weller (2003) point out that there may be a conflict of interest in relation to confidentiality when working with children and young people in that adult “gate-keepers” may expect researchers to disclose details of the research situation. They point out that researchers must resist adult pressure to disclose information while at the same time not offending the adult. The remainder of this chapter looks in more detail at how these ethical considerations were put into practice by outlining the research design in some detail.

Sample selection and recruiting an appropriate sample

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, a case study approach has been adopted. This involved interviewing young people with moderate learning difficulties (n=20) as well as people who are close to them such as a family member, a carer, a college lecturer, employer, training provider or careers advisor (from now on these will be referred to as significant others). Significant others were only interviewed after discussion with the young person. The young people were asked to decide which (if any) significant other(s) they would like to be interviewed about them, in an attempt to give them greater control over the research process. This approach was decided upon after close collaboration with supervisors and the research advisor and discussion with a range of stakeholders in the learning disability field and was based upon the results of a small pilot study. The pilot study enabled the interviewer to test out the initial interview schedule that had been devised in collaboration with the research advisor. The pilot study involved interviews with young people with moderate learning difficulties in a range of settings (see table 1). The young people interviewed had interesting stories to tell and raised a number of highly relevant points. The pilot interviews were conducted in collaboration with the research advisor and the data from these interviews were used to inform the design of the main interview schedule, which was amended on the basis of the results. The most successful interviews occurred when a significant other such as a parent, lecturer or support worker was available to provide supplementary information, thus informing the decision to interview significant others in the main study. Interviewing the young person first however ensured that issues which were salient to them were the priority.

	SETTING		
	Further Education	Training	Supported Employment
No. in each setting	10	2	2

Table 1 – Number of Pilot Interviews Completed in Each Setting

The sample consisted of twenty young people who had moderate learning disabilities. After close discussion with supervisors it was decided only to include those young people who could communicate verbally in the research given that interviewing young people with severe or profound disabilities would require greater skill and experience. Although not ideal, the research has made progress in terms of including a group of young people that has been excluded in much of the previous research. However, recognition is given to the fact that more research needs to be carried out with young people with severe and profound disabilities as it is likely that this group of young people have very specific issues and barriers that require to be highlighted.

As discussed in chapter one, adopting a definition of learning disabilities has been problematic as there are many different definitions currently in use. In particular, these can vary between providers in different areas such as education and social work. Riddell et al (2001) in their research with people with learning disabilities have advocated adopting an operational definition of learning disability. In other words when recruiting a sample they use the definition used by the organisation they are working with. As Careers Scotland has assisted in recruiting an appropriate sample group, their definition will be used here. Thus, young people included are those who have been classified by Psychological Services as having a moderate learning disability. They either attended an MLD secondary school (moderate learning difficulty school) or a mainstream secondary school but each young person had a record of needs which records a “moderate learning difficulty” as the diagnosis.

The twenty young people comprised two groups. Ten young people were from the Glasgow Local Authority area and ten were from the Renfrewshire area (incorporating Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire local authority areas). The decision to incorporate two local authority areas arose after discussions with various stakeholders during the pilot process who felt it might be more interesting to compare two groups from different areas.

Glasgow and Renfrewshire were selected for comparison because of the different levels of affluence between the two areas (represented by the difference in DEPCAT scores between the two areas) and the different relationships between the different partners involved in post-school provision for young people with learning disabilities. These issues will be discussed later in the chapter.

Each of the ten young people from the two areas left school at least two years previously, usually in May 2000. After consulting with voluntary organisations, analysing the school leaver statistics and reviewing the literature, it became clear that the majority of school leavers with a moderate learning difficulty go on to a further education or training course (Glasgow City Council, 2001). It is the next stage of transition that young people make from college or training that would benefit from further study. Therefore the focus was on those young people who were likely to have completed a college or training course and who were moving on to the next stage of transition.

Inclusion/ exclusion criteria

To summarise, young people had to meet the following criteria to be included in the sample:

- have a moderate learning difficulty as defined either by a record of needs (mainstream or special school) or attendance at a MLD school
- have left school in May 2000 or earlier
- live in the Glasgow Local Authority area (group one) or the Renfrewshire/ East Renfrewshire Local Authority area (group two)

The first post-school destination of the young person was taken into account to ensure that the broad spectrum of destinations (further education, training, employment, supported employment and unemployment) was covered. Care was taken to ensure that females as well as males and those attending mainstream as well as MLD schools were included in the sample. Because of the small numbers involved, the sample did not seek to be representative. However, care was taken to ensure that, where possible, the number of young people in each destination category reflected accurately, the wider picture. In Glasgow, the number in each destination category was chosen to reflect the proportion of young people with moderate learning disabilities in each destination category. It was not

possible to do this in the case of the Renfrewshire sample as the recording system in this area was not as sophisticated as that in Glasgow and the first post-school destination of clients was not recorded. Therefore, clients were selected at random and with the hope that a good mix of destinations would be included within the group.

Recruiting an appropriate sample

Initially it was planned to recruit the sample by enlisting the help of various further education establishments, training providers and employers within the Glasgow and Renfrewshire areas. This was the approach used for recruiting participants for the pilot interviews and was largely successful. However, in the interests of an unbiased approach, use was made of the “Focus system”, which is the database of Careers Scotland. The database holds information about young school leavers including basic demographic information – gender, date of birth, address and school leaving date – as well as information about destinations upon leaving school and interventions made by the careers service. The system also contains additional information such as whether a young person has any additional educational needs. As this is one of the most comprehensive databases of school leavers it was felt this would be an appropriate tool to assist in recruiting the sample. Unfortunately, the recording system and practices in Renfrewshire and Glasgow were not the same and this made it necessary to recruit the sample in a slightly different way in the two areas.

Glasgow

The sample was recruited using the Focus system. A list was made available of ALL young people who had left MLD schools in 2000 by destination and a list of young people who had left mainstream schools with a moderate learning disability (as recorded on the record of needs), also by destination. The list of young people from mainstream schools was slightly more problematic as it did not necessarily reflect the true numbers of young people with moderate learning difficulties at mainstream schools as recording practices are often poor. However, it appeared to be the most comprehensive list available at the time. The aim was to recruit a total of ten young people in the Glasgow area. Young people were selected from the list provided by Careers Scotland and because this list was created in a random way, the selection process was straightforward. The first person in each destination category was chosen, if they did not wish to take part they were substituted by the next person until the required number in each category had agreed to take part. Because the list provided had no intrinsic order, this was an acceptable strategy.

Because the participant was only known by an identity code at this stage, details were passed on to the Special Needs Careers Advisor for the Glasgow area. She then distributed an information pack about the study to each young person. This pack consisted of a letter of introduction) and an information sheet with more details about the study (Appendix A) as well as a covering letter from Careers Scotland, inviting the young person to take part. The young person then had to opt out of the study by telephoning the Careers Advisor or returning an enclosed form if he or she did not want to take part in the study. If the young person did not respond within one week it was assumed that they wished to participate in the study and their name and contact details were made available to the researcher. By only having an identity number up until this point, the identity and confidentiality of Careers Scotland's clients were protected.

Renfrewshire

The procedure followed in Renfrewshire was slightly different. A list was compiled from various sources including data from special schools in the area and Psychological Services records of school leavers with moderate learning difficulties who left mainstream and special schools in 2000. The name, address and date of birth of the young person was included as well as the school attended in most cases. However, because of recording practices in the area, the first post-school destination of each young person was not recorded and so they were chosen at random rather than by destination, which was the case in Glasgow. Because of policies in the area (i.e. a very strong commitment to inclusion) and the infrastructure (there are no special needs schools in the East Renfrewshire area), the majority of young people attended mainstream school and this was reflected in the sample. Although the identities and contact details of the young people were known at this stage, in the interests of balance the procedure for contacting young people was identical to that in Glasgow, in other words, initial contact was made via the Special Needs Careers Advisor.

Obtaining informed consent

Asking participants to opt out of the research seemed conducive to producing a reasonable response rate. Those young people who were strongly against participating in the research had the opportunity to withdraw without meeting the researcher and their confidentiality and anonymity remained intact. For those young people who did not opt out at the initial stages, procedures were in place to ensure that they could opt out at later stages in the research if they no longer wished to participate. If the young person had not made contact

with Careers Scotland within one week, it was assumed that they had no objection to taking part in the research and contact was made with them. In several cases this was difficult because Careers Scotland did not always have a contact telephone number for the young person, or the most up to date contact information. In these cases another letter was sent out to the young person thanking them for agreeing to take part and giving them a time and date for an initial meeting. They were then asked to make contact if the time was unsuitable either by calling or filling in a reply slip and posting it back. This did cause occasional difficulties for example, when receiving no reply the researcher went to visit a young person only to find they no longer lived at this address. In these cases the young person was substituted with someone else on the list. This highlights the difficulties involved in tracking and following up clients, particularly young people who are at a transient stage in their life and who may be moving on for a number of reasons. However in order to provide the sort of service that may be required by many young people, ways need to be looked at to overcome these problems. These problems are further exacerbated by the fact that many of the young people in this client group have fairly chaotic lifestyles.

As with other hard to reach populations (see Lee and Renzetti, 1993), young people were occasionally difficult to “pin down”. There were several instances where an arrangement was made to meet the young person but when the researcher arrived they were not at home. In most instances alternative arrangements were made without a problem, but in the case of three young people after continual efforts to meet with them the decision was taken not to proceed. A cut off point was agreed whereby after three unsuccessful attempts to contact a young person they would not be contacted again. It was felt that breaking appointments was perhaps their way of making it clear that they did not really wish to participate in the research and that wish must be respected. The sample was recruited in two separate phases. Interestingly, the second ten young people were more difficult to recruit. Many of the young people who were contacted via Careers Scotland in phase two did not wish to take part in the study. This was particularly true in the Glasgow area. There could be several possible reasons for this. Firstly, the careers officer who had been involved in recruiting the sample in Glasgow for phase one was off on maternity leave. Although her replacement was extremely helpful and followed the procedures that had been put in place for recruiting the sample, she was unknown to the young people she was contacting on the researcher’s behalf and this may have had a negative effect. Another possibility is the fact that in this second phase in Glasgow, young people were to be recruited who had attended mainstream as well as moderate learning disability (MLD) schools. In phase one all of the young people had attended MLD schools. It is possible that for young people attending mainstream schools there may have been a greater stigma attached to participating in a

piece of research which covered the area of learning disability. Indeed, perhaps they did not regard themselves as having a learning disability or requiring extra support whilst at school (see chapter three and chapter seven for a detailed discussion of the effects of stigma and labelling). Many young people may wish to put their difficulties with learning behind them after leaving school.

Within the literature (see Ward, 1997; Morris, 1998, 2002; Stalker 1998, Gilbert, 2004) it is recommended that the researcher had at least one initial meeting with the participant to get to know them and introduce the research to them (see also Germain, 2004; Pawson et al, 2005). Williams (1999) has identified the importance of using the initial stages of the research project to develop a shared understanding of what is meant by research and Rodgers (1999) recommends getting to know the person over a cup of tea before proceeding with the research. The positive aspects of getting to know the participant informally must be balanced against the potential of creating expectations of friendship that will extend beyond the course of the research as discussed above (Stalker, 1998; Rodgers, 1999). In the current study, the decision was taken to have a preliminary meeting with the young person to provide the opportunity to talk in more detail about the research and ease any concerns they might have about participating. At this initial meeting, the young person was asked to complete a consent form (see Appendix B). This stated that they had received the information sheet and had the opportunity to ask questions. It provided reassurances about confidentiality and reinforced the fact that the young person could withdraw their consent at any time. This initial meeting was a two way process. It gave the young person the chance to talk about the research in an informal way while getting to know the researcher a little better. At the same time, it allowed the researcher to be sure that informed consent was being given and that as far as possible the young person knew what the research involved.

It can be argued that expecting people with learning difficulties to opt out of a research study is unethical. However, this strategy had been successful, straightforward and appropriate. By conducting a preliminary visit with each young person who had not opted out, they were given the opportunity to ask questions they might have and could get to know the researcher a little bit better. This meeting also gave the researcher the opportunity to address any concerns the young person might have had and on some occasions gave the researcher the chance to meet their parents. These meetings appeared to be a successful way to establish initial contact. All of the young people apart from one who were visited agreed to take part. By negotiating access via the special needs careers advisor, young people had a reference point from which to make their decision. They

appeared particularly keen to take part if they had had a good relationship with their careers advisor. Interestingly however the young woman who refused to take part after the initial visit had appeared keen to take part until the careers advisors name was mentioned. Apparently they had not enjoyed a good relationship and this may have influenced her decision as the following exert from the fieldwork diary shows.

Stacey was nearly an hour late for our meeting. I sat in the living room with her mum and her younger brother. Her mum grew more annoyed at her for not turning up in time and eventually her brother phoned her on her mobile to see where she was. She had forgotten I was coming and was looking round the shops with her friends. I said I could come back another day but she said she would come straight home. When she got in I talked to her about the research and explained what it was all about. I went through the information sheet with her and at first I thought she was quite keen. Then I mentioned her careers advisor and she changed. She said "I am really sick of her. All she keeps doing is trying to get me to go on course after course. I've already told her I just want to get a job and settle down but she won't listen to me". Stacey decided not to take part in the end...

This raises an important issue in relation to the positioning and role of the researcher. Despite reassurances, Stacey was convinced that the researcher was working alongside the careers advisor and was going to try to persuade her to do something that she did not want to do. This highlights the difficulties that can occur in terms of being sure that participants really understand the role of the researcher. Feminist writers (see for example Finlay, 2002) have stressed the importance of being upfront about one's position and this is something that will be returned to in the remaining part of this chapter.

Introducing the research participants

Research Sites

Indicators of deprivation

As the decision had been made to conduct the research in two areas, it was necessary to conduct a mapping exercise in order to set out the differences between the two areas in terms of deprivation and services available. A number of sources were used to provide useful contextual information. Using data from the 1991 census and the Carstairs indicators of deprivation (Carstairs and Morrow, 1991) an analysis of the characteristics of the two areas was carried out, in order to provide contextual information. At the time of the 1991 Census, Glasgow district had a population of 662,853. Of this, 309,800 were male (46.74%) and 352,975 were female (53.25%). In terms of ethnicity, the majority described their ethnic minority as white – 641336 people or 96.75%. Those of Pakistani

origin made up the next largest group (10945 people, 1.65%) followed by Indian (3374, 0.5%) and Chinese (2780, 0.41%). The Renfrew district meanwhile had a population of 196980, less than one fifth of the population of Glasgow. There were 93780 males (47.6%) and 103200 females (52.39%), broadly similar proportions to Glasgow. In terms of ethnicity, the number from minority ethnic groups was very small in Renfrew. 99.37% of the population described themselves as white. There were 315 people of Indian origin, 257 of Pakistani origin and 210 of Chinese origin living in the area at the time. Even taken together, these groups make up less than half a per cent.

According to the 1991 census data, in relation to common indicators of deprivation – employment, tenure and car ownership - the Renfrew district was slightly more affluent than Glasgow overall as table 2 below shows:

INDICATOR OF DEPRIVATION	GLASGOW DISTRICT	RENFREW DISTRICT
Percentage of adults economically active	54.4%	61.7%
Percentage of adults who are unemployed/ permanently sick	15.8% (unemployed) 11.1% (permanently sick)	9.6% (unemployed) 6.1% (permanently sick)
Percentage of home owners	37.2%	51.9%
Percentage of homes with no car	65.4%	46.5%

Table 2 – Comparison of Indicators of Deprivation in Glasgow and Renfrew Districts.
Source: 1991 Census

However, there were variations within the two areas with certain postcode areas within Glasgow being significantly more affluent and certain postcode areas in Renfrew significantly less affluent than the overall majority making it difficult to make sweeping statements or generalisations about the two areas. Further indicators of deprivation include the deprivation index developed by Carstairs and Morrow in 1991. This allowed individual postcode areas to be categorised according to deprivation by allocating them a score based on certain key variables including overcrowding, male unemployment, low social class and no car. This work has been further developed by the Medical Research Council, who extended the analysis to cover the 1991 Census. Deprivation category one (DEPCAT 1) is most affluent and deprivation category seven (DEPCAT 7) is most deprived. Scores at the middle of the scale result from the mix of household types contained within these areas and define the majority of postcode sectors. 62% of the Scottish population live in areas designated DEPCAT 3, 4 or 5. However these areas will

contain deprived households because populations in post code areas vary considerably. Because of the variation within areas described above, it is difficult to compare two districts. Obtaining the mean score therefore is deceptive. However, doing this does suggest that Glasgow has a higher overall mean DEPCAT score (between five and six) than Renfrew (between 3 and 4). In Glasgow 66% of the postcode areas had a DEPCAT score of six or seven. In Renfrew this proportion was much smaller at 28%. Looking at the other end of the scale, in Renfrew 34% of the postcode areas had DEPCAT scores of one or two (most affluent) while in Glasgow the proportion was only 5%.

Education statistics are of particular relevance to the current study. As these statistics are more current (Scottish Executive, 2001) Local Authority boundaries have changed. It is necessary therefore to look at East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Glasgow. East Renfrewshire had the highest proportion of school leavers entering higher education while Glasgow had the lowest (53% and 20% respectively). Renfrewshire had 32% of leavers entering higher education. Glasgow had a higher proportion of young people entering further education (22%) than both Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire (both 18%). Renfrewshire had the highest number of school leavers entering training (9%), followed by Glasgow (6%) and then East Renfrewshire (only 1%). Glasgow had the highest proportion of school leavers leaving school and going straight into employment (24%), followed by Renfrewshire (23%) and East Renfrewshire (19%). These figures are likely to be affected by a range of factors including geographical location, availability of post-school institutions and availability of youth jobs. This may serve as an indicator of the relative deprivation of Glasgow in comparison to Renfrewshire/ East Renfrewshire as generally increased participation in Higher Education occurs in areas of greater affluence (Forsyth and Furlong, 2003). The number of pupils entitled to free school meals also provides a useful indicator of deprivation. In East Renfrewshire only 9% of pupils were entitled to free school meals. In Renfrewshire this figure rose to 22.8% and in Glasgow almost half of all school children were entitled to free school meals (40.9%). Again this serves as an indication of greater deprivation in Glasgow relative to Renfrewshire.

Looking at the various statistics, it seems that Glasgow is indeed a more deprived area than Renfrew. In all the indicators such as employment, tenure, car ownership, enumeration districts, DEPCAT scores, school leavers' destinations and free school meals, Glasgow performed less well than Renfrew. However, Glasgow is almost six times the size of Renfrew and this must be taken into account when making any comparisons. Also, more detailed analyses of individual postcode areas show that in both Glasgow and Renfrew there are pockets of affluence as well as pockets of deprivation.

Availability of post-school services

Further education

By virtue of its size, there is a greater choice of further education provision in Glasgow in comparison to Renfrewshire. The Renfrewshire/ East Renfrewshire local authority areas are served by one College of Further Education. In Glasgow there are a range of further education providers with five Colleges of Further Education providing specialist courses for people with learning disabilities. As discussed in more detail in chapter two, the formula for funding students identified as having special educational needs make them a financially attractive prospect for colleges. As a result, a number of courses designed for people with disabilities are in existence. These courses tend to be structured around type of disability and level of need. In one further education college in Glasgow for example, there is a specialist course for young people with autistic spectrum disorder. There are also more general courses for people with varying levels of learning disability. The most common route for young people leaving school with a moderate level of learning disability is to participate in a two year course. These courses are commonly referred to as development or extension courses and focus on a number of areas such as basic number and communication skills, computing skills, life skills and independent living skills (such as cookery and travelling independently), leisure and work preparation. These courses do have a vocational element and students can expect to be prepared for the world of work. Often these courses involve an element of work experience including a short placement with a local employer. Upon completion of a course of this type, students are usually expected to progress onto some type of training course or perhaps in a small number of cases onto a mainstream further education course.

For students with more significant levels of impairment, further education colleges in Glasgow and also the FE College in Renfrewshire offer a range of courses most commonly known as Life skills courses. These courses are much less vocationally focused and concentrate more on independent living skills such as cookery, travelling independently and getting to know the local community. There is a significant focus on leisure with activities such as aromatherapy, ten pin bowling and swimming being part of the curriculum. On these courses there is a less clear progression route for students and upon completion of such a course students may find themselves progressing on to a development type course or undertaking a similar course. Similar courses are also available for older adults with learning disabilities, providing an alternative to the adult training centre.

Training courses and employment services

The Further Education College in Renfrewshire and one of the FE Colleges in Glasgow also offer a training course entitled Get Ready for Work. This course is offered as a replacement for the previous special needs training course Special Skillseekers and offers what has been described as a more flexible, individually tailored approach to training. Get Ready for Work was introduced as a result of the recommendations of the Beattie Committee (Scottish Executive, 1999) (see chapter two for more detail) and is funded by Careers Scotland and Scottish Enterprise.

Other training programmes exist in both areas although availability varies locally and depends very much on the capacity of local voluntary organisations to provide the services required. In Glasgow, for example, there are six job brokers available to provide the New Deal for Disabled People. In Renfrewshire/ East Renfrewshire there are four brokers (who also cover Inverclyde and Argyll and Bute) (Information taken from an interview with a representative from JobCentre Plus). Other voluntary providers in the two areas provide programmes such as Training for Work on behalf of Jobcentre Plus. Variations by locality in relation to supported employment are perhaps felt most keenly. Supported employment is usually provided by voluntary organisations. Glasgow has a well-established project funded by Enable. This project is over-stretched and clients have to wait for extended periods until a placement becomes available. The social work department in Glasgow has developed OPUS, a supported employment service for people with disabilities. Until 2004, there was no supported employment provision available in Renfrewshire. However, Careers Scotland has also recently introduced supported employment projects on a pilot basis in seven local authority areas, including Renfrewshire (see chapter two).

Participant characteristics

Appendix C provides a matrix that gives more details about each of the twenty participants including type of school attended, first post-school destination, destination at the time of last interview and living arrangements. When the research was carried out respondents had left school for at least two years (usually in May 2000) and so were aged between eighteen and twenty-one. More males than females participated in the research but this reflects the gender distribution of learning disability in the population more widely (see Riddell and Banks, 2001). Six females and fourteen males took part in the research. Of these young people, the distribution of those attending mainstream schools and those attending MLD (moderate learning disability) schools was fairly evenly spread with eleven young people

attending MLD schools and nine attending mainstream schools. Only three of the Glasgow sample attended mainstream schools compared with six in the Renfrewshire sample, thus reflecting the policy of inclusive education in operation in East Renfrewshire.

In terms of post-school destinations, the Glasgow sample was selected on the basis of first-post school destination. In Renfrewshire, this data was not held by Careers Scotland and the sample was selected completely randomly, with the hope that there would be a good spread of first post-school destinations. In Glasgow, the sample reflected the post-school destinations of the wider population of young adults with learning disabilities (see school leaver statistics discussed earlier). However, in Renfrewshire, all of the young people excluding one young person went on to further education. This is illustrated in tabular form below.

FIRST POST-SCHOOL DESTINATION	GLASGOW	RENFREWSHIRE	TOTAL
Further Education	6	9	15
Training	2	0	2
Employment	2	1	3
Unemployment/sickness	0	0	0

Table 3 – Numbers of Young People by First Post-School Destination in Glasgow and Renfrewshire

In the two years since leaving school most of the participants in the research negotiated fairly complex transitions; more than half of the young people had moved more than four times since leaving school. The table below shows the last known destinations of the young people at the end of the study period.

LAST KNOWN POST-SCHOOL DESTINATION	GLASGOW	RENFREWSHIRE	TOTAL
Further education (special needs course)	0	1	1
Further Education (mainstream course)	1	2	3
Training course (including work placements)	0	2	2
Employment (paid work, full time or part time)	3	3	6
Unemployment	5	2	7
Sickness	1	0	1

Table 4 – Number of Young People by Last Known Post-School Destination in Glasgow and Renfrewshire

Research Design

In-depth interviews with the young people

The research was designed so that each young person would be tracked for a period of between six and nine months and would be interviewed twice, once at the start of this period and once at the end of the period. Young people remained in contact informally over this period and were able to call the researcher if they wished. The reasoning behind this was an attempt to capture any changes that were occurring in the lives of the young people during this relatively unstable time of transition. In the event, sixteen of the twenty participants were interviewed twice. It was not possible to re-interview four of the young people. There were a number of reasons for this. The difficulties of remaining in contact with young people during the course of a research project have been well documented within the youth studies literature (see for example Webster et al, 2004). At the time of transition, young people’s lives are often unstable and uncertain (Jones, 1995; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997) and it is relatively easy to understand why contact can be lost. In the current study three of the four young people who were not re-interviewed had experienced particularly chaotic lifestyles. One of the young men had recently left local authority care, the other had a chronic health complaint which meant he experienced extended periods of ill-health and hospitalisation. The young woman who had what could be termed a chaotic lifestyle had lived with a relative other than her parents from the age of eight. At the time of the study she was living alone (in the private rental sector) but she moved home and job on a fairly regular basis. It is possible to speculate that in the case of these young people

some of their plans or events they had predicted (such as returning to college or starting their own business) may not have come to fruition. The thought of being re-interviewed to discuss their progress towards these goals may therefore have been off-putting. In the final case, the young man had managed to obtain paid employment shortly after the first interview. It is not possible to predict why he refused to be re-interviewed but it is likely that such a significant change to his life circumstances would have had some impact on how he viewed the research.

The interview schedule was developed in partnership with the research advisor and the pilot interviews, discussed very briefly above, were used to inform the content of the schedule. The interview schedule was designed to be flexible enough to allow young people to discuss issues of salience to them, whilst at the same time asking fairly specific questions to assist with the communication process. The first schedule covered a number of broad areas including current education, training or employment placement, previous placements, school days, living arrangements, leisure activities and future expectations (see Appendix D for an example of interview schedule one). The second schedule was designed to provide young people with the opportunity to reflect on any events that had occurred in the six months following the first interview. Each schedule was tailored to the individual participant to allow the researcher to follow up any areas of interest from the first interview (see Appendix E for an example of interview schedule two). The second interview also allowed participants the opportunity to think about, add to or change any of the information they had given the researcher during the first interview, thus enabling young people to have a little more control over the process.

Significant other interviews

While the overall commitment of the current study was to ensure that the young people's voices and experiences were central, it was necessary to look to alternative sources for additional information. This is in accordance with other literature in the area (Booth and Booth, 1996; Goodley, 1996; Ward, 1997; Morris, 1998, 2002; Finlay and Lyons, 2002). However in order to ensure that young people had control over the process they were asked firstly, if they would agree for others to be interviewed to add their perspectives to the overall story being told. All of the young people agreed to this. They were then asked to nominate the people they would like to speak about them. This is in accordance with the principles of naturalistic enquiry, where according to Guba and Lincoln (1998), the researcher should not make decisions about who is consulted and who isn't. Young people chose a range of "significant others" including parents, careers advisors, college lecturers

and employers. The number of significant others nominated by the young people ranged from one to five people, with an average of three significant others being nominated. The information provided by the “significant others” was used to supplement what the young people had said in order to paint as detailed a picture as possible (see appendix F for “significant other” interview schedule). Because of the nature of provision in both areas, many young people shared for example a college lecturer or careers advisor. In these cases the same person was interviewed more than once about different young people. A total of fifty-nine significant other interviews were completed. The distribution of these interviews is illustrated in table 5 below:

SIGNIFICANT OTHER	NUMBER INTERVIEWED
Parents	16
Careers Advisor	12
Advocacy Worker	1
Employer	5
Training Provider	6
Further Education lecturer or tutor	16
Disability Employment Advisor	1
Leaving Care Services Key worker	1
Beattie Key Worker	1

Table 5 – Number of Significant Other Interviews Completed by Role

Broadly speaking the significant other interviews were useful in terms of providing additional, sometimes more detailed information that filled in the gaps that were left after speaking with the young person. Occasionally however, they presented something of a dilemma when they painted a very different picture from that presented by the young person. This should not be treated as a problem as such. Indeed according to postmodern perspectives there is not one single version of the truth. There are different versions of the truth and such a perspective would argue that the role of the researcher is not to seek out the truth but to present different viewpoints. What is of greater importance is to think about why the individual is telling the story in that manner (Goodley, 1996).

Key informant interviews

Finally, a range of key informant interviews were carried out in order to provide the policy context to what young people and significant others had said. Again, the interview schedules were designed in partnership with the research advisor. Interviews were carried out with representatives from the Scottish Executive (1), Local Authority Social Work Departments (3), Local Authority Education Departments (3), the Further Education sector (3), the Supported Employment sector (1), Careers Scotland (2) and JobCentre Plus (1).

Positioning the researcher

The importance of reflexivity and acknowledging the impact of the researcher on the research process has been stressed throughout the feminist literature on research methodology. The researcher's status as subjective rather than objective is not regarded as a problem within feminist research and in some cases is actively encouraged. Oakley (1998) for example has argued that the researcher should be prepared to give something back to the research participant. By sharing something of their own lives, the researcher is contributing towards redressing the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched, whilst at the same time encouraging the participant to open up. Dowler (2001) suggests that openness generates a good atmosphere for gathering data while increasing the researcher's empathy with the participants. Not all researchers agree this is a helpful strategy to take however and Meisler (2005) referring to a study of teenage girls sexual practices, points out that interviewers sharing their own experiences would not necessarily have encouraged the participants in that particular research to be more open. The feminist concern with reflexivity relates to the unequal power relations within the research process. Hertz (1997) encourages researchers to be aware of their own position and interests and to explicitly situate themselves within the research. According to Finlay (2002):

the researcher is a central figure who influences, if not actively constructs, the collection, selection and interpretation of data. Research is co-constituted, a joint product of the participants, researcher and their relationship. Meanings are negotiated within particular social contexts so that another researcher will unfold a different story. We no longer seek to eradicate the researcher's presence – instead subjectivity in research is transformed from a problem to an opportunity.

(Finlay, 2002: 215)

It is particularly important to be explicit about one's role when working with people with learning disabilities. In the case of the current research, although every effort was made to ensure the young people understood the concept of research and understood the researcher's role, there were cases of misinterpretation and on more than one occasion, participants assumed that the researcher was training to be a careers advisor or a social worker. A likely explanation for these misunderstandings was the fact that the young people were contacted initially by their careers advisors. In addition, it was explained to the young people that the researcher was a student at the University of Glasgow and so their assumptions were entirely logical. Once the position of the researcher was clarified it quickly became apparent that the interaction between researcher and participants would

affect the research process. Being fairly young and a participant within the education system enabled the researcher to identify with many of the issues raised by the young people. In addition, the researcher and participants shared common knowledge of popular culture and the closeness in ages led to respondents treating the researcher like a friend. This was advantageous in that participants were relaxed and this enabled them to open up and enjoy the experience. However, it also created some difficulties, which shall be returned to shortly.

In some cases, the researcher felt required to intervene and provide assistance if asked to do so by young people and their families. This appears to be a common dilemma faced by researchers (see for example Harris and Roberts, 2003, who in a study of disabled refugees provided assistance with the comprehension of official letters). When asked for assistance there may be concerns about over-stepping certain boundaries and taking on inappropriate roles but in the spirit of reciprocity, not to intervene when asked for help would seem to be unethical. In the current study, most common requests for help related to providing information, for example about the availability of certain courses at a local college. However, in a small number of cases, there was a need for more in-depth involvement. The case of Nadia provides an illustrative example. Nadia was of Pakistani origin and neither of her parents spoke English as their first language. After a long illness Nadia had lost contact with services and was very isolated with no structured daily activity. There were also issues relating to benefit entitlements. As her parents did not feel confident about speaking to professionals on the telephone they asked the researcher to do so on their behalf. After discussion with supervisors about the appropriateness of taking on this role, it was decided to put Nadia in touch with an advocacy agency as it seemed likely that on-going support would be required. The outcome of this intervention was that Nadia was matched up with a citizen advocate who was working towards finding new day opportunities for her. Overall, this appeared to be the best solution. By intervening, the researcher ensured that Nadia would receive on-going support, which it would not have been possible for the researcher to provide.

Such issues raise further dilemmas when it comes to ending the research relationship. The researcher and the participants were similar in age and in some cases shared similar interests. In addition the researcher provided assistance and information when asked to do so by the young people. This made it rather difficult and somewhat uncomfortable to end the relationship. Stalker (1998), picking up on the work of Booth and Booth (1996) recommends withdrawing from individuals at their own pace. The alternative is to run the

risk of fieldwork relations becoming exploitive. Ending the relationship can create uncomfortable ethical dilemmas for researchers. Swain et al (1998) point out that:

to conduct research of this nature [in-depth interviews] is to be involved in people's lives. The involvement may be peripheral as far as the researcher is concerned but it may not be from the participant's point of view.

(Swain et al, 1998: 31)

There is a danger that the participant can become reliant on the relationship or the relationship might be terminated before the participant feels the process is complete. Overall, there are no easy answers to these dilemmas and although every attempt was made in the current research to behave in a trust-worthy, responsible and ethical manner it is not clear whether or not the relationship with participants came to an end in a way that suited all participants. All participants were thanked for taking part in the research and shortly afterwards a thank-you card was sent to each participant as a small token of appreciation. Young people were invited to keep in touch with the researcher if they wished to do so and provide news of their progress in education, training or employment (to date, none of the young people have made contact). Ultimately the best way to complete the research relationship is to disseminate the findings of the research in a way that is meaningful and helpful to the young people involved. This is an on-going process.

Analysis of data

In total 109 interviews were carried out during the course of the fieldwork period. These interviews ranged in length from around thirty minutes (for some of the interviews with young people with learning disabilities) to around ninety minutes (for some of the significant other and key informant interviews). All of the interviews were recorded (with participants' permission) and were fully transcribed by the researcher. Interestingly, although all of the research participants indicated that they were happy for the interviews to be tape-recorded, it became apparent that once the tape recorder was switched off they became visibly more relaxed and often this was when information was most forthcoming. Again, this can create the ethical dilemmas referred to by Swain et al (1998) when conducting in-depth interviews and decisions had to be made about what information should be treated as data and what should not. Dowler (2001) indicates that it is important to recognise when someone is speaking to the interviewer as a researcher and when they are confiding in the researcher as an unbiased yet friendly outsider. This dilemma was assisted to some extent by the collection of detailed field notes after each interview had

taken place. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to make observations and reflect on the process overall. Unless a respondent specifically pointed out that something they said after the tape-recorder was switched off should be kept off the record, points of relevance from these informal discussions were often included in the field notes. In some cases if a point seemed particularly relevant but had not been mentioned during the interview it was possible for the researcher to clarify the issue by making a comment such as “oh that’s interesting, would you mind if I just took a note of that?”, thus enabling the respondent to retain ownership of the data. In any case, the young participants were given the chance to review and clarify what had been said initially during the second interview, although none of them took the opportunity to alter the data.

When researching with people with learning disabilities, issues around ownership of and interpretation of data generated are particularly significant. It is important for the researcher to manage and be explicit about the possibility of “contamination” where the views of the researcher colour the research process (Gilbert, 2004). As has been stated throughout, the commitment of this research has been to enable the voices of the young people to be heard, however, this has necessarily involved some level of interpretation on the part of the researcher. According to Taylor, (1999):

it is not sufficient simply to record and report the voice of the user; it is necessary to theorise the data. This is not to say that the research should emphasise an abstract analysis of the data at the expense of the practical and real world considerations; rather that it should be dialectical in relating the experience of service users to wider social structures.

(Taylor, 1999: 382)

The notion of intersubjectivity is particularly helpful here (Gardner, 2001). In the following account (chapters six, seven and eight), the voices of both the researcher and the participants will be presented. Every attempt will be made to be clear about whose voice is being represented and one voice will not be given value or primacy over the other.

Given the different voices being represented by the research, analysing the data in a systematic and sensitive way was crucial. As mentioned above all interviews were fully transcribed by the researcher. Although this was a long, at times lonely and time-consuming process it was valuable in that it offered the researcher the chance to revisit the data. Listening to the interviews enabled the researcher to pick up on key issues and an initial, first level analysis was conducted and potential themes were highlighted. Each case study was then written up fully and sessions were held with the research advisor to discuss

the cases and highlight possible themes. Data was then entered into the computer software programme QSR NUD*IST, which was used as a tool to manage the vast amount of data that was generated. NUD*IST facilitates the on-line storage, analysis and retrieval of textual information (Richards and Richards, 1994). The programme's hierarchical organisation was useful. Data is coded using nodes which provide a way of cataloguing the themes, ideas, people and places for each interview conducted. Nodes can be organised as a tree node hierarchy, where the nodes immediately below a given node (its immediate sub-categories) were sub-themes, and conversely the node immediately above a given node were major themes. Free nodes can also be created which are not connected to any tree node. The software package QSR NUD*IST proved to be a useful tool in terms of organising the large amounts of data generated during the in-depth interviews. The researcher felt it was important to highlight common themes or differences that cut across each case study and the software package allowed data to be grouped according to themes and sub-themes. This enabled the researcher to for example, identify the three models of transition into which young people could be grouped according to their experiences. It also proved to be a useful tool in terms of looking at the experiences and opinions of different groups of people (for example, young people, parents and service providers). On the other hand, given the commitment to ensuring that young people were at the centre of the research, it was crucial not to lose sense of who they were and what their experiences were. As a result, writing case summaries ensured that the overall picture of each young person was not lost or fractured. These two methods of analysis broadly complemented one another and allowed a detailed and accurate picture of the overall transitional experiences of young people with learning disabilities to be built up.

The analysis was influenced to some extent by Glaser and Stauss' (1967) notion of grounded theory in that the researcher adopted a method of comparison between cases in the process of data collection and analysis. Grounded theory provides a connection between data and theory and can be used as a procedure for researchers to follow in addressing the complexities of social life (see also Mason, 1996; Roberts, 2002; Gilbert, 2004). Grounded theory in its purest form involves the researcher starting the analytical process with a "blank canvas". This was not the case in the current research project, where a fairly pragmatic approach was adopted. The analytical process was informed by the pre-existing categories developed as part of the interview schedule which was used to carry out the semi-structured interviews with participants. This interview schedule was developed and "tested out" in partnership with the research advisor, ensuring issues of relevance to people with learning disabilities were covered (as discussed in more detail previously). These categories were used as a starting point for the analysis which was further developed

during the process of transcription. By listening and re-visiting the interviews, the researcher was able to highlight issues of interest and relevance, creating new codes and sub-codes. As the process of transcription and coding was on-going throughout the course of the field work, the researcher was able to follow up particular issues. For example, issues raised by young people relating to their perceptions of support available were followed up in interviews with key informants. The themes identified during the preliminary analysis and discussions with the research advisor were used as a starting point for the remainder of the analytical process. Data was coded according to these themes and new themes also emerged during this process. A priori assumptions were therefore brought into play to some extent. Indeed it could be argued that given the time and thought expended in terms of developing the interview schedules on the basis of the pilot study and work with the research advisor that it would have been impossible, unrealistic and even undesirable to ignore these assumptions. A final reading of the transcripts allowed themes to be grouped and occasionally merged together. Grounded theory can be criticised for an emphasis on fracturing the data. However, writing up the case studies fully prior to the analysis allowed the data to be viewed by themes cutting across the case studies while each case retained its own identity (Yin, 2003). The use of semi-structured interviews did not preclude people from talking about other areas which they felt to be of significance. The same applied to the coding of data. Data was coded under new categories even if it appeared initially to be beyond the scope of the current study. Data was not simply disregarded, however the need to have boundaries in order to make the study manageable meant it was not possible to use all of the rich data that was collected. For example, data was generated by the young people and the significant others about living arrangements and relationships. Although these relate strongly to the transition from childhood to adulthood, it was beyond the scope of this study to look at these different types of transition in any depth.

In terms of the coding and analysis of the data, the researcher worked closely with the research advisor to discuss the themes that were emerging in order to decide whether these appeared significant on the basis of his own experiences. The researcher worked on the coding and analysis of data fairly independently from the supervisory team. They were not involved in constructing codes but provided a sounding board for the discussion of ideas as they emerged. Preliminary findings were then presented to supervisors in draft written form for comment.

Data analysis brought with it, its own set of challenges. In particular there was a need to be mindful of the extent to which the researcher was imposing meaning onto other people's

ideas in terms of imposing interpretations of order and meaning. This would appear to be particularly salient in terms of conducting research with people with learning disabilities, a vulnerable group, who too often have had their voices silenced in the past. This is discussed in greater detail above (see also Taylor, 1999, Gardner, 2001, Gilbert, 2004).

Overall, the approach taken to data analysis could be said to be both deductive and inductive. The approach taken to coding was confirmatory in that transcripts were coded and analysed with the knowledge gained from the literature review and the pilot study in mind and coding was initially structured according to the categories developed for the semi-structured interview schedule. On the other hand, coding was also exploratory in that new themes and categories were developed as the researcher read and became more familiar with the data that had been produced. This would appear to be a fairly common approach to qualitative data analysis and is summed up well in the following quote by David and Sutton (2004:205):

Deductive coding involves the production of a list of categories by which data is to be coded prior to the collection of the data itself. In so far as there is always an element of selection in any form of social research, and in so far as the researcher is always influenced by their culture in how they see the world they research, there is always an element of deductiveness about coding. Inductive forms of coding involve the generation of codes after the collection and initial reading of the data itself. This may be at a number of stages in the data collection process. Either the first round of data collected is read to allow the researcher to generate an initial list of codes from which to give provisional conclusions, or the coding process is left until the data has all been collected. Early use of inductive coding becomes the basis for subsequent deductive forms of enquiry.

Dissemination

The importance of disseminating the findings of research in a form that is both accessible and useful to people with disabilities has been well documented in the research literature from the disability studies tradition (see for example, Barnes, 1992; Oliver, 1992; Morris, 1992; Zarb, 1992; Barnes, 1996; Bury, 1996; Shakespeare, 1996). This is an on-going process whereby different strategies need to be adopted to target different audiences. As mentioned above, visiting the young participants on more than one occasion provided the opportunity to provide some early feedback and gave the young people the chance to comment on the early work. However, on-going dissemination is required in a way that is meaningful to the young people. Others who have been involved in the research process

have expressed an interest in being made aware of the findings, particularly Careers Scotland who played a significant role in facilitating the research originally. Working in partnership with the research advisor has proved invaluable in identifying a target audience and potential sources for dissemination of the research. It will be necessary to develop a more detailed dissemination strategy but to date progress has been made in terms of presenting findings at various academic conferences and presenting in partnership with the research advisor to the Scottish Executive. Imaginative ways of disseminating research to young participants need to be developed.

Discussion

The aim of this chapter has been not only to outline the research methods adopted but also to provide a rationale for this. The research has been influenced by feminist and postmodern perspectives which view knowledge as something that is socially produced through interaction between the researcher and competent social actors. Young people's experiences were viewed as central to the research but at all times attempts were made to ground these in the wider socio-economic structures. The research has been driven by a commitment to ensuring the voices of young people with learning disabilities are at the centre of the research and as such has attempted to adopt a participative approach. In order to facilitate this participative approach careful consideration was given to the research methods used. The qualitative research paradigm seemed entirely appropriate and in particular the research adopted a case study approach that was influenced by biographical methods. Working closely with a research advisor was part of the attempt to ensure that the areas covered by the research were indeed relevant and appropriate to young people with learning disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood. Undoubtedly, the research might be criticised for not going far enough in terms of the emancipatory research paradigm. There is certainly room for improvement and increased involvement of participants particularly at the stages of planning and dissemination. Perhaps more imaginative research methods could have been adopted which would have facilitated greater participation such as the use of cameras, videos or diaries (see for example, Barker and Weller, 2003; Harris and Roberts, 2003; Wilson, 2003; Germain, 2004; Pawson et al, 2005; Williams and Simons, 2005). Much has been learned during the course of the research process that will be put into practice in future. The next three chapters will turn to focus on the research findings, drawing particularly on the voices of the young people with learning disabilities who took part in the research. Chapter six will focus in detail on the experiences of young people as they make transitions. Chapter seven will discuss the impact of being labelled as having a learning disability and the impact of the associated

stigma on young people's transitional experiences. Finally, chapter eight will discuss the services available, looking at the potential impact of service changes from the point of view of young people, their families and service providers.

Chapter Six: The lived experience of transitions for young people with moderate learning difficulties

As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, the overall aim of this chapter is to focus in greater detail on the experiences of young people with moderate learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. In order to do this, the chapter begins by briefly outlining the different routes taken since leaving school by the young people who participated in the research. It then goes on to look at the various factors which have influenced the young people's transitions and will discuss the nature of these experiences in some more depth. It has been possible to identify three different models of transition and in the remaining part of this chapter these models will be presented alongside a discussion of the extent to which the transitional experiences of young people with learning disabilities differ or are similar to young people's transitional experiences in the general population.

Routes taken by young people with learning difficulties upon leaving school

Chapter four outlined some recent trends in relation to the transition from school to further education, training and employment (see for example Cole, 1995; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; Bynner, 1997; Johnstone et al, 2000; Furlong et al 2003; Webster, et al, 2004). These trends suggest that youth transitions are increasingly complicated and stable. The available literature also identified key issues for young people with disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood and identified a range of barriers faced by young people (see for example, Morris, 1999, 2002; Mitchell, 1999; Riddell, et al, 2001; Jones 2002; Stalker 2002). In the current study it was possible to identify some patterns in relation to the routes taken by young people with learning difficulties upon leaving school. These patterns are shown in tabular form in Appendix C. In terms of first post-school destination, eighty per cent of the young people in the sample went on Further Education College after leaving school. This compares to 23 per cent in the general population (Glasgow City Council, 2001). Fourteen of these sixteen young people went on to a specialist course for people with learning difficulties and two of the young people went on to study on mainstream courses. Of the remaining four young people, three young people went on to find paid employment and one young person undertook a training course. Two years later (which was when the young people participated in the current study), five of the young people remained at college (either on mainstream or specialist courses), two were

undertaking a training course, five were in paid employment and seven of the young people were economically inactive. Within this group of economically inactive young people were young people in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, alongside young people on Incapacity Benefit or Sickness Benefit. This shows that not all of the young people who were economically inactive were actively seeking work. Since leaving school more than half of the sample had four or more placements (in some cases this was as high as seven or eight placements).

It is possible to draw on figures provided by Careers Scotland on a yearly basis which provide information about the first post-school destination of young people. Although the aim is not to make direct comparisons, the figures provide a useful illustration of the similarities and differences between the routes taken by young people in the general population and the routes taken by young people who participated in the current study. Figure one below shows the first post school destination of young people in Glasgow leaving mainstream schools, compared with young people leaving MLD schools in Glasgow. The differences between the two groups can be seen quite clearly. Although a greater number of options now appear to be open to young people leaving MLD schools, the proportion moving on to Further Education is far greater than that in the general population. In addition, none of the MLD sample moved on to Higher Education and smaller proportion moved into employment. Those with a moderate learning disability however were more likely to be found in a training place or in unemployment than young people in the general population.

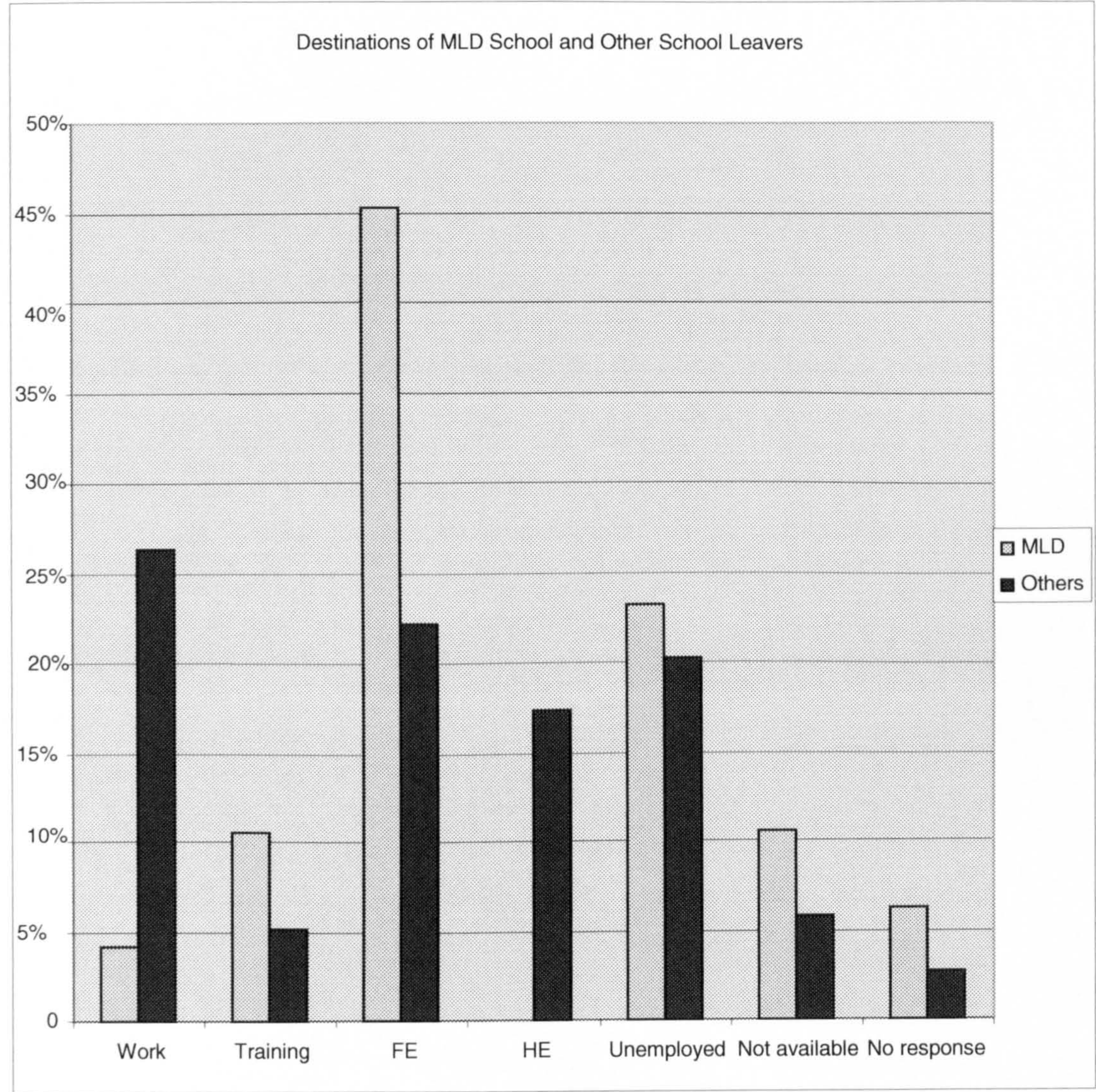


Figure 0-1 Post school destinations of MLD school and other school leavers. Figures provided by Careers Scotland

As mentioned above, a higher proportion of young people with learning disabilities move on to further education upon leaving school. In addition, none of the young people in the sample moved on to higher education, a notable difference with the general population. Although it would appear that growing numbers of disabled students are participating in higher education than previously (see Tinklin et al 1999, 2004) for a more detailed discussion of disabled students’ experiences of higher education) this was not the case for young people in the current study. In terms of participation in training courses and employment, the figures suggest that a similar proportion of young people in the current study experienced training and employment as young people in the general population.

When looking in more detail at the routes taken by young people in the current study in the two years since leaving school, it again seems possible to argue that their experiences fit broadly with the key trends identified in the literature on youth transitions discussed in detail in chapter four. As mentioned above, more than half the young people in the sample

had experienced four or more placements since leaving school. This suggests that they, like young people in the general population, are experiencing complex, protracted and unstable transitions (Coles, 1995; Jones, 1995; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). Indeed it was not uncommon for young people in the sample to experience several short-term placements, intersected by periods of unemployment or inactivity. It appeared that for many young people in the sample, finding a placement was relatively unproblematic, but sustaining that placement presented a range of difficulties. This will be discussed in greater detail throughout the remainder of the chapter.

Although young people in the current study may have taken similar routes and experienced unstable and uncertain transitions, their overall experience of transition may have been very different to those of young people in the general population. It is necessary therefore to look in greater detail at the lived experiences of the young people in the sample in relation to further education, training and employment. In order to do this it is necessary to discuss in some detail the various factors that have influenced the routes taken and the decision-making process for this group of young people.

Factors that have influenced the choices made and routes taken by young people with learning disabilities upon leaving school

Prior to conducting the fieldwork, it was hypothesised that the routes taken by young people upon leaving school and the situations that they experienced would be influenced by the area in which they lived (Glasgow or Renfrewshire) and the type of school that they attended (mainstream or special school). In the event, notable differences were not found either by area or school attended. In relation to area, young people living in Glasgow were likely to have greater choice in terms of college courses available or training providers offering particular training courses, however in terms of the post-school destination of young people at the end of the field work period there was little difference by area as the table below would suggest. Further, the extent to which young people in the sample exercised this choice in terms of college attended or training provider used is discussed in greater detail below.

LAST KNOWN POST-SCHOOL DESTINATION	GLASGOW	RENFREWSHIRE	TOTAL
Further education (special needs course)	0	1	1
Further Education (mainstream course)	1	2	3
Training course (including work placements)	0	2	2
Employment (paid work, full time or part time)	3	2	5
Unemployment	5	3	8
Sickness	1	0	1

Table 6 – Numbers of Young People by Last Known Post-School Destination in Glasgow and Renfrewshire

One area where a small difference is notable is in relation to the number of young people not in further education, employment or training (NEET) in both areas (see Howison, 2003; Raffe 2003; Scottish Executive, 2005c for a more detailed discussion). In Glasgow, the proportion of young people in the sample who were unemployed or long-term sick was double that in the Renfrewshire area. This may be attributable to a range of wider socio-economic factors and reflects the broader picture at a national level whereby the proportion of Incapacity Benefit claimants in Glasgow is one of the highest in Britain (see McGregor et al, 2003).

In relation to school attended any noticeable difference as a result of attending a mainstream or special school appears to have been cancelled out as a result of the majority of young people in the sample moving on to specialist college provision (see also Mitchell, 1999; Watson, et al 2003; Pitt and Curtin, 2004). This will be discussed in greater detail below. Although area lived in and school attended had less impact on young people's experiences than originally expected, a range of factors that appear to have had an impact on young people's choices and decision making as well as their lived experiences were identified.

Self-confidence

The majority of young people in the sample moved from school onto further education. Fourteen of the sixteen young people who moved onto further education had attended a specialist development course. This was true regardless of whether the young person had previously attended a mainstream school or special school for young people with moderate

learning difficulties (MLD school) and it would appear that there were a number of reasons for this. Generally young people were advised to go on such courses, usually by teachers, parents and careers advisors in an attempt to improve their overall levels of confidence and self esteem. This was a key issue, which was mentioned by almost all of the young people, their parents and the professionals who worked with them. It was a characteristic that was shared by almost all of the young people in the sample and has almost certainly had some impact on their experiences since leaving school as the quote below from Craig would appear to suggest:

I was thinking about that [getting a job straight from school] but then I got scared. But now I've got the experience to go to work. If they offered me a full time job now I'd probably take it.

Craig, 21, Glasgow

When asked why one of his students came to be on the development course in the first place one tutor who worked on a Further Education development course said:

just total lack of confidence...And it's just that I think she's always been a shy kid. And she's been happy being a shy kid and she's never really wanted to come out of it...But no she's matured since then. But I think her basic problem is shyness and getting on with people. When she first joins the group she keeps herself very much to herself and she doesn't make friends easily. But then when she makes a friend she's made a friend".

Tutor, Development Course

A lack of self-confidence has clearly influenced the choices made by some of the young people. In some cases it held young people back from choosing what they really wanted to do after leaving school.

Now I'm starting to, I'm thinking about going back to college cos I want to do a travel and tourism course at the food tech, but I don't really know yet....I was going to actually apply for a course in the Food Tech, the same course and I was just about to write it out and everything, my application form, and just chickened out at the very last minute.

Peter, 21, Glasgow

This lack of confidence may stem from young people doubting their own ability or from difficulties experienced while at school which may have stemmed from being labelled as having a "learning disability". This is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Seven of the young people also had difficulties with travelling independently and this had a significant impact on the options available. Certain college courses or training programmes were limited to those young people who could travel on their own. In Stuart's case, for example, he only had a choice of two college courses when he left school because he could not travel independently.

Young people's perceived involvement in the decision making process

It would seem apparent that many of the young people in the current study were perceived (by parents, teachers and careers advisors) to be lacking in self-confidence and not yet ready to participate in the "real world". Further education in the form of the development course was seen as a useful bridge between school and "adult life" and sixteen of the young people were advised to move on to one of these courses as a result. However, contrary to some of the previous literature on transitions for young people with learning disabilities (see Cameron and Murphy, 2002; Small et al, 2003; Smart, 2004) which suggests that young people with learning disabilities are marginalised in the transitional planning process, several young people in the current survey felt actively involved in the decision making process as the quotes below suggest. Young people were asked about who was involved in deciding what they would do when they left school. Several of the young people said that they were involved in the decision making process, often alongside someone such as a parent or carer:

eh I think that was a bit of both my mum's and mine. Cos it was a handy college for me to get to and em, it actually looked, sounded quite good that's the thing.

Stuart, 18, Glasgow

Em, it was em, first it was my idea and then it was not only my idea but [careers advisors] as well

Ali, 20, East Renfrewshire

However, other young people described the situation differently and spoke of being told what to do by various professionals.

He [the teacher] said I should go to college and do the Step course cos it would give me more confidence and cos I'm usually shy to people and he said it would give me more confidence to talk more to people and give me more qualifications.

Joanne, 18, Renfrewshire

Parents and professionals such as careers advisors spoke of being involved in the decision making process, but were keen to point out that young people had a major say in the matter. In one or two cases where parents did not agree with the decision made by the young person, they respected that decision and did not try to force the young person into something they did not want to do as the quote below suggests:

em well he must have been about seventeen, he must have been seventeen when he left. It was June you know and school was kind of finishing up and he said I don't think I'll go back to school and I said what do you mean. He said I think I'll go to college and I was like [makes wailing noise] [laughs]. I tried to talk him out of it but no he was determined he was going to college.

Parent, Glasgow

Overall, most of the young people in the study felt involved to some degree in the decision making process although some felt they had been told what to do by those they regarded to be in positions of power such as parents, teachers, careers advisors and college lecturers. These decision makers certainly paid lip service in terms of involving young people in the decision making process. However, closer examination of the data revealed that the “choices” made by young people were influenced by a range of structural factors, which will now be examined in more detail.

Participation in school link courses

Young people's decisions about what they would do after leaving school were also heavily influenced by the ways in which the secondary school they had attended prepared them from leaving school. All of the young people in the sample (those who attended mainstream school as well as those at MLD school) had participated in a school link programme prior to leaving school. This is a programme where in the final year of schooling the young person spends a certain number of hours or days each week at the local Further Education College rather than in the classroom. This programme gives students a taster of college life and gives them an idea of whether it is appropriate for them. For sixteen of the twenty young people in the sample, attending one of these school-link programmes made the choice almost automatic. Many of the young people expressed some confusion about what they should do after leaving school. Attending the school link programme allowed the young people to move on from school to college without taking a step into the unknown.

It was Dawn and the school who decided she should go on to the Step course. Dawn was happy to do it as she did not feel ready for anything else at the time. The school recommended it partly because she didn't know what she wanted to do next but also because they thought it would help her build up her confidence.

Parent, Renfrewshire

School link courses can therefore on the one hand be regarded as a useful period of preparation for the young person about to leave school. This is a period of time that is often regarded with anxiety by young people generally but particularly by young people with learning disabilities and their parents (Small et al, 2003). The school-link course would appear to enable young people to take gradual steps towards adulthood. On the other hand, such programmes can be regarded as a mechanism intended to guide or steer young people in a particular direction.

Territorial Issues

Another significant factor that appeared to influence the decisions taken by young people can be described as territorial issues. Much has been written about the significance of territorial issues for young people in the general population (see for example Skelton and Valentine, 1998). Young people can feel excluded from local spaces either because of other young people or because adults or the police resist their presence (Skelton and Valentine, 1998). For several of the young people in the current study, where a college or place of employment was located geographically was regarded as a major influence on whether the young person decided to attend that particular course or accept the job offer. There were four cases where the young person turned down the course or job they really wanted to do and accepted something less appropriate simply because of location. There are several potential reasons for this. One of the major reasons is about feeling unsafe in particular areas as the following quote from Simon illustrates well:

I started off at [College in Renfrewshire] but I left after my mum and dad split up. I didn't like it there anyway. I didn't feel safe there. Then I went to [College in Glasgow] instead. I went there because it was handy

Simon, 19, Glasgow

Feeling unsafe in particular areas is something that is common for young people in the general population (see Skelton and Valentine, 1998). However for young people with a learning disability this can often be attributed to bullying or the stigma attached to having a

learning disability. In Nadia's case her mother did not wish her to attend the local college as too many young people from the local area went there. Nadia had experienced name-calling from some of the local young people previously as the following quotes suggest:

they said to try the nearer college [careers advisor], and the thing was because of the local boys going from my own street, and you know, because of the name calling and things like that, that was the reason I wasn't happy to send her to the local college, they're all too familiar and that's about it.

Parent, Glasgow

She [young person] maybe goes out and about locally by herself but when she goes out I get the feeling that she puts up with quite a lot of grief from people. You know, that maybe people are rude to her or she has the reputation of being a nuisance or...

Advocacy worker, Glasgow

Another reason which is more likely to be specific to this group of young people relates to lacking the confidence to take on a placement that is too far away from home. Mandy turned down a job in a bakers shop on the advice of her mother because it was too far for her to travel everyday. Likewise, Patrick gave up a placement in a college in Renfrewshire which was running the course he really wanted to do in order to pursue a course which his parents perceived to be unsuitable at a college in Glasgow which was "on the doorstep".

Influence of parents

Another area which appeared to affect the experiences of the young people in the study as they made the transition from school to further education, training or employment was the influence of their parents or other family members. This influence can have a positive or negative effect on the young person's transitional experience and can be intentional or unintentional. Indeed, Pascall and Hendey (2002, 2004) identified having "exceptional parents" as the single most influential factor for young disabled people making the transition to paid work and independent living. In their study all of the young people who successfully attained both paid employment and independent living, attributed this to having "exceptional parents" (see chapter four for a more in-depth discussion). Within the current study perhaps the most obvious area of parental influence was the effect which an unsettled home life can have on the young person's transition from school to further education, training or employment (see Morrow and Richards, 1996; Johnston et al, 2000;

Howison, 2003; Raffe, 2003; and Webster, 2004). Five of the young people in the current study came from a home background which was disrupted in some way, either by the divorce of parents, having a parent with alcohol or other addiction problems or where the young person had to leave home because they do not get on with a parent. In all of these cases the disruption caused by these problems resulted in the young person having to leave school early (with perhaps less qualifications than they might have attained otherwise) or leave a job or further education placement.

In some cases, parent's own attitude towards employment was found to have an impact on their child's decision making (Morrow and Richards, 1996). In several cases what the young person wanted to do on leaving school was influenced by the type of work their parents or other family members did. Craig was extremely focused on becoming a chef. He was likely to have been influenced by the fact that his older siblings were both chefs. Similarly, Natalie wanted to work in an office because that was what her older sister did. What was less clear was whether having parents who worked or did not work influenced the attitudes of young people towards work. Thirteen of the young people had at least one parent in paid employment, three of the young people had parents who were unemployed or unable to work due to ill health, while it was unclear what the other four sets of parents did. It seemed likely that those young people who had parents in employment who advocated strongly the merits of employment, were more likely to feel strongly about having a job or getting a job (Morrow and Richards, 1996; Pascall and Hendey, 2002; 2004). At the very least they were more likely to say they were trying to get a job or to imagine that they would be working in one year's time. Those whose parents did not work seemed to feel under less pressure to try and find work. This may have been compounded by the fact that the young people and parents who were not in employment enjoyed spending time together and were therefore less likely to hurry to find work. This was apparent in three cases. James' Beattie key worker was finding it difficult to encourage him to apply for jobs. She felt this was partly because he seemed happy with his current situation. At the time of the fieldwork he spent his days playing football or snooker with his father who was not in employment either.

Parental attitudes towards their son or daughter's capabilities were also significant and it was found that parents could assist in either giving or taking away self-confidence. Parents were keen to emphasise their child's positive attributes and seemed particularly keen to emphasise that they were "not stupid", as the following quotes show:

He did okay at school, he wasn't overly bright but he was very popular and he was good at sports.

Parent, Glasgow

And she isn't like stupid...it's just the dyslexia, know what I mean.

Parent, Renfrewshire

Again this may be linked to stigma or bullying and will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven. Of particular significance to young people with learning disabilities is when their parents under-estimate what they are capable of. The current study identified several cases where parents were perceived to be over-protective (occasionally by their son or daughter, but usually by professionals involved in the young person's life). Parents could inadvertently erode the young person's confidence as the quote below suggests:

she became more confident in a very quiet confident way she came to appreciate her own abilities, em she found her own strengths. I think she had a lot of things laid on her maybe from her mum, you know that she couldn't do a lot of things, there were sort of conditions of worth around.

Personal Tutor, Further Education College

Parents who under-estimated their child's abilities may have unintentionally held them back. In Frank's case his mother would not let him travel independently because she was worried that he would be bullied on the bus. As a result of this, certain options at college were closed to him. This appeared to be a very difficult dilemma for parents and many of those parents interviewed spoke of the tension between wanting their son or daughter to do well and worrying about them. This raises issues about risk and acceptable risk-taking (Manthorpe and Walsh, 1997; Bradley, 2002). Some professionals interviewed appeared to find this frustrating. In Stuart's case his college lecturer felt he had the potential to live and work independently eventually. However she added that he would never fulfil his true potential while living with his mother as the quote below shows.

In relation to working I think he really did show a lot of potential but the problem is that he is too dependent on his mum. Because there is only the two of them I think she likes to do things for him but she is not doing him any favours. I really feel if he moved out of home he would be much more mature. He did mature over the last couple of years and he could have done more but he chose not to

College Lecturer

There is a need to understand the difficulties involved in letting go for some parents and the tensions that can exist between parents and professionals, both of whom tend to have the best interests of the young person at heart. On the one hand, parents have dealt with their child’s disability for many years and have unique knowledge and insight into how their child copes in certain situations. Professionals, on the other hand may interpret parental concern as over-protection, which holds the young person back. For the young people in the current study, the support they appeared to value most from their parents, family members and various professionals was the encouragement and support to make their own decisions.

Finances and benefits

The final area of significance highlighted during the course of the interviews with young people and significant others which helped to shape and influence young people’s experiences in relation to education, training and employment was finances and benefits. A substantial amount of research, particularly in relation to employment and supported employment, has suggested that the benefits system and finances affect people’s attitudes and ability to work (see for example Beyer and Kilsby, 1996a, 1996b; O’Brien et al, 2000; Riddell, et al, 2001; Burchardt and McKnight, 2003). (See also chapter four for a more detailed discussion of this area). In the case of the young people in the current study, benefits clearly had some impact on their working lives. Using the data provided by the young people, their families and professionals involved in their lives, the table below shows the benefits claimed by the young people. This information may not always have been accurate as some of the young people and/ or their families were not completely sure which benefits they were receiving.

BENEFIT CLAIMED	NUMBER OF CLAIMANTS
Severe Disablement Allowance	1
Job Seekers Allowance	4
Incapacity Benefit	3
Sickness Benefit	1
Disability Living Allowance	3
Income Support	1
Disabled Person’s Tax Credit	2
None	5

Table 7 – Number of Recipients of Welfare Benefits by Benefit Received

Certain benefits have been shown to create particular barriers for the young people in the study that are similar to those found in the general population. For young people in

receipt of sickness benefit for example, asking them to come off that benefit to go on some kind of training course or to accept paid employment is asking them to take a risk which some may find unacceptable. Those on Incapacity Benefit may find it difficult to find out about what services are available to them. They have no obligation to come in to the Job Centre to sign on and therefore may not be aware of services such as the Disability Employment Advisor (See Schneider et al, 2001; Department of Work and Pensions, 2002; McGregor et al, 2003; Select Committee on Work and Pensions, 2003; Riddell, et al 2005 for a more detailed discussion around the effects of Incapacity Benefit). The main difficulty with Disability Living Allowance is that it limits the number of hours that young people can work or attend college. This can result in young people having to work different hours to everyone else. They can also be less flexible in the number of hours that they work. In Natalie's case being on Disability Living Allowance meant that she had to drop some of the subjects she did at college so that she did not spend too much time there. Her lecturer believed that this would severely hamper her ability to progress onto the next level of the course.

The attempts of the government to encourage people to move from benefits into employment have been discussed in some detail in chapter two. For some young people in the current study however, in order to qualify for a place on certain training courses or to qualify for help from certain agencies, they had to be in receipt of certain benefits. In Joanne's case she had to apply for and be in receipt of disability living allowance before a particular voluntary organisation would provide a supported employment service. It was unlikely that Joanne would be able to move into open employment straight away so doing this was necessary for her job prospects. Her mother was unhappy about going down this route as she had hoped her daughter would be able to secure employment without having to claim benefits. This may illustrate the stigma which some people still feel about claiming benefits.

In spite of the restrictions imposed by certain benefits, the views of the young people and their parents appeared to suggest that they valued employment for more than just financial reasons and being in receipt of benefits did not seem to hold back many of the young people in the study from trying to find employment. Some of the young people were not even aware if they were in receipt of benefits or which benefits they received suggesting it was not always an important consideration for them. They were however concerned that they were treated fairly and several of the young people felt that training programmes which expected them to work for only an extra ten pounds each week on top of their benefits were unfair. Young people found this particularly difficult to deal with when they

saw younger people coming into the work place and earning more than them. Most of the parents shared the views of the young people. Several parents stressed that the money was not the most important factor and felt it was more important for their son or daughter to have something worthwhile to do. However parents also felt their sons and daughters should be treated fairly and one mother summed it up well by saying “equal pay for equal work”.

A small number of parents although keen for their son or daughters to find work, did express some concern about their son or daughter losing their benefits, particularly when there was some uncertainty around how well they would cope with a job.

And there was always this feeling of you know Stuart is on benefits at the moment and you're scared if you push things too far in the direction of jobs if you get a job that's fine but it's the benefits out the window...It's a real problem you know, but there are, em in-work benefits, you're allowed to earn money and em still be on benefit which is, but the drawback is you can only do eight hours. But if you do eight hours, which would be more than enough for him, you get something, you know which would be fine and it would give him the chance to get to know a job in terms of whether he can handle it.

Mother, Glasgow

It seems clear that structurally benefits can have a real impact on the experiences of young people, steering them down particular paths or restricting others (see Stalker 2002, Weston 2002). However the attitudes of the young people and parents questioned suggest that being on benefits certainly does not seem to hold back the desire of the young people to find work or the desire of parents and other unpaid carers to encourage them to do so. There were no notable differences between the two local authority areas in relation to attitudes towards benefits although as mentioned earlier in the chapter, there was a greater likelihood of young people being economically inactive or sick if they lived in Glasgow as opposed to Renfrewshire.

Young people's experiences of further education, training and employment

To sum up briefly, the interviews with young people and significant others appear to suggest that while the young people's experiences of transition may be similar to those of young people in the general population in terms of some of the routes taken and the unstable, complex nature of transition, the factors that influence their transitions and inform the decision-making process are fairly specific to this particular group of young

people. The remainder of the chapter will look in more detail at young people's lived experiences of further education, training and employment before introducing the three models of transition that have been developed.

Experiences of Further Education

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, sixteen of the twenty young people who took part in the study moved on to further education on leaving school. Most of the young people who were interviewed enjoyed their time at college, particularly initially. They commented on issues such as being allowed to call the lecturers by their first name and not having to wear a uniform. This suggests that they valued being treated as an adult and enjoyed being given more independence and autonomy as the following quote suggests:

it was just meeting new people and knowing that I could call lecturers by their first name like you couldn't at school

Joanne, 18, Renfrewshire

At school many of the young people and their parents spoke of a sense of being over-protected. Therefore moving on to college appeared to represent a change in status. The young people enjoyed trying new subjects which were more vocational in nature including bricklaying and hairdressing and enjoyed the work experience elements of the courses that they were on. The young people also spoke of valuing the social elements of college. In particular they enjoyed spending time with their friends. This was important to the majority of young people questioned.

Parents spoke about their pleasure in seeing positive changes in their son or daughter after leaving school and moving on to college. These changes were often subtle and related to young people becoming more independent and increasingly confident in their own abilities, as can be seen from the quote below.

Basically the reason she went on the course was that she was having learning difficulties, she lacked confidence and she's doing marvellous today, this is the longest I've heard her talking, I'm quite gob-smacked. She does lack confidence and the reason she went on this one was because we felt the more experience she gets of talking to people and going out and working and finding out what a working environment is really like, cos she's never done it before. And now she's eighteen, she's doing it and she's benefiting from it...she's come a long way since she got there.

Parent, Renfrewshire

Like their sons and daughters, parents also valued the social opportunities and activities afforded by college as the following quote from a parent in Glasgow suggests.

The reason I encouraged him to go back to college for the third year was to keep up his friendships.

Parent, Glasgow

Parents also felt that giving young people the chance to obtain some work experience was a useful exercise, but in some cases they felt it was an opportunity lost. In one case a young man was sent to the same placement on three occasions. He only got the opportunity to experience something different after his mother complained. When he found out that there were more opportunities available he felt cheated. One mother felt it would have been more valuable to have had “more actual opportunities to experience work rather than sit around talking about it”.

Overall most young people enjoyed the time they spent at college. However, some dissatisfaction was expressed. One of the most common complaints that the young people made, was that in terms of content and subjects studied it was just “more of the same”. After an initial period of excitement it appeared that the young people felt that college “was just the same as school”. As a result of this many of the young people grew tired of their courses and were glad to leave at the end of the course as the following quote would appear to suggest:

I liked the last two years but in the third year since I've got older, I've started to lose interest in it a wee bit. I wouldn't just walk out in the middle of it though

Craig, 21, Glasgow

Some of the parents questioned also seemed to grow disillusioned with college and opinions on how beneficial college was for their son and daughter overall were mixed. Some parents seemed disappointed that their children did not achieve what they had hoped or expected them to in terms of qualifications or even employment in some cases. Within the college setting some of the young people had the opportunity to work towards some kind of qualification, usually ScotVec modules or a college certificate, but these were not always recognised in the outside world. Some of the parents interviewed felt that the colleges could have done more for the young people, particularly in relation to helping them prepare for leaving college and finding employment. One mother said of her son:

he's put in a lot of effort [at college] but at the end of the day it's not got him anywhere.

Parent, Glasgow

Such opinions would appear to concur with the views of Riddell and colleagues (2001) who, in their book on the meaning of the learning society for people with learning disabilities, suggested that college provided a “warehousing” function for people with learning disabilities in that it gave them somewhere to go. How one views this debate depends on how one views the purpose of these specialist courses for people with learning difficulties. On the one hand if one is using soft targets to measure outcomes such as increasing confidence, improving social skills, increasing independence and maturity, the courses can be viewed as being extremely successful and the time spent at college by young people can be seen as extremely productive. However when hard targets such as gaining qualifications and achieving employment are being considered the usefulness and appropriateness of such courses is more questionable. Although achieving soft targets is beneficial, particularly for this group, (see Scottish Executive, 2003d) they are somewhat difficult to measure and quantify. Views as to whether a young person has achieved a particular soft target are likely to vary depending on who is being asked. College lecturers and other professionals involved in further education for this group of young people were keen to point out the benefits of attending such a course for young people with learning difficulties. They pointed out that when many young people start on these courses they are not yet ready for other options such as training or employment. They are likely to be lacking in maturity and confidence, as discussed above, and may not even be sure what they would like to do next, as the following quote from a lecturer in Glasgow suggests:

the development course was beneficial to [name of young person] because he was learning all the time, not just academically but socially and psychologically as well.

Lecturer, Further Education College

Lecturers and support staff would suggest that these courses should be viewed as a stepping stone from which young people can then move on to something else, be that a mainstream college course, a training provider or some kind of employment. While young people and their parents clearly appreciated the advances made by young people during their time on these courses, perhaps in some cases they were expecting a more tangible end product such as paid employment.

Overall it would appear that development courses were valued for the changes they brought to young people in terms of increased confidence and self-esteem. The social aspects of college were particularly valued by young people and their families but this must be placed in context. Very few young people who took part in the research socialised with friends from college in the evenings, at weekends or during the holidays. In addition very few of the young people interviewed had kept up friendships from college after leaving. Young people's social life and leisure activities were likely to be structured around the private space of the family as the following quotes suggest:

sometimes I go to the cinema and maybe sometimes into town...I mostly go there with my mum and my Gran and Grandpa

Stuart, 18, Glasgow

He's still got a couple of friends from school that he sees...em, they don't really go anywhere, you know they don't go to the pubs or anything like that. He'll go to the football at the weekend with his dad but that's about it really

Parent, Glasgow

Although young people valued the social opportunities that college brought, the opportunities for social inclusion were debatable. The young people who attended college in the study did so within mainstream settings but they remained segregated from their peers on mainstream courses, even when they had previously attended a mainstream school. Only two of the young people involved in the current study made the transition from specialist to mainstream course at college and in one case this was unsuccessful as the correct support mechanisms were lacking. In addition, young people were likely to socialise only with their peers on specialist courses and were unlikely to be able to maintain these relationships upon leaving college. These findings corroborate those of Watson et al (2003) who found little evidence of inclusion of adults with learning disabilities within mainstream further education settings (See also Mitchell, 1999; Pitt and Curtain, 2004).

Experiences of Training and Employment

Motivations for employment and type of work undertaken

A similarly mixed picture emerges when examining in greater detail the young people's experiences of training and employment. Before doing this, it is necessary to look at

young people’s motivations for working and the type of work they undertook. All of the young people in the sample had some experience of employment, either in a work experience situation, a training placement, supported employment or open employment. The table below shows the various training programmes and supported employment programmes that have been used by the young people in the study either at the time of the research or prior to this. The various programmes have been described in more detail in chapter two (see also Riddell, et al 2005).

TRAINING/EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME	NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAMME
Get Ready for Work	5
Skill Seekers	1
Supported Employment Programme (voluntary organisation)	1
Training for Work	3

Table 8 – Number of Young People that have Participated in Training/ Employment Programmes Since Leaving School

During the course of the interviews it emerged that there were certain features which influenced the overall experience the young people had in the work place. The young people in the study were not only interested in employment for financial reasons, although this was an important consideration for some of the young people as the quote below suggests.

it [working] gets you off the streets and it gets money in your pocket. That’s what a lot of people work for to get money in their pocket.

Adam, 20, Glasgow

According to Hendey and Pascall (2002) in their study of young disabled adults making the transition from childhood to adulthood, as well as providing a route away from poverty and social exclusion, employment also gave respondents:

Daily activity, self-confidence, independence, control over day to day life, a place in society, an escape from the stigma of claiming benefits and concomitant sense of identity as an equal citizen.

(page 13)

Such was the value that was placed on employment by the young people interviewed during the current study that even those who were not in employment attempted to impose

a similar structure to their daily lives, perhaps by going into the city centre shopping or going out to a café for a cup of tea. Most of the young people spoke of the need to “get out of the house for a bit”, possibly relating to the issues of control over day to day life outlined by Hendey and Pascall (2002) above. The following quote from Peter illustrates this point nicely:

An average day? I'd probably get up about ten, then I'd go to the Job Centre, then after that I'd leave there and go and see my cousin Jordan, he's only four...And then after that I'd probably go and see my ma and sometimes I'll have dinner in my ma's or sometimes I'll have it here and then I'll come back and watch some telly...I hate it...sitting in the house daeing nothing ...I'm one of these people that wants to get up and get ready and go out and do stuff and go to work

Peter, 21, Glasgow

As with further education, the young people also valued the social aspects of employment and most said they liked working with people and liked to meet new people. Clearly payment for work carried out was important but for most of the young people it was by no means the most important reason for working.

Although young people spoke of meeting new people, much of the work that they did tended to be behind the scenes work involving tidying up stock rooms, sorting out deliveries, stacking shelves and cleaning. The table below shows the type of work commonly undertaken by young people in the study, either in the form of paid work or as part of a work placement.

JOB TITLE/ SECTOR	TYPICAL TASKS
Kitchen Porter	Preparing vegetables, washing dishes, cleaning kitchen
Office Assistant	Filing, stuffing envelopes, sticking labels on envelopes
Retail	Tidying stockroom, directing customers to staff to deal with enquiries, unpacking boxes, filling shelves, defrosting fridges
Trolley Boy	Collecting and moving trolleys in supermarket, keeping car park clean and tidy
Care Assistant	Working with older people, making tea, changing bed linen, providing company and social support to residents
Catering Assistant	Working in staff canteen, serving meals, replenishing stock in vending machines, washing up crockery

Table 9 – Typical Tasks by Workplace/ Job Title

This was not what many young people were expecting when they began working. Those working in retail for example, thought they might have been dealing with customers or serving on the till. It appeared that employers, training providers and other professionals believed that initially giving young people routine, monotonous tasks would increase their confidence and allow them to make progress in the workplace. Natalie’s college lecturer for example, thought that she would be best off working in a smaller environment in a job where she was doing repetitive tasks which would help her to grow in confidence. Young people’s surprise may have been exacerbated by their expectations about the nature of work. The expectations of not only young people but also of their parents and professionals operated at a number of levels that influenced young people’s experience of the workplace. It is necessary to look at the importance of expectations in some more detail.

Expectations in relation to employment and the world of work

Young people’s career aspirations and expectations were often perceived by their parents and professionals as being unrealistic on different levels. Initially young people may have been unrealistic about the type of job they would like to do. One young man said he would

like to be a professional footballer or join the army. Another young man said that he would like to be a musician. The professionals involved with each of these young men thought these were unlikely goals (see Morris, 1999, 2002 for a discussion of expectations of parents and professionals in relation to employment for people with disabilities). This often created dilemmas for professionals that were difficult to deal with. Professionals felt that it was important to achieve the correct balance between encouraging a young person and being realistic about their options as the quote from a special needs careers advisor shows:

...and you don't want to set somebody up not to succeed, you know so you look for alternatives that would have been possible and would have moved [name of person] forward.

Career Advisor, Renfrewshire

In some cases the young people in the sample had unrealistic expectations about what certain jobs involved. One young man did his work placement in a supermarket but he did not like this because he had to collect the trolleys from the car park when it was raining. An employment development worker with a voluntary organisation also gave the example of a young girl who had wanted to be a hairdresser. The development worker set her up with a placement in a top city centre hair salon but she left after one day because she did not like washing people's hair and sweeping up hair all day. It would also appear that some of the young people in the study did not really understand what type of behaviour was appropriate in the work place. According to an employer one of the young girls who took part in the current study would stand for long periods fixing her hair in the mirrors in the shop where she did her work placement. One of the young men on a work experience placement at a swimming pool spent most of the day swimming. This would suggest that some young people may benefit from greater support in terms of understanding the nature of the world of work. It would appear that there is a need for greater preparation before young people even go out into the work place.

Features which contribute to a successful work placement

Matching young people's job aspirations with job placements

In order for a placement to be successful, it would appear that there were certain features that may be even more important than the type of work carried out by the young person. In the literature on employment and supported employment, the importance of matching

clients with jobs that they want to do and are interested in is stressed (see for example, Siegel et al, 1991; Schneider, 1998; Meuser, et al, 2001; Wilson, 2003 for a more detailed discussion around the benefits of a process of job matching in supported employment). However, in the current study it would appear that the wishes of the young person were not always taken into consideration when placing them in a job. In the majority of cases there appears to have been little linkage between the type of work the young person had expressed interest in and the type of work place they had been sent to for their work placements. Peter had always expressed a keen interest to work in the travel industry however the placements he was sent on were always in the catering and hospitality industry. He felt that the training provider was more interested in getting him any job rather than the job that he wanted.

In the light of targets set for training organisations by funding bodies such as Scottish Enterprise and the European Social Fund, this is perhaps understandable. Training providers have to show they have placed a certain percentage of their clients into employment each year. However, placing young people in inappropriate settings can have damaging consequences for the young person as the quotes from two parents in Glasgow suggest:

when the placement didn't work out it was a big, big knock on her confidence. She said "will I ever get work" and she started having all these doubts in herself.

Parent, Glasgow

No because they kept insisting on putting Adam forward for jobs that he couldn't get. And that became annoying because it made Adam feel like a failure do you know what I mean? It wasn't good for his confidence. He was on the New Deal and after two weeks training they started sending him for interviews for jobs as well. They sent him for a job as a security guard and he went for the interview on the Tuesday and the next day his first job was at Parkhead football when Celtic were playing whoever and Adam wouldn't have been able to deal with that situation

Parent, Glasgow

The quotes above suggest that not enough time and effort is spent in matching young people with appropriate work placements. Doing this is likely to reap rewards in terms of enabling the young person to stay in that placement longer. Ignoring the young person's wishes may result in the young person leaving the placement early. In addition, by not taking into account fully the type of work and tasks that are appropriate for the young

person, training providers or employers may contribute to eroding the young person's confidence. As well as the type of work done, other factors within the workplace appeared to have a significant impact on young people's experiences of training and employment. Perhaps one of the single most important factors was having a supportive employer.

Having a supportive employer

It may be argued that by virtue of taking someone on with a disability in the first place an employer must be sympathetic; but their attitude towards the young person, their ability to offer appropriate support and their understanding of the nature of their disability were also found to be important as the quote below suggests.

Employers shouldn't be overly sympathetic as this may look patronising, as though it is not a real job. But it's good to have employers on board who have a social conscience and are able to offer support.

Beattie Key Worker, Glasgow

Young people in the sample stressed the importance of fitting in with their colleagues and being treated in the same way as everyone else but there would appear to be a fine balancing act between treating the young person as a member of staff while at the same time making allowances for their learning disability. Those employers who had appeared to "get the balance right" offered appropriate support while not drawing unnecessary attention to the young person's disability (the relationship between learning disability and stigma will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter).

He's the same as us all...he's one of the staff...he's basically treated as a member of staff.

Employer, Retail, Glasgow

A lot of this seemed to depend upon the employer having a clear understanding of the young person's difficulties. In Craig's case, his employer did not realise he had a learning disability initially. However the employer soon came to realise that he picked up things more slowly and found it more difficult to retain information than other people. Therefore, his employer adapted working practices to suit his learning needs. This enabled him to learn the skills required in order to carry out the job to the best of his ability and as a result his confidence increased.

Provision of appropriate support for young people and employers

The interviews also raised questions about the support available for those young people on work placements, and employers, from the training providers. Most young people were happy with the level of support they received from the training provider. Most seemed happy to receive help from their colleagues and employer and felt they did not need additional support from the training provider. Again, this fits with the literature on supported employment, which suggests that in order for placements to be successful natural support mechanisms with the colleagues must be developed (Wehmen and Kregel, 1995; Beyer and Kilsby, 1996; Bass and Drewett, 1997; Wilson, 2003). This may relate to the comments made by young people about the importance of fitting in and being the same as everyone else. The young people who took part in the research did not wish to be viewed as different to any other colleague and having someone coming to visit them in their workplace may have singled them out as different (this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter). Young people did however appear to value the monitoring visits carried out by training providers, usually on a monthly basis, although for some young people seeing someone on a more regular basis may have been valuable as the following quote suggests.

It would have been good to have somebody to encourage me a wee bit more, somebody to get me to keep on going. It would have been nice to have somebody to talk to.

Imran, 20, Glasgow

Some of the parents and employers interviewed expressed concern that there was not enough support in place. Some parents felt that where placements had not worked out, this was due to the training provider not offering enough support or training to the young person. There was a sense from some employers that once the placement had been set up the young person was then left in the workplace to “get on with it”. Three employers spoke of having very little contact with the training provider after the placement was set up and all employers felt there was a lack of co-ordination between the training needs identified in the work place and the training carried out by the training provider outwith the work place as the following quotes illustrate:

they come to monitor his progress now and again but that's about it.

Employer, Hotel, Glasgow

There has been no contact at all. I don't even have a contact name of someone I could get in touch with if there was a problem. I have worked with different schemes in the past and there has always been a link person for me to get in touch with. But this project doesn't seem to have anything along those lines.

Employer, Retail, Renfrewshire

Employers felt that it was of vital importance for them to have someone to get in touch with if things went wrong. On the other hand they did not want too much contact with the training provider as they “do not want to feel like someone is breathing down my neck all the time”. Certain support mechanisms that were available to employers were not always popular. The employers questioned did not value having a job coach in the workplace as they felt that training the job coach initially was a waste of valuable resources as the following quote suggests:

I am as well getting right in there with Patrick and doing it [training him] myself

Employer, retail, Glasgow

The training providers interviewed as part of the research all mentioned the importance of providing support for young people in the work place. However they also appeared to believe in stepping back and allowing the young person to take ownership of their placement as the following quote suggests:

...they [clients on the programme] would maybe only get a half a days, sort of job support. Em because it's their job and they've got to take ownership for it. But that's not to say we're not there. Because obviously with the employer em and the contract that we agree, we're always there if there's any issues or problem

Employment Development Worker, Voluntary Organisation, Glasgow

It would appear that there is a very fine balance between providing adequate support to ensure both young people and employers get the most from a work placement without taking responsibility away from the young person. In addition, given that young people wanted to “fit in” and be the same as other colleagues, the issue of stigma must also be taken into account. Further thought is required, particularly in relation to the type of support that is most beneficial (job coaching is not always popular with young people and employers) and who is best placed to provide that support.

Effectiveness of training and employment programmes

Potential for exploitation

Three of the young people had managed to achieve paid employment as a direct result of their work placement. For those who had not managed to achieve paid employment, there were issues around how useful the placement had actually been. In Sam's case he was with his training provider for almost a year. He really enjoyed his time on the placement and both he and his mother had assumed that he would move on to paid employment at the end of it. However, the employer continued to bring in new employees while overlooking Sam for any full time positions which arose. Sam then became disillusioned with the process and his mother felt that he had been led on with false promises. Clearly Sam was better off in some ways. He now had a full year's work experience behind him which may have made him more attractive to potential employers. Unfortunately in terms of hard outcomes Sam had achieved little. This raises the question of potential exploitation by employers of trainees, since trainees often represent significant savings to a company in terms of wages. This in turn raises a dilemma for training providers. How long should they allow a young person to remain on placement with an employer if the prospect of paid employment is looking unlikely? This is a particularly difficult question to answer if the young person has enjoyed the placement. The following quote illustrates this dilemma well:

but certainly something, it's taught me something this year that we have got to get it over to employers that we are serious here, this is not a wee school work experience. Without...because if you lay it down too heavily to employers they're not going to want to take them. You know, they've got to know that they're not obliged to give them a job but if they're not, if they wouldn't give them a job, if they think they're unemployable then they've got to tell us why you know [so the young person can be taken out and moved somewhere else]

Training Provider, Renfrewshire

It would appear that exploitation can happen at two levels. Employers who take on people with disabilities may be offered certain incentives. In the case of Training for Work and Work Step for example, young people can remain in a placement for anything up to fifty two weeks (see Riddell et al, 2005). As a result of this an employer can have someone working with them for a year without paying them any wages. They may be keen therefore to extend the training period for as long as possible to delay the time when they will then be responsible for paying the person's wages. This seems likely to have been the case for Patrick. His employer only had positive things to say about him but seemed

reluctant to offer him paid employment. The employer continued to put it off but was unable to offer an acceptable reason for this. The training provider therefore decided to offer an incentive (a two thousand pound grant, to be given on the condition that he was employed for a minimum of a year) and if no progress was made they would remove him from the placement. Offering the incentive worked in this case, but the real potential for exploitation is clear to see. At a more basic day to day level young people may be exploited by being asked to do particular tasks or work particular hours because they are unlikely to refuse (although this could also be the case for young people in the general population).

Potential for social inclusion

Several pieces of literature on supported employment in Britain and the United States have discussed the potential of supported employment (and other forms of training) for bringing about social inclusion for people with disabilities (see for example, Beyer, et al 1996; Walsh and Lineham, 1997; Gosling and Cotterill, 2000; Wilson 2003). In the current study almost all of the young people who had experience of the workplace mentioned the significance of things such as having a uniform, having a pay slip and being entitled to the same breaks as everyone else. It is likely that these features are symbolic of a broader desire to fit in and be seen as part of the team. Conversely young people often tried to cover up anything that might make them look different in any way. Almost every young person questioned about a work placement said that the main reason they enjoyed their job was because of the people they worked with. Interacting with colleagues and “having a laugh” with them was highly important to the young people. Colleagues appeared to have the potential to make the experience enjoyable one or not. The philosophy of supported employment relies on disabled people building relationships with colleagues within the workplace which then become a natural support mechanism for the disabled employee (Beyer et al, 1996). However, in practice this natural support was not always forthcoming. In several cases, in this study, a lack of support from colleagues or employers led to the young person losing their job or led to the placement breaking down. In Adam’s case, he was left with responsibility for a large order. He had some difficulties with this and made several mistakes costing the company a significant amount of money. He lost his job as a result. Perhaps, if Adam had been given clearer guidance and instructions from his employer and greater support from his colleagues, this could have been avoided.

Although it was beyond the scope of this study to assess the extent to which young people were better off financially in employment, given the types of jobs young people were

doing and the fact that those who were in employment only worked part time (partly as a result of benefit restrictions) this seems unlikely. Literature on the supported employment experience in America has suggested that disabled people are significantly better off in employment (Wehmen et al, 1995). However, this finding has not been replicated in the British literature (see for example, Beyer et al, 1996; Shearn et al, 2000). There was a small amount of evidence of four of the young people and their parents being deterred from accepting paid employment as a result of fear of losing their entitlement to benefits (undoubtedly expecting young people to give up their benefits in return for employment was asking them to take a significant risk, given the difficulties highlighted for these young people in terms of sustaining employment) but overall, there was little evidence of young people in the study making “better off” calculations before accepting a job. Young people in the study appeared to value other functions of employment to a greater extent than financial gain. However, despite the emphasis placed by young people on the social aspects of employment, as with the experiences of young people in further education, there was some evidence of young people with disabilities being segregated or treated differently by colleagues or employers. Interviews with young people, their families and employers highlighted cases where young people were excluded from various events including training programmes within the workplace and social events out with the workplace. Interestingly although all of the young people stressed the importance of getting on well with their colleagues very few of them went along to social occasions outside of working hours. This could be attributed in some part to attitudinal barriers but a range of structural factors also came into play. The impact of the benefits system for example, in terms of restricting the number of hours young people were able to work often had a negative impact on the ability of young people to socialise with colleagues outside of work. Patrick rarely worked in the evenings as the number of hours he worked each week was restricted by the benefits that he received. As a result he was never involved in stock-taking, a team activity where everyone in his place of work worked together, often going out to socialise afterwards. Not only did Patrick miss out on an important learning experience in what was a key function of the job, but he always missed out on the various social activities that arose as a result. Patrick did not socialise with his work colleagues and spent much of his leisure time with his family. In addition, those on training placements such as Get Ready for Work got time off at Christmas and so they were likely to miss out on any events with colleagues around these times.

The main aim of this section of the chapter has been to paint a detailed picture of the young people’s experiences of further education, training and employment. What emerges is a picture whereby young people with learning disabilities appear to have far greater choice

than in previous years; yet at the same time these choices continue to be constrained by a range of factors, many of which are specific to young people with learning disabilities. These include the benefits system, the attitudes of parents and professionals and the availability of the support required by this group of young people to sustain their placement. Although each young person had a different “story” to tell (see Roberts, 2002) it has been possible to identify three different models of transition that the young people fit into. The remaining section of this chapter will introduce these models in more detail.

Three models of transition

The three models of transition were developed after careful consideration of the similarities and differences between each young person’s situation. It was possible to identify three different routes or categories that each young person appeared to fit into. In relation to the existing literature on youth transitions, these models fit rather neatly with the work of Fergusson (2000) as discussed in chapter four. Based on his own empirical work Fergusson (2000) has questioned the whole notion of transition as a useful concept to understand young people’s experiences. Instead he introduced three discourses to more accurately reflect young people’s experiences – the transitions discourse, the market or choice discourse and the marginalization discourse (see chapter four for a more detailed discussion).

The Logical Transition

The logical transition can be seen in some ways as a “successful” transition. This model can be supported by Fergusson’s discourse of transition (2000), which recognises that for some young people the traditional notion of transition from school to further education or training and then on to employment still exists. Since leaving school the young people in the current study who fit into the logical transition model can be seen as making some kind of logical progress. The young people within this group were moving towards an end goal of employment and they were doing so in a way that was logical. The defining characteristics of this model is that the experience is straight-forward and smooth. The young people within the group were in the ascendancy, they were moving up to the next level with each move they made. Progress may have been slow but it was visible. The young people within this group were likely to have left school and undertaken a specialist course at college for people with learning disabilities. Upon successful completion of this course, they will have left with a better idea of what their personal skills and attributes were and would know what kind of work they wanted to do as a result. At this stage, they

may have moved on to a training programme such as Get Ready for Work and would have undertaken a work placement. From there they would move on to employment, possibly open employment or with some support. Within this model there is a sub-section of young people. They started off at the same point as the others in the group, but rather than going on to a training programme, this sub-section of young people chose to go on to study a mainstream course at college with the hope of attaining employment that way.

Six of the young people in the sample fitted into the logical transition model. Craig was a very good example of a young person who fitted into this model. Craig lived at home with his parents in Glasgow. He attended a MLD school until the end of fourth year. He left school with two standard grade qualifications and on the advice of his teachers and careers advisor went to a local further education college to undertake a two year development course. During this course he progressed well. His confidence and maturity increased and it became clear that he was a very able student. During his time at school and college he undertook several work experience placements and when it came time for him to finish the development course he had decided that he would like to be a chef. His own experiences and watching his brother and sister enjoying their jobs as chefs helped make up his mind. When the time came to leave the development course his lecturer advised him to remain in the college and enrol on the Get Ready for Work training programme. His careers advisor agreed with this recommendation and referred him on to the programme. The training co-ordinator worked hard to find him an appropriate placement in a hotel where he worked as a kitchen porter. During his time on the training programme he remained focused on his goal. His employer in the hotel was so impressed with him that she decided to offer him a paid job. At the time of his final interview he had remained in the job for several months and was enjoying it very much. His attitude towards his work and his supportive employer and colleagues meant that he was able to sustain his employment status.

There are several reasons why Craig's transition may have been so straight forward. Firstly he was extremely focused and knew exactly what he wanted to do. Having family members who worked in the same industry may have helped give him an awareness of what the job involved and so his expectations of the work place were realistic. He was happy to take the advice of the professionals involved in his case and this enabled him to choose the most appropriate paths. His attitude towards work meant that he remained hard working and motivated. Finally, within the workplace he was lucky enough to have a supportive employer and colleagues who were able to adapt working practices slightly to meet his needs.

The chaotic transition

This model of transition is characterised by several features. It is far less linear than the previous model and it is much more difficult to predict any patterns in terms of what the young person might do next. In terms of Fergusson's discourses (2000) the chaotic transition fits broadly with the market or choice discourse. However while the young people in Fergusson's study had normalised the dislocation they experienced and seen this as a positive feature of their lives (see chapter four for a more detailed discussion), young people in the current study may have been less free to make the choice to move between placements in quick succession. In the case of young people in the current study, this often occurred as a result of events beyond their control. Young people who fitted into this group may have been less clear about where they were going or what they might want to do next. But overall their aspirations were likely to remain the same, to find paid employment. Young people within this group may seem to have made less progress in terms of hard targets such as holding down paid employment and the nature of this transition may mean that any progress they have made in terms of soft targets such as increasing confidence may also have been affected. Continually failing to sustain a placement is likely to have a negative effect on someone's self-confidence. Within this model the key characteristic is a lack of sustainability. The young people who fell into this group may have started their transition relatively smoothly, but since then things would have become much more chaotic. They are likely to have left school and went on to undertake a specialist college course or possibly a training course. After leaving this course (which they may or may not have completed) they are likely to have moved onto another course or into the world of work. Although this group of young people appear to have no problems when it comes to finding a job, they have real difficulties in sustaining that job. Placements may only last a matter of weeks before the young person has to move on. A sub-set of this group is the young people who undertake college course after college course. They are often referred to as revolving door students in the literature (See for example Riddell et al, 2001; Watson et al, 2003).

This model appears to be most common and nine of the twenty young people fitted into this model. Adam's case provides an excellent example of this model. Adam was twenty years old and lived in the east-end of the city with his mother, older sister and younger brother. He attended a MLD school in the city and left school when he was seventeen. He left school before his teachers felt that he should because some boys from the local secondary school were bullying him. His mum was concerned about this bullying and also felt that he had got as much out of his time at school as he could, therefore she decided to

take him out of school. She had never really agreed with him attending a MLD school in the first place. She would have been much happier had he went to a mainstream school. When he left school he was given no advice about what he should do next and so his mother took him to the local Job Centre. An advisor from the Job Centre referred him to a training programme run by a local training provider. He remained on this programme for around two years and it looked increasingly unlikely that he would get paid employment from it. Therefore he decided to leave and went back to the Disability Employment Advisor (DEA) at the Job Centre for some assistance in finding a job. The DEA managed to find him a placement in a local supermarket and this seemed to go well. They decided to keep him on as a paid employee and although Adam was pleased about this he was not really happy in his job as he did not get on well with the other members of staff. After a couple of months, the company began experiencing financial difficulties and he was made redundant. After this Adam had a succession of jobs. He found a job in a large City Centre hotel as a cleaner. His neighbour who also worked in the hotel helped him to get this job. Initially he enjoyed this job but after a few weeks they sacked him because they said he was too slow and could not cope with the work. Although Adam had had an initial training period in the job, this was no different to the training that anyone else would receive and no support was provided after the training period was over. His mother called the hotel to explain about his disability and offered to arrange for a support worker from a voluntary organisation (who had supported Adam in the past) to come in and provide some support. However, the employer refused and decided to let him go. Since then Adam has had another two jobs both of which have ended in the same way.

There are several reasons that may explain why Adam's transition has been chaotic. Firstly, there may have been a mismatch between the skills that Adam had and the jobs that he got. Adam had managed to find some jobs using informal networks of friends and neighbours. They may not have had a clear understanding of the nature of his disability and so may have been suggesting jobs that were inappropriate. Adam was also unlucky in terms of not having what appeared to be particularly supportive employers. It is likely that his employers did not understand the nature of his learning disability. It was suggested that some of his employers may have over-estimated his abilities and this seems likely, as initially Adam appeared to be very able. He was a tall, strong young man who was very hard working and good at physical tasks. It took a little while in Adam's company to realise that he may not always have understood or processed the information that he was given. To perpetuate matters, Adam was very embarrassed about his learning disability and did not like to ask for help or to admit that he did not understand something. He could

be reluctant to accept the support on offer from the Disability Employment Advisor or other agencies, as he did not wish to stand out or appear different to any other employee.

The Disengaged Transition

The final model of transition that has been identified is possibly the most difficult both for the young people and their families who experience it and also for professionals and policy makers in terms of the most effective and appropriate support to offer. This model is best linked to Fergusson's marginalisation discourse (2000). According to Fergusson (2000), young people, particularly those who lack material and affective family support and who have not learned to negotiate systems cannot normalise this dislocation and experience anxiety. In the current study, young people who fitted into this model may have found the transitional experience particularly problematic. Like the chaotic model of transition, their transition was unlikely to be linear and they may have had some difficult or "unsuccessful" placements. Again progress in terms of both hard and soft targets may be lacking. The main difference for this group of young people in comparison to the young people in the group outlined above is their attitude towards education, training or employment. Although initially they may have been optimistic and motivated they became disillusioned with their progress and with the services they received. Young people in this group may still have said they wanted a job or place at college but in practice they were no longer likely to be doing anything about this. They were likely to have stopped engaging with the services or professionals they were in contact with. In some cases because contact had lapsed the young person may have slipped through the net. The young people's parents were less likely to be working and they were likely to be fairly passive and less pro-active in terms of advocating for services on the young person's behalf. In some cases, the parents were absent as a result of problems such as alcohol or drug misuse. Young people who fitted into this group may have gone on to undertake a college course after leaving school. After leaving colleges they were likely to have been referred to various services providers and worked with them for a period of time. These interactions were likely to have been unsuccessful and so the young people may have been referred on to other people. This referral process would have exacerbated the situation as it became increasingly unclear who was responsible for the young person's case. Young people became increasingly disenchanted as they were passed from professional to professional.

Five of the young people in the current study fall into this group. A typical case of a young person who has fallen into this group was Jamie. Jamie was nineteen and lived in Renfrewshire with his parents and younger brother. As well as having a moderate learning

difficulty, John also had behavioural and social difficulties. He began to disengage from services from a very early age. When he was in primary school he stopped attending classes as he found it difficult to be in group situations. By the time he reached secondary school (he attended mainstream schools) he began being excluded from schools as a result of his attendance. By the time he was fifteen he had attended six different secondary schools. He left school as soon as he was able to. Upon leaving school he started to look for employment but his difficulties meant that he found it difficult to sustain any kind of employment. Over the years he has had help from various agencies. These include a careers advisor, a personal advisor in the Job Centre as well as medical professionals including his GP and a psychiatrist. This did not help as the careers advisor and personal advisor did not take account of his difficulties in group situations and referred him to inappropriate programmes. The medical professionals said he would more than likely grow out of the problems. In 2002 he was referred to a Beattie Key Worker. She worked with Jamie on a one-to-one basis. He began to travel independently and participated in some group work sessions including some outward-bound activities. His key worker felt that he was ready to move on to the next level and started to look at supported employment placements for him. However, Jamie started to miss appointments and meetings and as a result, he no longer saw his key worker. At the time of his last interview, the onus was on Jamie to make contact when he wanted to.

There are several possible reasons for this. Young people in this group may simply have lacked the commitment and motivation to find employment, training or further education. However it is more likely that young people were disengaging from the services on offer because they felt that they are not relevant or helpful to them. When one service failed to move a young person on (to paid employment or a training place) they were likely to refer the young person on to someone else. It was then assumed that the new service provider would take on the responsibility for that young person. However in some cases this did not happen and the young person slipped through the net. In Jamie's case he felt that services were "passing the buck" and that no one was interested or supportive enough to help him. These difficulties can be exacerbated when the young person gets so used to this situation that it becomes a habit. According to some professionals interviewed, it gets much easier to continue doing nothing than to take the first step to try something new, particularly as confidence is eroded more and more. This is exemplified by a quote from a further education lecturer talking about another young person who also falls into this group of young people:

I think it's easier for some students not to bother doing something, than to make the effort to say I must do this, you know I really have to get this, you know. And if you get into the habit of not moving, you know not actually building up energy, building the confidence to say I'm going to go and do something...now he may be in that. I don't know, he may be in that trap whereby it's easier not to do something than it is to do something. No he may be at that stage, you know. I don't know. I really don't, I'm not sure"

Further Education Lecturer

The difficulty for policy makers and service providers when working with young people who fit into this third model is to find a way to offer support to young people who choose not to accept the services on offer.

Discussion

Young people who fit into each of the three models of transition developed during the course of the research will require different policy responses in order to assist them in making the transition from school to further education, training or employment. Policy responses and the impact of various policy changes will be discussed in greater detail in chapters eight and nine. The aim of this chapter has been to do several things. Firstly the chapter outlined the routes taken by the young people in the study and considered the extent to which these routes were similar to or differed from those taken by young people in the general population. It would appear that with the exception of higher education, the choices available to young people with learning disabilities have opened up in recent years. The young people in the current sample had experience of further education, training and the world of work. The chapter then went on to look at the various factors that influenced the routes taken by the young people and the choices they made. Although these factors, which included territorial issues, the influence of parents and finances and the benefits system, can arguably affect all young people, they appear to affect young people with learning disabilities in very particular ways. The chapter has outlined the ways in which the young people in the sample were subject at times to bullying and stigma as a result of their learning disability (although this will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter). In addition to this the young people who took part in the current research project were often subject to the unrealistic expectations of their parents, professionals or employers. Their opportunities were also hampered at times by a rigid benefits system which for some of the young people had the effect of restricting the opportunities available or the number of hours they were able to work (these difficulties are discussed in greater detail in chapter two).

The chapter then went on to look at young people's lived experiences in their places of work, training or education. From these accounts the extent to which young people's placements can be said to lead to greater social inclusion must be called into question. The views of young people and their parents in relation to their experiences of further education, training and employment were mixed. Young people appeared to value above all the social aspects brought by education and employment, yet closer analysis of this social contact revealed that it can be, at times superficial. Both young people and their parents expressed disappointment at the lack of what can be classed as hard targets such as qualifications, a sustainable job or financial gain. This raises questions around the nature of success and how this should be measured. McCollam in an unpublished PhD thesis (1988) raised similar questions in relation to supported employment for people with mental health problems. She questioned whether such programmes, which do not always offer a job at the end, raise false expectations amongst vulnerable people. Others such as Schneider (1998a, 1998b) argue that such programmes offer value to participants in a variety of ways including boosting self-esteem and confidence as well as having useful therapeutic benefits. It would appear that when considering the outcomes of further education, training and employment programmes for young people with learning disabilities their success in terms of improving soft targets must be emphasised while at the same time not making false promises in relation to hard targets. In addition, the views of the service user (in this case young people with learning disabilities) must be listened to (Ramcharan and Grant, 2001). Previous research (see Nocon and Qureshi, 1996) has suggested that the outcomes valued by service users do not always match those prioritised by service providers and policy makers. "Soft targets" such as increasing self-confidence and promoting social opportunities must be promoted, particularly as these are valued by young people (service users). However, finding ways to meet "hard targets" should also be seen as a priority. It would appear that simply widening participation is not enough to enable young people with learning disabilities to make the most of the opportunities available to them. The three models of transition identified towards the end of the chapter highlight the need for different policy responses for young people within each group in order to provide the most effective support as young people make the transition from school to further education, training and employment. The various services available and potential policy responses will be discussed in chapter eight. However the focus of attention in chapter seven shifts to focus on the impact that being labelled as having a learning disability has not only on young people's transitional experiences but also on their identity creation.

Chapter Seven: The impact of the label “learning disability” on young people’s transitional experiences and identity creation

The previous chapter focused on the lived experiences of young people with learning disabilities as they made transitions from school onto further education, training and employment. Drawing chiefly on interviews with young people with learning disabilities and others who played a significant role in their life, such as parents, college lecturers, employers and careers advisors, the chapter identified three models of transition and identified various factors which influenced experience within these models. The focus of this chapter moves to look in more depth at the impact that being labelled as having a learning disability has on young people and their families. Once again drawing on the in-depth interviews with young people and the significant others in their lives, this chapter will explore the perceptions of young people and others in relation to their learning disability. The chapter begins by briefly outlining the characteristics of the young people who participated in the current study. This is significant because it is likely that young people who have been classified as having a moderate learning disability (MLD) are likely to have experienced a very different transition to those young people with more severe or profound disabilities (see Klotz, 2001). The chapter will then move on to look in greater detail at the perceived stigma attached to the label learning disability. According to the young people and parents who took part of the current study, an awareness of this stigma begins when young people enter the education system. The chapter therefore includes a discussion of the different experiences of young people attending mainstream and special schools (MLD schools) before going on to look in more depth at the impact of labelling on young people and their parents, drawing on some of the literature from the disability studies tradition that was discussed in more detail in chapter three.

Characteristics of the young people who took part in the research

Chapter three introduced in some detail the literature from the disability studies field and traced the debate around the extent to which being labelled as a disabled person impacts upon one’s identity creation (see for example, Thomas, 1999; Swain and Cameron, 1999; Riddell and Watson, 2001; Corker and Shakespeare, 2003). This is by no means a straightforward process and the process would appear to be particularly complicated for people with learning disabilities (see Chappell, 1997; Goodley, 2001; Armstrong, 2002). For people with learning disabilities the social model of disability has not always been a

useful tool to understand their lived experiences (Chappell, 1997, 2000) and the extent to which people with learning disabilities are free to create or reject a disabled identity is also open to debate (see for example, Baron et al, 1999; Reeve, 2002). For the particular group of young people who took part in the current study, the situation is further complicated given the nature of their disabilities. Chapters one and five looked in some detail at the characteristics of the young people who took part in the research and chapter five outlined the process by which the young people were recruited to participate in the research. It has been noted in the literature that the concept of “learning disability” is relatively difficult to define (see Diesfield, 1999; Klotz, 2001; Ho, 2004). These difficulties are further exacerbated by the different definitions used by policy makers (see chapter two for a more in-depth discussion) whereby, for example, an individual may be classified as being disabled within one system but not so under another (see Mabbett, 2005 for a more detailed discussion). As a result of these difficulties the current study followed the example of Riddell, et al (2001), and adopted an “operational definition” of learning disability, using the same definition as Careers Scotland. The twenty young people who took part in the research comprised a varied group of young people with a very wide range of abilities and difficulties. Although formal diagnoses were not provided (or asked for) it was clear that not all of the young people had a cognitive impairment. Some of the young people described themselves as having a learning disability and a small number of the sample described themselves as having dyslexia. For other young people, social, emotional and behavioural factors appeared to be the most significant issue. The very varied nature of the eventual sample group was perhaps unsurprising given the ambiguity surrounding the term Moderate Learning Disability (MLD).

Given these difficulties with the category of moderate learning difficulty/ disability (MLD) and concerns by some that such categories are informed by a “medical deficit model” (see chapter three for a more detailed discussion), it would seem sensible not to get overly “bogged down” by definitions and categories. As has been mentioned previously, the aim of this study has been to give voice to young peoples’ own understanding of their situation as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. However, given that the focus of this chapter is on the impact that being labelled as having a “learning disability” has on young people and their identities, it is important to be clear about the characteristics of the group of young people in question.

Aspirations- The Same As You?

Young people's aspirations

The young people who participated in the research appeared to be in a somewhat unique position. Although they had been classified as having a MLD, most of the young people had experienced both mainstream and specialist services and appeared to have to navigate between a “disabled” and “able-bodied” identity, depending on the particular situation (see for example, Finkelstein, 1993; Swain and Cameron, 1999; Humphrey, 2000; Riddell and Watson, 2001). The extent to which this occurred appeared to vary depending on the individual, their family, the situation and the level of disability (some of the group appeared to be more able than others). However, as a group, it is likely that the young participants had very different experiences to young people with a more severe or profound disability for example. It has been reasonably well documented in previous research (see for example Mitchell, 1999; Conner and Stalker, 2002; Pascall and Hendey, 2002, 2004; Burchardt, 2005) that young people with various disabilities want the same things as young people in the general population when it comes to making the transition from childhood to adulthood. They are likely to want a well-paid job, a home of their own and a family of their own. Indeed, in the national review of learning disability services (Scottish Executive, 2000b) paid employment, among other things, is seen as the right of everyone in Scotland with a learning disability (regardless of the level of their disability) (see chapter two for a more detailed discussion). Chapter four and chapter six have shown that the different transitions that all young people go through before reaching adulthood are becoming increasingly complex and problematic. The young people in this study have had additional barriers to overcome. However despite these barriers the aspirations of many of the young people remained the “same as you” as the following two quotes in response to thinking about the future suggest:

...just hoping that I've got a good job, something that I like, that's it and dae well for myself

Jack, 19, Glasgow

...em, I don't want to stay here forever, I'd like my own house eventually so...

Danielle, 20, Renfrewshire

Those young people who stated that they would like to have a job and their own home appeared to be influenced by what they saw around them, by their parents, other family members and friends. Frank's social worker put this well:

And Frank's also perfectly able to look round and see that everybody works, that his sister works and his sister's friends works, his mum's friends work, his dad works. I mean his dad, obviously he looks up to his dad more than anyone else. Em so I think that's another kind of role for Frank

Social worker, Renfrewshire

Even those young people who did not work still wanted to get a job. An interesting feature among those young people who were not working was the way in which they attempted to impose a routine or structure on their life, in order to be the same as their counterparts, family members or friends who were in employment. This was discussed in more detail in the previous chapter and illustrated the value that young people placed on employment. Young people appeared not only to value employment for its potential for financial gain but for a range of other reasons including increased independence, increased self-esteem and bringing routine to their everyday life (see Warr, 1983, 1987, 1994; Schneider, 1998; Huxley, 2001 for a more detailed discussion around the benefits of work and other daytime occupation).

The young people interviewed had some ideas about the type of work they would like. The most common types of work that the young people wanted to do included office work, care work, retail work, catering, beauty therapy and manual work. Some of the young people had some direct experience of their favoured type of employment through work experience and training schemes. Others had no direct experience but were influenced by the career choices of family or friends or by their own perceptions of what particular jobs involved.

The employment aspirations of some of the young people were occasionally perceived by others such as professionals and parents as being unrealistic (again this is discussed in some detail in chapter six). Professionals thought that unrealistic aspirations were potentially damaging for the young person's prospects, particularly when parents shared in these unrealistic views. A special needs careers advisor pointed out the difficulties involved in finding the balance between encouraging young people without building their hopes up unnecessarily when discussing jobs they were unlikely to get. However although many of the young people had ideas about the types of work they would like to do, they

often introduced a caveat which suggested they had an understanding of the differences between what they would like to do and what they were likely to do.

Cabin crew, I still want to do that. I know it's very hard to get into and its really big competition...well it's not really cabin crew as such. If I could just get into travelling that would be good"

Peter, 21, Glasgow

The quote above from Peter suggests that while his ultimate goal was to work as cabin crew, he was realistic in recognising the difficulties involved in getting into this type of work. Therefore even working within a similar environment would have been acceptable to him. This suggests that while, like everyone, Peter had hopes and dreams, he also had a "back up plan". It seems clear from the interviews that young people had the same goals as other young people at a similar life stage in the general population. This confirms what has been suggested in previous research (see for example, Ward et al, 1991; Mitchell, 1999; Conner and Stalker, 2002; Pascall and Hendey, 2002; 2004).

Although the young people interviewed appeared to want the same as their non-disabled counterparts, it is likely that the picture is not this straight-forward. During the course of the interviews it became apparent that some of the young people may have been giving what they thought of as the most appropriate answer rather than what they really thought or did. This illustrates the unequal power balance that can exist during the research relationship (this is discussed in much greater depth in chapter five). Despite the efforts made by the researcher to ensure the process was as equitable as possible it would appear that some of the young people were concerned with giving the correct answer (see also Booth and Booth, 1996; Stalker, 1998; Swain et al, 1998; Finlay and Lyons, 2002; Gilbert, 2004). In the case of some of the young people in the sample it became apparent that they were giving what they thought was the answer expected of them. It is possible to speculate that the young people may have felt it was socially unacceptable to suggest that they did not want to work or were no longer looking for work. Those who weren't working were keen to emphasise that they wanted to work "like everyone else" and highlighted their strategies for finding work. However follow up interviews with the young people suggested that they were not always committed to the strategies they had outlined previously. Imran's situation provides a good example. Imran was nineteen years old and lived at home with his parents, brothers and sisters in Glasgow. After leaving a moderate learning disability school (MLD School) he completed a two year development course at a local college. Upon completion of this course he began a training programme with a large

voluntary organisation that specialised in training people with learning disabilities for employment. After a series of unsuccessful placements he left the programme. At the time of the research he had no structured daily activity (in the form of education, training and employment) and no input from services. During the course of the interviews Imran expressed a strong desire to find employment. He spoke of his boredom and frustration at being stuck at home all day and seemed keen to change his situation. He asked for advice about whom he should contact for help in relation to employment opportunities, marriage and driving lessons. His former training provider painted a rather different picture. She described him a “lazy boy” who exhibited the wrong attitude towards employment. She described him as being reluctant to take orders and she felt that he was not keen on starting from the bottom of the organisational structure as this often involved routine and monotonous tasks. She felt that he did not really want to work and would be unlikely to sustain employment. During a follow up interview with Imran, after the information he had requested had been provided, it became clear that he had not followed up any of the leads suggested and that his situation had not changed.

One potential explanation for the behaviour of Imran and others in his situation was that doing nothing had become a routine. It might have become easier to do nothing than to actively seek education, training or employment. Young people who have no structured daily activity are less likely to be in contact with services and the nature of these services means that young people have to be pro-active in seeking help and advice (this will be discussed in greater detail in chapter eight). Doing nothing for extended periods may result in young people losing any confidence they had built up making it all the more difficult to change their situation. This is explained well by a lecturer on a development course in a further education college in Glasgow:

I think its easier for some students not to bother doing something than to make the effort to say I must do this, you know, I really have to get this, you know. And if you get into the habit of not moving, you know, not actually building the confidence to say I'm going to go and do something...now he [the student being discussed] may be in that. I don't know he may be in the trap whereby it's easier not to do something than it is to do something...he has to try and get back into that kind of structure again. Em cos it sounds as if he's got so used to you know, well I'm not doing anything and because there's no pressure on me, I don't have to do anything.

Further Education Lecturer, Development Course, Glasgow

Young people in this situation are then likely to disengage with services becoming trapped in a negative cycle. Young people like Imran fit into the disengaged model of transition outlined and discussed in greater detail in chapter six. The difficulty for service providers is that young people who are no longer motivated to find education, training or employment cannot be forced to accept the help or services that are available.

Although again it's a completely voluntary em, the young person, they can be referred all they like but if they don't want to come to us they don't have to come to us so again it depends on that

Beattie Key Worker, Renfrewshire

Parents' aspirations

Although a small group of young people who took part in the research became trapped in the negative cycle of the disengaged model of transition (see chapter six), many of the young people interviewed continued to look for employment even when they faced setbacks on a regular basis. The data suggested that young people's aspirations were likely to be influenced by a number of factors. These included peer pressure. An employment development worker with a voluntary organisation explained that some young people who took up training places were likely to be put off if their friends were not working. "They may feel resentful to be tied down to a routine when their friends can do whatever they want". Parental aspirations were also likely to influence the aspirations of the young people. Previous research (see Weston, 2002; Pascall and Hendey, 2002; 2004) has suggested that some parents of children with disabilities are reluctant for their children to take up employment as a result of concerns about them losing their entitlements to benefits. This has been discussed in some depth in the previous chapter. Although some parents did express concern that their child may be worse off financially, almost all of the parents questioned expressed a desire for their son or daughter to find employment or some other valued daily activity as the quotes below from Nadia's mother and another parent would appear to suggest:

I just want something desperately for Nadia's sake; because she's got this new kidney and she's you know, like anybody, you're all wonderful. But now she's back from this major operation and she's feeling healthy, to definitely get a chance, em to fulfil her life to the best of her limits, you know

Parent, Glasgow

I think he would really like to be working and that...oh aye, I would just like to see a future for him somewhere but you just think, no you're just stuck, you've no moved on at all, no...we'd just like to get him settled, you know, settled in something

Parent, East Renfrewshire

It would appear that a common feeling among both young people and their parents was a desire to see the young person "settled" and in some kind of routine thus highlighting the importance of having a structured, daily routine for the well being of not only the young person but their family also. This reflects the literature on employment and employability which emphasises the importance of work for well being (see Warr, 1983, 1987, 1994; Schneider, 1998a, 1998b; Huxley, 2001; for a more detailed discussion). When asked what they would like to see happening to their son or daughter in the future several parents suggested that as long as their son or daughter were happy they would be happy.

Well as long as he's happy, to me that's the sort of main reasoning, you know, as long as he's happy within himself.

Father, Renfrewshire

As long as Patrick's happy, I don't care really you know as long as he's happy. And I think he is happy.

Mother, Glasgow

Other parents wanted the same for their child with learning disabilities as they would for any other child as the following quote from a mother in Renfrewshire suggests:

well I would like to think she would have a full time job in six months time which is our aim at the moment. That she gets a job and she doesn't need to go to college, doesn't need to have support from any agency or something like that and she's earning a wage which everybody wants to do I suppose. So in six months time I'd like to see her fully employed.

Mother, Renfrewshire

For many there has been a shift in attitudes whereby it is no longer acceptable to expect less for a young person with learning disabilities than for any other young person. Previously young people with learning disabilities would have been expected to leave school and move on to an adult resource centre (see chapter two for a more detailed discussion). However changing expectations, reflected in policy developments such as the

publication of the Same As You? (Scottish Executive, 2000b) has meant that further education, training and employment are all seen as realistic options by young people, their parents and professionals as the following quote from a Beattie Key Worker suggests:

and there's no reason why they shouldn't work you know...I think traditionally people with learning difficulties, depending on what the difficulty was...it was thought that they couldn't do very much and it was going to be either day care or college and it was looking more at the development of their social skills as opposed to thinking is this person ever going to seriously work, in whatever capacity, right? Em, but I think now, you know with the supported employment...it's looking at real jobs with support and then eventually weaning them off that support

Beattie Key Worker, Glasgow

It can be seen therefore that young people with learning disabilities and their parents increasingly have aspirations to be the same as everyone else. Changing expectations and a changing focus by services providers means these aspirations may be increasingly realistic. It is no longer acceptable for young people with learning disabilities to make a transition from school to a day centre without exploring other possibilities first (see Glasgow City Council, 2000).

As mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, the young people who took part in the research are in a somewhat unique position. Although they have been labelled as having learning disabilities, they have experiences of both mainstream and specialist services. However by the very nature of being labelled as having a learning disability, young people and their families face certain stigmas, which may have an impact both on their identity and their transitional experiences. The remainder of this chapter will explore the impact such a label has on young people, beginning with their experiences in the compulsory education system, which for many of the young people who took part in the research is where the label (and the stigma attached to this label) first came to light.

Experiences of mainstream and special schools

Although the aim of this chapter is to look at the impact that being labelled as having a learning disability had on young people's identities and transitional experiences, a lot of interesting and useful data was collected on feelings around different types of schooling and it is useful to explore this data in the context of labelling and stigma. Of the twenty young people who made up the case studies, nine attended mainstream schools and eleven attended special or moderate learning disability schools (MLD Schools). Two of the young

people who originally attended mainstream schools moved to MLD schools and one young person moved from a MLD school to a mainstream school. Seven of the young people who had attended MLD schools came from the Glasgow local authority area. This may be a reflection of the inclusion policy in East Renfrewshire (this was also partly the result of boundary changes which meant that there were no longer any special schools within the local authority boundary).

The young people who took part in the research were asked to recall their school days and how they felt about their time there. When questioned, young people who had attended mainstream school viewed this in mainly positive terms. This is supported by some of the literature in this area. Norwich and Kelly (2004) found that most children expressed positive evaluations of their schools and the teaching they received (see also Armstrong et al, 1993; Davis and Watson, 2001; Pitt and Curtin, 2004). In particular they appeared to value being able to continue going to the same school as their friends in the local area as the following quote suggests:

Well I was with friends that I had been with since primary school, that I knew and they were in some of my classes and I was getting to know different people too...

Joanne, Renfrewshire

Those young people in mainstream schools did not appear to experience more bullying than those in special schools. This is supported by previous research, which has suggested that young people with learning disabilities may be bullied in either setting (see Mencap, 2000; Mishna, 2003; for a detailed discussion of bullying and learning disabilities). Norwich and Kelly (2004) found that although bullying was experienced in both settings those in special settings experienced far more bullying by children from other mainstream schools and from peers and outsiders in their neighbourhood. None of the young people who attended mainstream school in the sample reported bullying although there was some evidence that some of the young people may not have fitted in well at school or had a large number of friends and may have felt intimidated by some of their peers.

Most parents viewed mainstream education positively, one parent said that “it was the best thing that happened going into mainstream education”. Although the overall concept of mainstream education was popular with young people and their parents, they felt it was only successful when appropriate support was in place.

Interviewer: Did she get enough support at school?

Parent: Oh uh huh, absolutely marvellous, I couldn't fault them. The teachers are just wonderful. They're really oh just, their aim in life was just to let, to help these children go somewhere in life, you know. And so as far as I'm aware, most of the ones that were there are doing well.

Parent, Glasgow

Stigma and a fear of appearing different from their peers meant that for some young people it was embarrassing to ask for help or support and in some cases, a lack of resources meant that the support which young people or their parents felt should have been available was not. In particular parents would have valued more one-to-one support for their child as the following quote suggests.

Interviewer: What would you have liked? You know what kind of help would you have liked for her?

Parent: Just like more one-to-one help with her like when she was, areas of difficulty like that...it would have been better if the support had been there earlier for her. They can only do what they've got enough money for right enough.

Parent, Renfrewshire

Some parents spoke of having to fight for the services that they felt their son or daughter were entitled to in a mainstream setting:

we asked for help with every subject really and we didn't get it for the first year and I asked again for the second year and they had no knowledge of this. In the third year she started getting help with some subjects, not all subjects but some subjects.

Parent, Renfrewshire

Some parents of young people who had attended mainstream school and had a record of needs felt that this ensured they got the services that they were entitled to as the following quote suggests:

em and then when it came time to do his exams because he had his record of needs he got extra time and he could have had a scribe if he wanted, you know to write for him.

Parent, Glasgow

However, having a record of needs was not always viewed in a positive way.

I thought getting a record of needs for him was the right thing to do but I'll tell you I wish I hadn't I really wish I hadn't. Once there was a record of needs that was it he was in their hands [local authority] and I didn't have any control of the situation any longer. I think it is the worst thing that can happen to a child. Maybe that was because I didn't accept it and I had gone down the route of having independent assessments and they said he could have coped in mainstream, that's what made it so hard to accept.

Parent, Glasgow

The above quote came from a parent whose son attended a MLD school. It is clear that she was not happy about this. The quote illustrates well the unique position held by young people in the sample group. For some of the young people, they are on the borderline between “special” and mainstream”. The parent of the young person above was told he could have coped within a mainstream setting. This made the label “learning disability” and the resultant placement within a specialist setting all the more difficult to accept. However some young people and parents viewed the MLD schools system in a fairly positive way. None of the young people who had attended a MLD school had anything particularly negative to say about it. Many of the young people enjoyed their time at school and in one interesting example a young man who moved from a mainstream school to a MLD school actually enjoyed his time at the MLD school more. He felt that he got more out of his time there because the additional support he received meant he could understand more. Many of the young people valued the social aspects of attending a MLD school. Several spoke of the friendships they made at school although it was often difficult for them to keep up these friendships after leaving school given the wide geographical spread of pupils attending such schools. These findings are supported by an internal piece of research that was carried out by Renfrewshire Council. During an interview with the researcher, the Head Psychologist explained that they had found that young people with learning disabilities who attended special schools felt more “socially included” within that setting and with their own peer group than young people who attended mainstream schools. The young people in the current research also spoke of enjoying experiences such as “residential” where they stayed overnight or went away for the weekend to a place of interest. These sorts of activities can be seen as a way to develop social and independent living skills, however, some parents felt that MLD schools did not have a great deal of relevance educationally for the young people as the following quote suggests:

em, the teacher was very good there...yes I think she got good support there but I suppose they did more of like jumble sales and things like that.

Parent, Glasgow

Some parents felt that their children were held back by attending MLD schools either by mixing with children who were “less able” than their son or daughter, which meant that they picked up “bad habits” or by a well-meaning but over-protective system. Again this would appear to illustrate the borderline nature of the label moderate learning disability.

It was a marvellous school and they did lots and lots of things there but they were very, very cosseted. They were really, really kept back in a big way...she really relied on, you could probably say she was institutionalised, that's probably the best word for it.

Parent, Glasgow

Almost every parent who spoke about having a choice in relation to the secondary school their son or daughter attended opted to send them to a mainstream school (see Riddell, et al, 2000; 2002 for a more detailed discussion of the role of parents in the decision-making process in relation to special educational needs). Those who did not choose to send their child to a mainstream school or did not realise that they could have made this decision appeared to regret this with hindsight as the following quotes suggest:

I went to the school, I went to see it. I wasn't like, no she's not going or anything, I did go and I did talk and they were probably going to offer more support. But I just felt that she wasn't that bad eh to go there. Right, like she needed help but I think if somebody monitored her and helped her and I was helping her that she could do it, and she did do it.

Parent, Renfrewshire

I do you know like, I think you know, I don't think he should have gone to these schools [MLD schools]. If I had any help or I knew these things then, you know. If I see anybody with a problem now I tell them and I told my sister [who also has a child with learning disabilities] straight away. I said don't you dare, stick up for yourself; put him in a normal school.

Parent, Glasgow

This goes away back to when he was a baby. The health visitor noticed he wasn't doing what he should be doing and at nursery he wasn't interacting with the other kids. He went for an assessment, it was up at [name of area] just behind just behind the bus garage, do you know where I am? I can't remember the name of it. And they thought he would be better at a pre-school nursery for children with difficulties. Anyway, it got to the point where it was time to go to school and we were told that he had borderline learning disabilities and they said he would go to a special needs primary school, but it would just be for a short time. Em so we said for a short time, you know to get him the basics, to get him in there and then we'll put him into mainstream. But once he was in there I couldn't get him out. I went to [Private hospital] and got an independent assessment carried out and they said he was borderline. I went to a hearing and the health visitor agreed with me that he would be okay at a mainstream school. But the doctor, his class teacher and his head teacher said that he wouldn't manage at a mainstream school and they wouldn't change their mind, despite the evidence. I feel he has been severely hindered by attending special schools. After a long fight I got him into [name of primary school] Primary two or three afternoons per week, only because the teacher there agreed to have him. But then she left and although she had said he could manage he had to go back to the special school. I tried to do additional work with him but I can only do so much at home, but if what I'm doing is different to what he's getting at school it doesn't work.

Parent, Glasgow

The quotes above all appear to illustrate the perceived stigma felt by those parents who have had to send their child to a special school. The use of language such as “not being bad enough to go there”, and the referral to mainstream school as “normal” highlight this particularly meaningfully. This appears to be particularly the case if parents felt that their child was more able than professionals had given them credit for. Less common among parents was a more pragmatic view where the parent accepted that their son or daughter simply would not be able to cope in mainstream school, either as a result of their own difficulties, or a lack of support and resources within the mainstream setting. One parent said “he would have been disruptive; he was very hyperactive when he was younger”. The attitudes of parents in relation to the most appropriate educational setting for their child's education would appear to depend very much on their perceptions of their son or daughter's abilities.

In terms of outcomes, there were no clear differences between the post-school destinations of young people who attended mainstream schools and those who had attended special schools. Those in both settings were just as likely to go on to a further education college to undertake a special needs development course (this has been discussed in more detail in the

previous chapter). It has been possible to identify advantages and disadvantages in relation to both educational settings. Young people in both settings appeared satisfied with their situation and no-one expressed dissatisfaction with the setting in which they had been educated, other than to mention a general dislike of school, in the same way as young people in the general population (see also Norwich and Kelly, 2004). Parents on the other hand would appear to prefer, in principle at least, for their children to be educated in mainstream settings for a variety of reasons.

The stigma felt by young people and their parents in both mainstream and specialist educational settings has had a knock on effect on their experiences of transition, as will be discussed in the next section. In relation to identity creation, it would appear that young people in both settings had the label of learning disability imposed onto them by their teachers and other professionals such as educational psychologists. This supports the work of Davis and Watson (2001) who found that:

the children are expected to comply with the definition, with the status imposed on them. They are told that they are different, to naturalise that difference and for that difference to become part of their lifeworld...processes of labelling and differentiation mark disabled children as different in both “special” and “mainstream” settings.

(Davis and Watson, 2001: 673)

The young people in the sample attempted to minimise the differences that such labels imposed between them and their peers by, for example, not asking for help, as this drew attention to their difficulties. It would appear that young people in the sample who attended mainstream and special schools were reluctant to take on a disabled identity (see Hughes, 2000; Darling, 2003). However, how free they are to negotiate their identity after having the label learning disability imposed on them by teachers and other professionals is debatable (Baron et al, 1999; Riddell and Watson, 2001; Reeve, 2002). According to Veck (2002) (discussed in greater detail in chapter three), some disabled people adopt a “psychic defence mechanism” whereby they do not regard themselves as being disabled. This would appear to be the strategy adopted by many of the young people in the sample.

How do young people view and internalise their “learning disability”?

From analysing the data from the interviews with young people it becomes possible to draw some conclusions about how young people feel about being labelled as having a

learning disability. Young people were very matter-of-fact when talking in practical terms about the things they could do well and things that they found more difficult. Talking in this way meant young people were not necessarily discussing whether or not they had a learning disability as such. Rather, they were talking about difficulties they experienced in a practical sense, which seemed less embarrassing than talking about being labelled as the following quotes from a selection of the young people suggest:

Interviewer: How are you with money? Young Person: I still find it difficult. Sometimes adding and taking away, it confuses me you know. My mum helps me to work it out. My mum mainly looks after my money. It's my parents that mainly deal with the money.

I think it was really the reading. I didn't understand some of the words and I didn't know what to write and I would of wrote some words quite wrong. But really the problem was with my maths work, I was really bad at maths and science.

No I'm quite thingmy at that cos I'm not good at handling money and that cos my counting and that's not good, some of my counting is ok but its just like maths and giving people their change back and that.

...but it's nothing I'd be keen on. Well I was keen on it at first but it's all the writing, I canny stand all the writing...no I canny at all, specially I'm not a very good speller either so I don't even go there. That would do my nut in writing all the time.

Interviewer: Would you say you have a learning disability? Young Person: It's just really my spelling. My maths is no good, the now, cos I've no done it for a wee while, but it's just really my spelling

Interestingly, some of the young people who discussed their learning disability in these practical terms saw it as a problem that had ended when they left school and moved on to the world of further education, training or work. This is illustrated well in the following quote from Joanne:

Well it's really like for people with a lot of learning difficulties. I had a lot of them when I was at school with my writing and, well I think it was just really my writing that I had difficulties with, I don't think there was anything with my reading. My reading was okay, it was more my maths and number work and that, I really needed help with. But once I got to college they helped me a wee bit more with it

Joanne, 18, Renfrewshire

This suggests that school might not have been a positive experience for some of the young people and moving on to further education or a training placement may have been more

appropriate for their needs. In addition, in the post-school setting, there may be less emphasis on labelling or categorising young people, which might help to increase confidence. A tutor from one of the development courses suggested that this may be the case.

School can sometimes be a bad experience for youngsters as you probably know that have a learning difficulty or a specific learning difficulty, you know they get called stupid and as you probably know they are not necessarily but they have got the label of being stupid which is really, really bad for their confidence and so you know, they maybe begin to act out what people say they are...and I think once they get here and they get the sort of smaller classes they become a wee bit more confident and they are better able to find their own strengths a wee bit.

Tutor, Development Course, Further Education College

Likewise, a Beattie key worker that was interviewed explained that many of the young people she worked with did not take to classroom based training courses very well because of previous bad experiences at school. Although many of the young people felt comfortable enough to talk about their learning disability in practical terms, others felt so embarrassed by the label that they were not comfortable enough to talk about it at all. In these cases, sensitivity was used and the young person was not pressed on the matter, but the quote below may illustrate some of the discomfort felt.

Interviewer: What was the reason do you think that you moved from your old school to the [MLD] school?

Danielle: Em, I suppose that I didn't, that I wasn't completely intelligent. Although I didn't need that much help at school, em I don't know [laughs nervously]...I don't know, I can't think now. Em, I hated maths, I couldn't do maths, I wasn't very good at maths. Em...well I was actually quite a good reader

Danielle, 20, Renfrewshire

Previous research has outlined the potential impact of being labelled (see Diesfield, 1999; Klotz, 2001; Ho, 2004). McMaster et al (2002) and Higgins (2002) point out the potentially damaging consequences for young people's self-esteem as a result of being labelled "learning disabled" (although conversely being labelled can also have some positive effect as it provides an explanation for difference). Those who are labelled as having a learning disability can be subject to bullying and harassment (Mencap, 2000) in a similar way to those with mental health problems (see for example, Berzins et al, 2003)

and other disabilities (see Disability Rights Commission, 2004). Mencap (2000) found that two-thirds of their respondents were bullied on a regular basis and almost one-third were suffering from bullying on a daily or weekly basis as a result of their learning disability. As Veck (2002) points out, often young people deny the existence of a learning disability as a coping mechanism (see also Vernon, 1999; Watson, 2002). In Danielle's case her tutor felt this was an accurate assessment.

Danielle was always that wee bit unrealistic about what she could do. She wasn't very happy to be where she was [on the development course]; she really did want to be in hairdressing. I think we got her into some hairdressing classes. Em, but she wasn't, there was things about that that she didn't much like...Em, I think Danielle only stayed with us for about a year. She felt that the Step course wasn't quite right for her but I think there was a huge amount going on out there for her. There was a huge amount going on in Danielle's life...so I don't know what happened then, she didn't stay with us for the full two years, she didn't, she felt the step course, in fact I'm surprised she even stayed with us as long as she did, but it was a fight to keep her. And there was always something better that she wanted to do and something different that she wanted to do and that didn't appear to work either...[she felt] that she should have not been put into any sort of special thing. I don't like to use that word, but uh huh, I know what you are saying that she would have been more comfortable if she was mainstream, a wee bit unrealistic about her, you know...maybe it was wrong for her, I don't know, maybe she would have coped with a lot of support some place else, maybe in mainstream school, maybe it was inappropriate for her...but she certainly em, probably wouldn't have achieved very much because of her attendance no matter she would have been at school, you know?...she just felt embarrassed about being labelled as having some kind of difficulty didn't she?...She wasn't comfortable with the label...

Tutor, Development Course, Further Education College

Denying the existence of a learning disability, or trying to play down differences was shown to have negative consequences for some of the young people in the sample in relation to their transitional experiences. Adam's case illustrates this well as the following quote from his support worker suggests:

I think Adam might be quite embarrassed by his learning disability and I think he needs to be more open with people and say "listen I'm not understanding this". I think he's too embarrassed to say that and that was why he made the mistake. I think it was because they told him what to do and he maybe didn't absorb all the information...and he doesn't want to feel stupid or different to anybody else and so he just got on with it...

Employment support worker, Glasgow

It would appear that many of the young people were reluctant to ask for help either in college or in a workplace situation - in Adam's case this led to him losing his job. Dawn's reluctance to ask for support on her mainstream college course led to her failing the course, although in the event she was allowed to re-sit the part of the course that she failed:

yeah she doesn't want to ask for a lot of help, she doesn't want to draw attention to herself, you know...it's her fault if she's not offered more maybe at college...like if she's saying oh I'm all right with that when she really needs it. I say take all the help you can get Dawn, you know.

Mother, Renfrewshire

This perceived stigma attached to having a learning disability also resulted in some of the young people being unwilling to take up the services that were on offer to them or making use of the courses that were available. As mentioned previously, Danielle did not enjoy her time on a development course in a local college "because of the sort of course it was" and Patrick was reluctant to discuss a day-release course organised by the training provider with his employer:

well he never spoke about anything like that. I don't know if he just wants to get on with things himself, doesn't necessarily want this, you know people to say you're different from us. Em and maybe that's why he does nay talk about it.

Employer, Glasgow

Clearly this reluctance to take up services could be detrimental to young people's transitions. Again in Adam's case, his refusal to allow the Disability Employment Advisor to become involved and offer support when he found a job independently may have been a contributory factor in him failing to keep that job.

Competing perspectives and resultant tensions

Such strategies may have been a coping mechanism to avoid the perceived stigma that being labelled as having a learning disability brings; however they can create tension between young people and the professionals that work with them. A lack of awareness about the nature of their disability and the level of their abilities was common among the young people interviewed according to the professionals who worked with them.

According to professionals this made it all the more difficult to work with the young people and offer them appropriate support as the following quote suggests:

em and I think part of my assessment of him was that he doesn't think there is a problem...so you know, you need the student to work with you...so he's not picking up on what you're saying about the difficulties...they can't be supported without them doing something.

Senior Lecturer in Learning Support, Further Education College

Now what he says he can do and what he can do, his capabilities are two different things...em, his perception was that he could do anybody's job better than them, en but he couldn't...he doesn't see himself as having any sort of disability whatsoever. Em and then I think also in the class, because [voluntary organisation] do work with people who do have learning disabilities em he didn't like being in the classroom environment with other people with a learning disability. He thought he was better than them.

Employment Development Officer, Voluntary Organisation

These attitudes not only make it more difficult to offer support to young people but may lead to disappointment for the young people in question. Parents, employers and other professionals may have unwittingly caused disappointment among young people by over-encouraging them and there was a tension apparent between giving young people encouragement and giving them false hope. In Sam's case he was disappointed that his employer at his training placement did not offer him a full time job. Obviously trying to encourage Sam, his employer told him that he and Ross [another student on the programme] were "the brainiest two in the place" and that he was "the best worker he had". Sam, taking this literally could not understand why he continued to be passed over when opportunities arose within the store. The senior lecturer who worked on the training programme put this well:

and they don't mean to be cruel [employers] but you're giving them [students] a false hope. Maybe the person that said it felt they were genuine but you know we do have to deal with that if they ever come back and say I'm going to be the managing director or something. And it could be somebody thinking they're being funny but our young people with their difficulties taking it literally. And they're not really meaning to be cruel but it is. Now where he's got this or whether its just him making it up, I'm getting a job...you know and men in places in like that would draw them along and say oh you'll be the managing director or you'll be fine for a job and they're taking it all literally. And nobody's meaning any harm or any mischief but, you know we've had scenarios like that before and we've got to be the baddies who have got to bring them back down to earth and say well okay.

Senior Lecturer, Further Education College

Parent's perceptions of their son's or daughter's abilities were variable. Some parents had a good understanding of their child's abilities and could discuss the areas where they felt their child would need support in relation to employment, education or independent living. However, parents and other family members also appeared to be affected by the stigma of being labelled as having a learning disability and often adopted similar coping strategies to those of their sons and daughters. In order to compensate for their son or daughter being labelled as having a learning disability many parents were keen to emphasis that their child was not unintelligent as the following quotes suggest:

He is very clever and I don't think it is challenging enough for him [the college course that he is currently doing]. He's got quite a lot in him, that I think just needs bringing out

Parent, East Renfrewshire

When he was six years old, you know he was very clever. When he was four he was, because you know he likes advertisements on TV and all the time, the news come before the adverts and so he always watch the news and from the news, you know he gets all the presidents, the capitals of all the countries...

Parent, East Renfrewshire

Well say the first, see before Dawn went to school right, it started like she knew all her colours, she could write her name and all that. She could do all that. She was, she is bright, right. It's just the dyslexia

Parent, Renfrewshire

The last quote highlights a particularly interesting point. It would appear that there is less stigma attached to having a specific condition such as dyslexia than to having a learning

disability per se. According to Wearmouth and colleagues (2003a, 2003b), the dyslexia lobby have powerfully argued that people with dyslexia are usually of above average intelligence. As knowledge of the condition has increased and several figures in the public eye have spoken of their own difficulties with dyslexia, less stigma has been attached to the condition. It is not clear however, whether young people and their families were using the label dyslexia to describe the young person's condition because it was perceived to be more socially acceptable or whether the young people in the study actually did have dyslexia. It is also interesting to note that several parents talked about when their son or daughter was younger. In several cases it would appear that parents perceived the problem to begin when their son or daughter started school. This suggests, as outlined by Davis and Watson (2001) earlier in the chapter that educational institutions have a role to play in making differences between children more apparent. This also links to the discussion around the social construction of learning disability (see chapter one and chapter three) – in this case the label would appear to be created, to some extent, by the education system. The message that parents would appear to be keen to get across is that their son or daughter is clever and perfectly capable in spite of being labelled as having a learning disability. The parents interviewed emphasised their son or daughter's positive attributes rather than dwelling on their difficulties.

He done okay at school. He wasn't what you would call overly bright but he done okay. He played football and he was really good at that. He was never in any trouble and he was a very popular boy.

Mother, Glasgow

Parents were, in some cases, reluctant to use services because of the perceived stigma attached to them. In particular, a small number of parents expressed reluctance to accept involvement from social work partly because of embarrassment and partly because they felt the service offered did not relate particularly well to their children's needs. This reluctance to work with social work services also extended to a small number of employers. This suggested some employers may be a little more reluctant to take someone on if a social worker was involved in their case. The following quote is illustrative:

and I think you know if the phone goes and it's the careers office its fine but if its somebody from social work you're like that oh here we go. People start thinking why is there a social worker involved? That's the first thing I mean we are only human beings, people are going to think, why the hell is this social worker involved? What's he done? What's she done? You know why's it came to that stage that a social workers got to phone up and try to get them a job, why aren't they out trying to get themselves a job, you know...

Employer, Glasgow

Parents' perceptions of their son or daughter's abilities were not always in agreement with those of professionals. Some professionals suggested that certain parents either over-estimated or under-estimated their child's abilities and lacked an understanding of the nature of their child's disability. Parents on the other hand, argued that they spent more time with their child and therefore understood them better.

Parent: Em, I think she has to have a job with people, that's one thing. And support wise, if you give her instructions she's very good at it...I think she could do quite well, I really believe she could do more than people give her due...

Interviewer: And who do you mean? Teachers, people at college...?

Parent: Well they're all a wee bit sort of, like you know, she won't do it right and lets just finish it off for her.

Parent, Glasgow

There do not appear to be any real patterns emerging in terms of which parents were likely to have realistic perceptions and which parents were likely to have unrealistic perceptions of their son or daughter's abilities, although interestingly those families from minority ethnic backgrounds were perceived by certain professionals to have less of an understanding of the nature of their son or daughter's disability (There has been very little research conducted in relation to learning disability, ethnicity and the role of parents, see for example, Bignall and Butt, 2002). From the data collected (there were three families from minority ethnic backgrounds within the study) there would appear to be several factors in operation. Firstly families from ethnic minorities may be less able to access the information they need about the nature of their son or daughter's disability. Communication issues may also make it more difficult for parents where English is not their first language to process or understand the information that they are given. Thirdly cultural factors such as the type of work that is appropriate for men and women and the

priority given to marriage at an early age, in some cases at the expense of further education or employment are likely to influence the beliefs of these families.

What almost all of the parents who took part in the study shared was a need for an explanation for their child's difficulties, a reason for the problems they were having. As a result having a diagnosis was of some significance. It allowed parents to understand the nature of their child's problems and in some cases stopped them from blaming themselves as the following quote suggests:

she was saying that there was a problem [the teacher] but they didn't know what it was. Maybe they thought I wasn't like doing it, the work with her or whatever, I don't know right. But eh all the reports, they all say that I've put in lots of help, know what I mean, I've bought lots of books and I never knew to about primary five that it was dyslexia right.

Parent, Renfrewshire

For parents where their child's condition remained undiagnosed there seemed to be an underlying sense of frustration and in some cases a slight worry that others may perceive them to be responsible.

It's never been said to me that Natalie's...you know how people used to say...but it's never been said oh she's this or she's that [name of condition or diagnosis]. The only thing that they asked me and it was silly, eh when she was born, did she, eh did I drink.

Parent, Glasgow

To sum up, it would appear that both the young people who took part in the research and their families are aware of some kind of perceived stigma attached to the label learning disability. This holds true whether the young person attended a mainstream or special (MLD) school. Young people and their parents have adopted various strategies to cope with being so-labelled. In the case of the young people this has often involved denying the existence of a learning disability or treating it as something which stopped when they left school. The literature suggests that being labelled can have negative effects in relation to self-esteem and bullying (although none of the young people in the sample have reported bullying as such) although it can bring positive benefits such as an explanation for difference (see also Gillman et al, 2000). This is something parents in the sample clearly valued, given the importance they placed on obtaining a diagnosis for their child. Another advantage to being labelled is that it allows access to certain services. In further education

colleges for example, young people have to be labelled or classified as having a certain type of disability in order to receive learning support. If students are not classified in this way, the learning support department does not receive adequate funding from the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC). The senior lecturer in learning support at one college said “it [the label] gets you things, I have to say”. It may also be possible to use the label to create positive interpretations of people with disabilities (see chapter three for a more detailed discussion). This is one of the main aims of a citizen advocacy project in Glasgow that has been working with one of the young people in the study.

So again, that's looking for ways to get across a message that says people with disabilities are equally valuable, equally important in our society as everyone else. We all have different skills. We are all equally important.

Citizen Advocacy Coordinator, Voluntary Project, Glasgow

Continued relevance of the label “learning disability”

This chapter has attempted to outline young people's experiences of being labelled as having a learning disability and the associated stigma that accompanies this. The remaining section of this chapter raises the question of how relevant the label of “learning disability” continues to be in a late modern or post modern society. It has been argued that learning disability is a socially constructed concept (see chapter three for more detail) and it might be suggested that technological developments may help overcome this, making the label increasingly irrelevant. A surprisingly large number of respondents referred to how skilled young people in the sample were at using the computer. Young people enjoyed working with computers and this may be partly because they helped them to overcome difficulties they may have previously had in relation to writing and spelling. Many parents made comments along the lines that their son or daughter was more skilled in computer use than they were (although this could in part be attributed to generational factors) and several young people, parents and professionals felt that working in an office environment carrying out basic computing skills would be ideal work for them. Natalie is a good example. Natalie was twenty one years old and lived with her parents in Glasgow. She had mobility problems, a hearing impairment and a moderate learning disability, as well as other health problems. Natalie attended a school for young people with hearing impairments before moving to a mainstream secondary school. After undertaking a development course at college she worked with a training provider and experienced two inappropriate, unsuccessful placements before going back to college. When at college for the second time she developed a love of computers and with hard work and perseverance

became skilled in this area. At the time of the research, she was undertaking a National Certificate (NC) course in Business Administration and her lecturer felt that the possibility of employment in an office environment carrying out tasks such as data entry was a real and viable option for her. In the past, employment and continuing further education might not have been seen as realistic options for someone with multiple disabilities like Natalie. However, technological advances such as the growing use of computers may lead some people to argue that the label learning disability is less relevant. Young people in the sample enjoyed using computers as in certain circumstances they minimised the differences between them and other young people in the general population by assisting them in areas they previously found difficult.

On the other hand as writers such as Roulstone (1998, 2002) and Jolly (2000) have emphasised, the impact of globalization has changed the nature of employment. The type of work available is increasingly short-term and part-time, with a growth in self-employment. The labour market is increasingly flexible and although this might bring some advantages to disabled workers in terms of ability to adapt working hours and so on, it is likely that increasing flexibility within the labour market will actually result in employees having to satisfy increasingly stringent criteria to retain employment (Jolly, 2000). The increased use of technology in the workplace, although beneficial to some disabled employees, is likely to result in many previously unskilled jobs becoming increasingly highly skilled (see also Roulstone, 1998). This may result in people with learning disabilities being marginalised into only the most menial, unskilled jobs. Thus, it would appear that despite the growth in technology, the label “learning disability” continues to be significant.

Again, linking with the debates outlined in chapter three, for many of the young people in the sample, there are a number of additional problems or difficulties that may have contributed to their learning disability. Many of these additional problems are caused by social or environmental factors and it might be suggested that this is further evidence of the socially constructed nature of the label learning disability. For some of the young people in the sample it would appear that their learning disability is the result of external factors such as family difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. These factors contribute to the young person’s learning disability by creating disruption, often resulting in poor attendance at school and low take up of support services. Taking the example of those who have recently left care, a Beattie key worker who worked with this client group suggested that:

I would say that a lot of our young people have learning difficulties...due to the fact that a lot of young people who are in care have missed out on a lot of education. So there are huge literacy and numeracy issues. Some of our young people have conditions like dyslexia but I would say that the majority of our young people have learning difficulties borne out of the fact that they haven't attended school for x amount of years. I mean I have worked with a lot of young people who effectively opted out of education in second, third year, and as a result you know, they've not sat exams, they've missed out...and due to their missing out, the ones who have got learning difficulties very often go undiagnosed because they are not within a school setting.

Beattie, key worker, Glasgow

Young people may also perceive a certain stigma attached to these additional problems such as being in care or having behavioural problems and so ironically those young people who are most vulnerable and need most help may be least likely to access services.

Discussion

This chapter has highlighted the unique position that young people in the sample were in. Although diagnosed as having a moderate learning disability, many of the young people found themselves on the border between mainstream and special services and most of the young people (and their families) had experience of both. For several of the young people, the difficulties they faced were exacerbated by social and environmental factors and this, alongside the development of new technologies such as computers raised questions as to how relevant the label learning disability is in late modern or post modern society. In addition, it would seem that the category of learning disability takes on particular significance for young people and their families when they enter the formal education system.

Whether one accepts that the category "learning disability" is socially constructed or not, the impact of being so-labelled was clearly significant for the young people who took part in the research. Young people (and their families) faced stigma and embarrassment and being labelled had negative effects on young people's self esteem and social inclusion. Although none of the young people directly reported bullying, there was evidence of social isolation and their school days were not always their happiest.

Young people and their families adopted a range of coping strategies which included denying the learning disability completely or refusing the help that was offered in an attempt to minimise difference from peers. These strategies clearly had an impact on the young people's transitional experiences. Often this impact was fairly dramatic as the

example of one young person losing his job illustrates. None of the young people in the sample appeared to enthusiastically embrace a disabled identity (indeed, several young people attempted to strongly deny this); however, this identity was often imposed upon them by professionals within the compulsory education system including teachers and educational psychologists. Given the borderline position in which this group of young people were situated, being so-labelled appeared all the more difficult to accept. The next chapter moves on to look at post-school service provision for young people with learning disabilities in both mainstream and specialist settings and explores the potential impact of recent policy changes.

Chapter Eight: Post-school services for young people with learning disabilities – taking responsibility for successful transitions

The previous chapter looked at the impact that the label “learning disability” has on the transitional experiences and identity creation of young people with learning disabilities. It became apparent that the perceived stigma and embarrassment felt by young people and their families resulted in the adoption of various coping strategies in both mainstream and specialist settings. This chapter moves on to explore in more depth service provision for young people with learning disabilities upon leaving school, particularly in relation to training and employment services. Continuing to draw on the twenty case studies, which involved in-depth interviews with young people and significant others in their lives, this chapter also draws extensively on the fifteen key informant interviews that were carried out with a range of stakeholders at a strategic level within the fields of education, social work, careers guidance, employment services and government.

Service providers were asked to reflect on the services they provided and in this chapter, their views on the appropriateness of services will be compared with those of young people, their parents and other professionals. The chapter will begin by outlining the use of services by young people who took part in the research, in order to give a flavour of the services available at the time of the research. The chapter will then go on to identify some of the key issues in relation to service provision such as responsibility, joint working and planning for transitions. Finally, the chapter will discuss the potential implication of the policy developments that were outlined in greater detail in chapter two. As well as policy documents and legislation which relate specifically to transitions for young people with learning disabilities such as the Beattie report, *Implementing Inclusiveness, Realising Potential* (Scottish Executive, 1999a) and the *Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004* issues such as responsibility and joint working are also reflected in the wider policy arena, both in *Modernising Community Care* (Scottish Office, 1998) and the *Joint Futures Agenda* (Scottish Executive, 2000).

Use of services by young people in the sample

Throughout Scotland a range of training and employment services exist, both locally and nationally. National services such as those run by JobCentre Plus and the Department of Work and Pensions include New Deal for young people aged between eighteen and twenty four and New Deal for Disabled People as well as the Training for Work Programme and

other specialist disability programmes such Work Start, Work Step and Work Preparation. These programmes are contracted out to voluntary organisations such as Enable and Capability Scotland who take on the role of training provider (see chapter two for a more detailed discussion of these programmes). Other programmes are provided by Careers Scotland and Scottish Enterprise. These include the Get Ready for Work training programme, devised on the back of the Beattie recommendations to provide a flexible training resource for young people aged sixteen and seventeen who have additional support needs. Careers Scotland has also recently introduced supported employment projects on a pilot basis but these are currently only available in seven local areas and will be evaluated before being rolled out if successful. Other, local initiatives exist and are provided by local authorities and local voluntary organisations; choice of provision therefore depends a great deal on locality.

Of the twenty young people in the sample ten had undertaken some kind of employment training. The most common training programme undertaken was the Get Ready for Work programme, this was followed by Training for Work and New Deal (either the strand for young people or disabled people). Interestingly, none of the young people had undertaken supported employment although one young person was on a waiting list for a supported employment programme provided by a voluntary organisation in Renfrewshire. Table 10 below illustrates the spread of training programmes undertaken.

TRAINING PROGRAMME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE CURRENTLY OR PREVIOUSLY ON THE PROGRAMME
Get Ready for Work	5
Training for Work	3
New Deal for eighteen to twenty four year olds	1
New Deal for Disabled People	1

Table 10 - Young People who were currently or had previously been on training programmes (N.B. Some young people may have been on more than one training programme, however multiple placements are not included in the figures, only the current or most recent placement has been taken into account)

Opinions on the quality of training and employment programmes

Young people and their families discussed in some detail their opinions on the services that they received. Their views about the usefulness of the employment and training services outlined above were mixed. As discussed in more detail in chapter five young people and

their parents appeared to appreciate the development of “soft targets” such as increased self-confidence and self esteem. Several young people and parents mentioned the development of a greater understanding of the world of work and increasing awareness of the importance of issues such as time-keeping, attendance, motivation and using one’s own initiative. Even where the training placement did not result in a full time job, young people appreciated the chance to gain work experience and some parents felt that the work experience gained would enhance the future job prospects of their young people. Most of the young people and their parents appeared to appreciate the help and support provided by services and there seemed to be a common perception that professionals had “tried their best” to help, even when this had not been successful as the following quote from a parent in Glasgow suggests:

but, they were all right. I mean they did give him a chance, know what I mean. She did put him in about two or three places. Its not like they didn't try, they did. And they paid him, like you know, what did they call it, a training allowance.

Parent, Glasgow

Although there were positive features of the various programmes as outlined above, young people and their parents also identified negative features. A small number of young people felt that services on offer were not relevant or appropriate to them. A particular concern was expressed by several of the young people about service providers making promises they could not deliver as the quote below from Jamie illustrates well:

I've tried to phone them but when you phone them they tell you they've got a lot of people, they tell you they've got a lot on their plate and they'll get back to you as quick as they can. But they won't, they never dae. They don't get back to you so I just leave it and no phone again.

Jamie, 21, East Renfrewshire

There would also appear to be a lack of understanding among some of the young people about the aims and objectives of the training and employment programmes. This would appear to be particularly true when the programmes involved work placements. For some of the young people there appeared to be some confusion around the notion of a work placement. The young people often assumed that a placement was a first step towards paid employment and were left somewhat bewildered when no employment offer was forthcoming. In Imran’s case for example, he called his careers advisor several weeks into his Training for Work programme to find out when he would be starting paid employment.

This suggests a need for greater communication between training providers and young people.

Case Study: Get Ready for Work

Service providers also reflected on the services they provided. Obviously the majority felt that the training and employment programmes were of considerable benefit to the young people in question, however there were areas they did feel needed considerable improvement. In order to highlight some of these areas, the Get Ready for Work training programme will be looked at in more depth. Get Ready for Work is a training programme that was introduced in response to the recommendations of the Beattie committee (Scottish Executive, 1999a) who identified the need for more flexible and responsive training provision for young people with additional support needs. It is managed by the Enterprise networks and it is delivered through Careers Scotland, local training providers and Local Enterprise Companies (LECs). It is funded by Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Get Ready for Work primarily targets young people with additional support needs who are aged between sixteen and seventeen. It replaced the special needs skill seekers programme and has four main strands – personal skills, life skills, vocational skills and core skills. Young people must be referred on to the programme by Careers Scotland and after an initial assessment of the young person's skills, aspirations and attitudes towards employment, the careers advisor will draw up an action plan. The training provider will then use this plan to draw up a training plan with goals for the young person to achieve. The programme is not time limited although the young person must leave when they are eighteen unless there are good reasons why they should stay on the programme for longer. At the time of the research, Get Ready for Work was very new and there was no literature available that evaluated its effectiveness. However, a one-year evaluation of the programme was conducted internally by the Scottish Executive (unpublished). Although this evaluation was not available for public viewing, a representative from the Scottish Executive discussed the positive features of the programme, which were highlighted by the evaluation.

...They are meeting and exceeding their targets of young people going through the programme, of young people progressing onto what we call positive outcomes which are the jobs or the mainstream Skillseekers which is you know an employed job in a sense but still in a training programme or into further education. So I mean there is a success there and talking to various training providers it is beneficial and a lot of people are getting on it.

Representative, Beattie Implementation Team, Scottish Executive

The quote above suggests that although young people are coming on to Get Ready for Work in increasing numbers (indeed it was the most common training route for young people in the study) there is little evidence as yet that young people are finding paid jobs as a result of the programme. It is interesting that one of the indicators of success of the programme is to move people onto another mainstream training programme (Skillseekers). This may perpetuate the “revolving door” image of trainees moving from one programme to another (see Riddell et al, 2001 for a more detailed discussion). Of the five young people in the current study who undertook a Get Ready for Work placement only one found a job as a direct result of the programme. Another young person managed to find a job independently of the programme after deciding to leave, while the other three young people were facing the continual cycle of training discussed above.

The Scottish Executive evaluation also highlighted some difficulties with the programme. In particular these related to the availability of the service and misunderstandings about the nature of the programme. Similar issues have also been identified during the course of the interviews with young people, parents, professionals and key informants. Some of the issues identified relate specifically to the Get Ready for Work programme, but others can be extended to other training and employment programmes.

Misunderstanding the nature of the programme

Discussions with service providers suggested various interpretations around eligibility criteria for the programme. Young people who were not yet “work-ready” had to be referred onto the programme by a Careers Advisor. Among service providers there appeared, in particular, to have been some doubt around age restrictions and time limitations for the programme. One provider for example, asked young people to leave the course on their eighteenth birthday, while other providers may have been more flexible. Anecdotal evidence from the Scottish Executive suggested that some of the Local Enterprise Companies put considerable pressure on training providers to get people off the programme and into a positive outcome (a job, a place on the Skillseekers programme or a further education placement) as quickly as possible. In some cases questions were being asked if a young person was still on the programme after six weeks. However the experiences of the young people in the study and the training providers questioned suggested that young people were likely to remain on the programme for up to a year, or even two years in some cases. The nature of the difficulties and barriers faced by the particular group of young people in question means they are likely to need fairly intensive support over a relatively long period of time (as discussed in more detail in chapter five).

This creates tensions, particularly around financial issues and raises questions about responsibility. These will be returned to later in the chapter.

As well as the evidence that suggested that some of the young people misunderstood the nature of the programme, there also appeared to be a misunderstanding between some of the providers of Get Ready for Work and some of the employers who offered work placements. It would appear that some of the employers felt they were only expected to offer the young person some work experience, much in the same way as they would do with school pupils rather than provide real opportunities for young people to gain paid employment, which is what the Get Ready for Work Providers expect. The experiences of two of the young people in the sample led one Get Ready for Work provider to question her practice as the following quote illustrates:

so I'm at this point at the end of the year saying what am I about, you know, what are we doing here. So I've said to the staff right the first thing we've got to do is...cos we think we're doing everything, they know exactly what's expected of them [employers] what the students there for, they know that they are not obliged to give the student work, they know what we're looking for but something is missing. And I said to the staff, what we've got to ask them every month [the employers] is would you employ this young person, if not why not. I don't want just a nice report about somebody who's got special needs because they would feel bad about saying something nasty...so I'm afraid I'm beating myself up over him [young person in sample] and I'm making judgements about the placement but if I do anything else this year, they have got to know that these, that we are serious about getting these young people jobs and if they are doing things that are making them unemployable then they have got to tell us...

Get Ready for Work provider, Renfrewshire

This is a highly illustrative quote that shows some of the initial teething problems with the Get Ready for Work programme. In particular there appears to be a lack of clarity about what the overall goal of the programme is. Should the programme be aiming to find “real”, paid jobs for young people or should it simply attempt to provide work opportunities that offer young people experience and the opportunity to improve their “employability”? This is a key dilemma that can be applied to many of the services in this area and it will be returned to later in the chapter.

Availability of services by area

Another issue would appear to be the availability of services by area. Get Ready for Work is a relatively new programme and therefore it is perhaps understandable that development

across the country has been patchy (Scottish Executive, 2003d); however the availability of training and employment services generally would appear to differ according to geographical area (Riddell, et al, 2005). The development of the Life Skills strand of Get Ready for Work, which targets those young people who are “hardest to reach” or “furthest from the labour market” has been particularly problematic. The life skills strand takes a relatively new approach to deliver intensive support to those young people who need it most. As a result existing providers have had to develop new training approaches and the service does not yet exist in all areas:

we now have Get Ready for Work with life skills, which is part time, which is great. That's been brought in because to be honest quite a lot of the clients I work with do go on to Get Ready for Work part time to build up on it and then I can hopefully progress them on to full time. But my only complaint would be that we've only got one provider that does it. In fact I've got a bit of a cheek because [the neighbouring Local Authority] doesn't have it at all yet.

Beattie Key Worker, Renfrewshire

We run quite a lot of different schemes. Eh Training for Work, New Deal, Work Step, Work Preparation, em Get Ready for Work. Well we don't actually do that here we only do it in Glasgow.

Employment Development Officer, Voluntary Organisation, Renfrewshire

Clearly the lack of services in some areas, and the lack of providers offering particular services will impact on the choices available to young people. The young people who are likely to make use of these programme, may be particularly limited as travelling to other areas where provision is available may not be an option for a variety of reasons such as an inability to travel independently. A lack of competition and choice of providers may also result in a lower quality of service. However, given that Get Ready for Work is a relatively new programme, it is too soon to say whether these inequalities by area will be permanent or will improve through time.

Need for greater flexibility

Although Get Ready for Work was introduced in order to provide more flexible employability training for young people with additional support needs, some professionals identified a need for even greater flexibility. Some young people when referred on to Get Ready for Work have not been ready for a work placement and would have benefited from some additional training prior to this. For other young people, Get Ready for Work was

simply inappropriate. However, there was a lack of alternative provision for professionals to refer on to:

Get Ready for Work is a really good programme. We have had lots of successes of moving people into employment. However I think there should be more flexibility with the programme. When a young person is referred to us, if we feel they are not yet ready to go out on placement then we don't have the resources to do anything else with them, we can't keep them behind for training for a few weeks, we don't have the resources to do it so we have to send them out anyway. The other thing that I think can be problematic is that young people have to be out on placement for twenty five to thirty hours a week. This is too much for some of the young people. We cannot reduce the hours they work because they have to complete a timesheet each week. There is a real need for more flexibility across the board.

Employment Development Officer, Voluntary Organisation, Glasgow

There seems to be a bit of a gap for young people like Jamie basically who just needs that extra bit of support, you know who has different needs and as I say is a bit more vulnerable and there is a bit of a gap in the provision that we have for that... I feel that there is a gap in the provision, I really strongly feel there is a gap in the provision and I think that's something that needs to be addressed. Obviously that comes at a very high level, at a much higher level than I'm at...It's difficult to find a placement for someone who is particularly vulnerable, that's a big issue that we have.

Beattie Key Worker, Glasgow

These quotes suggest a need for greater flexibility, particularly for those who are more vulnerable. Young people who have been assessed as not being “work-ready” are referred onto Get Ready for Work but this programme does not appear suitable for the “least work ready”. In a similar way to other employment programmes such as New Deal, discussed in chapter two, Get Ready for Work appears to target those who are closer to the labour market, leaving a gap for the most vulnerable. It would appear that the common problem where young people (or other clients) have to fit in with existing services rather than services being flexible enough to meet needs continues to exist. This is recognised by both practitioners and at a more strategic level.

You're really limited aren't you on where you can go and what you can do to get a positive work role...because if you slot them into existing services, there's nothing really there that would actually look at everything, would look at who Frank is and the needs he has.

Social Worker, East Renfrewshire

I think the main challenge is...that we still have quite a long way to go to actually be designing services with the clients in mind. We're still, you know the disparity between services and the professions is still em, can be improved considerably and certainly that's the case post-school as well.

Psychologist, Renfrewshire

It is of note that the young people who took part in the research were assessed to be at the “more able” end of the learning disability spectrum, yet for a small number of these young people, the Get Ready for Work programme, which was designed to be flexible and with the needs of young people in mind was not deemed to be appropriate, as the range of quotes above suggests. It would appear that some of the young people in the sample are not yet “close enough to the labour market” to benefit from the services on offer. There seems to be a contradiction between the policy rhetoric which suggests that all adults with a learning disability who want a job should be able to get one (Scottish Executive, 2000a) and the services that are available to provide the support required to achieve this. Despite the introduction of Get Ready for Work as a more flexible training programme for young people with additional support needs, even more imaginative and flexible approaches need to be adopted as clearly this approach does not suit everyone.

Although Get Ready for Work was selected as a case study to illustrate these points, the discussion could be said to apply across the board in relation to training and employment programmes for disabled people (see for example Riddell and Wilson, 2001; Salisbury, 2001; Riddell, et al 2005). The following section will focus in more depth on three key issues that were identified as being significant by service providers in relation to services for young people with learning disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood. These are responsibility, planning for transition and joint working.

Issues raised by service providers

Responsibility

According to Riddell and Wilson (2001) the area of further education, training and employment for people with disabilities is a crowded one without much coherence as the following quote suggests:

welfare policy for disabled people is currently influenced and delivered by a bewildering array of agencies including the Benefits Agency, the Employment Service, Further Education Colleges, Adult and Continuing Education

Departments, Local Enterprise Councils, social work departments, housing services, NHS Primary Care Trusts and voluntary organisations.

(Pages 256-7)

It was perhaps as a result of the number of agencies and different structures and policies involved in this area that during the course of the fieldwork, the theme of responsibility came up on many occasions. Taking responsibility for the needs of young people with learning disabilities was often seen as problematic and confusion and tension were identified around which agencies should be taking responsibility at certain times. This confusion was apparent in the further education sector, particularly for young people with learning disabilities who were on mainstream courses. There was uncertainty around who should be responsible for providing support for young people with additional support needs on mainstream courses. If someone needed a personal assistant or a scribe in the classroom for example, should the further education college or the social work department provide this? This confusion was intensified as it became clear that the situation differed between institutions. One further education college could provide assistance with the costs of transport for example, while another did not, although the reasons for this were unclear. Professionals saw a real need for guidance in this area to provide clarity around who should be responsible for providing certain support.

There are certain things the college can help with, we can provide up to fifty per cent of the costs towards a taxi for example but we cannot administer personal care or medication. There are certain boundaries that we cannot cross and these need to be more clearly defined. There needs to be a clearer understanding of the roles of the different agencies in health, social work and education.

Senior Lecturer in Learning Support, Further Education College

This quote highlights an area of confusion that the Scottish Executive had recognised and was attempting to deal with at the time of the research. At the time of the research a short life working group was considering the responses to the consultation on Guidance for Further Education, Social Work and Health. This has recently resulted in the publication of the guidance document *Partnership Matters* (Scottish Executive, 2005g). This guidance will replace the outdated further education circular 13/95. The hope was that it would address changes in policy, procedure and practice, and the Scottish Executive hoped that it would provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each agency. Increased clarity of roles and responsibilities should be beneficial as staff have been taking on increasingly wide and broadly defined roles. The fieldwork provides examples of college lecturers and

careers advisors who were tackling a broad range of issues including homelessness and drug and alcohol issues. Given the diversity of the young people in the sample and the wide range of social problems that they faced, this is unsurprising. Any guidance that can increase the clarity of roles should enable service providers to focus on their own areas of expertise. Service providers can then refer on to other agencies, although this of course assumes knowledge of other services that are available, which may not always be the case.

Further confusion arises in respect of when responsibility should end. Within local authority education departments, this was previously seen as straightforward, however policy changes such as the introduction of post-school psychological services (see chapter two for a more detailed discussion) may mean that education departments now have responsibility for young people with additional support needs after school leaving age. The new Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 will also have an impact as the following quote suggests:

Provisions in there mean we will have to be, we will have a duty, a duty means that we have to do it. We have to have an awareness of what's happening to the young person after they leave school and in that, to exercise that duty we have to work with careers, with colleagues in social work and with health, no doubt about that.

Deputy Director of Local Authority Education Department

For other service providers, where responsibility should end has been less clear. This is an area of particular significance given the difficulties young people in the current sample had in terms of sustaining placements and the need for on-going, often intensive support identified in the previous two chapters. Now that Careers Scotland is an all age guidance service, for example, responsibility no longer ends when young people leave school. However it may seem reasonable to assume that responsibility would end after referral on to another agency. Several of the young people in the sample were referred on to other agencies by their careers advisor. In some of these cases contact with the young person was then lost and they were left with no support:

As I said I can refer on to other agencies and I can only assume that they do what they say they are going to do. And I always say to the individual when I am referring them on if things don't work out please come back to me. So I'm there at the end of the day and what they are doing is coming back. Hopefully they will do it.

Careers Advisor, Renfrewshire

This quote appears to suggest that Careers Scotland is a reactive rather than a proactive service. The onus and responsibility appears to lie with the young person to go back to the careers advisor for further support or another referral. It seems unlikely that the young people in the sample would take the initiative to self-refer unless some kind of follow up provision was in place. Indeed, one of the key messages highlighted in chapter five was that in order to sustain placements, young people require adequate support and follow up. It makes sense that if someone was coping reasonably well in a placement with support, then withdrawing that support may introduce difficulties.

It's one of the big complaints that they come to us on the Get Ready for Work course and we, quite often find that students who are ready to go in and take a job, but then when they do, there's no support at all and within six months that student is out of a job. And if there had just been that wee bit more support and a tailing off rather than this abrupt finish then I think we would make more of a success of it, and I just think it's such a shame and I think that's where the whole system is falling down time and again.

Personal Advisor, Get Ready for Work training programme, Renfrewshire

The difficulty arises when considering who should be responsible for providing that on-going support. Many of the service providers considered this role to be beyond their remit and with a new cohort of young people to consider this would seem understandable:

I mean we are only supposed to be a training intervention and that's it, which is a cold way to look at it. But we do what we can. We always hope to move them on but if it doesn't happen it's for other agencies to take over.

Get Ready for Work training provider, Renfrewshire

It would appear that there is a need for greater clarity in relation to taking responsibility for services for young people with learning disabilities. It has been identified that this is a group of young people who reap the benefits of on-going support and follow up when it comes to moving on to employment or other placements. However, demand on services and resource implications make the question of who should provide this on-going support a difficult one to answer. In addition, targets set by funding bodies, which are outcome based and focused on moving young people on can have a detrimental impact for those young people who require on-going support (see Riddell et al, 2001; Salisbury 2001; Corden et al 2003; Stafford 2003 and chapter two for a more detailed discussion).

Planning for transition

Another key area of significance identified by service providers was planning for transitions. At the time of the research, formal planning for transition took the form of the future needs assessment that took place in the third year of secondary education and was repeated in subsequent years. This will change as a result of the introduction of the Additional Support for Learning Act which came into force in November 2005 (see chapter two for a detailed outline of key features of the Act. See also, Scottish Executive 2003b, 2003c; Riddell 2004; for a more detailed discussion). At the time of the research those involved in transitional planning included the education department, the social work department, Careers Scotland, further education colleges and other relevant providers. Most providers felt that while there were some positive features of their current transitional arrangements, much could be done to improve things. In particular, a need for earlier intervention and better sharing of information were identified. It would seem that the transition from education services or children and families social work services on to adult services was perceived to be particularly problematic:

we have to take some responsibility for, sometimes just the way they record information it's not clear who are actually the ones with learning disability...so sometimes just even the recording of information has not been good. But we need to improve the interface and steps have been made to do that...but I don't think it's as good as it should be...what you really want is the adult services involved in the planning at an earlier stage. But sometimes that is a, it's not an unwillingness to do that but often it's also because of just the numbers of people. It's something that we know that if we're going to actually have a seamless service for people then we need to get earlier.

Representative, Social Work Services, Glasgow

We recognise that our services need to improve and we constantly, it's not even so much about specific services for people in transition, it's just about services just actually talking to each other and making sure there's a process...

Representative, Renfrewshire Social Work Department

Clearly there is a recognition that transitional services and processes need to improve. Attempts to do this were already underway. In East Renfrewshire, for example, money from the change fund (a pot of money made available from the Scottish Executive to modernise community care services) funded the development of a transitions team. The team had two workers, (it was planned to increase this to three workers some time in 2004). They adopted a person centred planning approach within schools to ensure early

intervention for those young people with additional support needs who were likely to undergo fairly complex transitions. Again the need for early intervention was highlighted. However, although adult services seemed keen to be involved in the planning process from an earlier stage, it would appear unlikely that they would be able to provide services from an earlier stage due to the resource implications this would entail. Sharing information and the planning process is likely to be assisted by an increase in joint working. This was the final area of significance brought up by service providers and other professionals.

Joint working

Joint working or inter-agency working has taken on increasing significance in recent years (Riddell and Tett, 2001; Stewart et al, 2003). Riddell and Tett (2001) suggest that partnership between public, private and voluntary sector agencies, individual service users and communities is seen as an important way of promoting social capital. Stewart et al (2003) meanwhile suggest that:

integrated working irrespective of the organisational structure will increasingly become mandatory rather than permissive. The debate will not be whether but how, and the spotlight will be on the detail for attaining the process of integrated working.

(Page 349)

Given this recent policy drive towards joint working, it is perhaps unsurprising that all service providers questioned gave evidence of some kind of joint working arrangements. In some cases this took the form of formal partnership agreements or service level agreements but there were also examples of working together with relevant agencies in an informal way, perhaps to improve the provision of certain services. Social work departments had formal partnership arrangements in place with colleagues in health and education but there was also growing evidence that suggested an increasing amount of work being carried out with voluntary organisations in the field of learning disability. These voluntary organisations appeared to be seen as a useful source of knowledge and expertise to be tapped into in order to improve existing services and develop new ones.

Careers Scotland worked in partnership with a variety of agencies but they had a joint working agreement with JobCentre Plus.

Em, we work quite closely with Careers and with Scottish Enterprise, we have joint working agreements with them, you know for example the Careers service we are working on projects and we have an agreement to share vacancies and things. So we work quite closely, many of the people going through from the Beattie committee, through the recommendations would go through provision and then would come to us, so its very important that we link in with all the people so we do work very closely with those involved...but I mean all of these things pick up learning points of what organisations need to change about the way they work...but our relationships are good.

Representative from Job Centre Plus

This closer working relationship between Careers Scotland and JobCentre Plus is likely to be of considerable benefit to the young people in the sample, given that some of the young people had expressed confusion about the different roles of the careers advisor and the personal advisor in the job centre. Several young people spoke of being unsure about who was the most appropriate to go to in certain circumstances. This confusion had been recognised by the key informants questioned, indeed, it was seen as particularly relevant now that Careers Scotland is an all age guidance service as the following quote suggests:

Traditionally they go through the careers service first until they are eighteen and then they will come to us but now that careers service is all age guidance that's where we are working together to sort out how that works so that its not confusing for the person and its not confusing for the employer. So we are working quite closely...I think if they went to the Job Centre and were talking about careers advice we should be indicating and making appointments for them and I think, well we're highlighting having the careers service based in some of our offices not every day of the week as we haven't got the resources to do that but if an issue arises they can see someone. So kind of joint working is one of the sort of themes for how we are trying to go forward...

Representative, Job Centre Plus

Despite the lip service paid to joint working in the quotes above, previous research has suggested that joint working in the areas of education, training, employment and benefits has not yet been put into practice on the ground (see for example, Salisbury, 2001; Wilson and Riddell, 2001; Riddell et al 2002a; Riddell et al 2003; Thornton, 2003). However, key informants did express a commitment to increase joint working that would be helpful given that joint working can help avoid confusion and duplication of services (Stewart et al, 2003). The Inclusiveness Projects, introduced on a pilot basis across Scotland as a result of the Beattie recommendations (Scottish Executive, 1999a) have helped to bring joint working into sharper focus. The impact of the projects will be discussed in a little more detail in the next section of this chapter but it is helpful here to mention the emphasis the

projects have placed on joint working. One of the main roles of the key worker is to act as a signpost to help guide young people through the various services. To do this effectively they have attempted to bring partners from various agencies on board to share information and provide training so that all services working in the sector have a greater awareness of what others are doing:

so we have for want of a better word Inclusiveness Practitioner Network Meetings...which meant you could invite all the agencies or the folk that the key workers worked with and you would have a mixed sort of information exchange with presentations...we would use it also to tell them about things we were trying to move forward, maybe a wee bit of em discussion around local issues and then how to move things forward and things to do with the change fund or whatever. And they went down a bomb, they have been very successful and we decided to try and firm it up. We had money for training in our budget, training for partners...that was another thing, how do I find out what the partners really want and need because this group was not representative enough so by getting directly to the people they could tell me themselves and have some say in what we should offer training in...

Inclusion Project Co-ordinator, Renfrewshire

Although service providers expressed a commitment to the principles of joint working they also identified that more needed to be done. In particular, it was highlighted that there was a need to work more closely with employers in an attempt to bring more of them on board:

well the priorities are having an employer's event and then building on that. We don't just want it to be like an employer's event and then we all go away and sort of think oh that's great. I mean it's a case of trying to build on that and having established some links with employers we need to build that up and get them more involved.

Representative, Greater Glasgow Supported Employment Network

Agencies such as social work recognised the need to think more widely when it comes to partnership working. It would seem that there is a need to extend the traditional partnerships with health and housing, which exist to a greater extent in relation to other client groups such as older people (see Scottish Executive 2000c; Audit Commission 2002; Stewart et al, 2003; for a more detailed discussion of partnership working) to include employment and training providers and voluntary organisations. Although there has been a move in this direction it was perceived that more work was needed:

I think the notion of partnership needs to go much further, where we want to get that partnership notion extending is into employment and training agencies, I mean that's where we're starting thinking much more now. You know that's the area we would say well, the tendency in the past is that health and social work people look at their own world.

Representative, Social Work Services, Glasgow

Service providers identified barriers that made joint working difficult. Working with young people who have a wide variety of needs is fairly complex and involves a large number of agencies at different times and stages of the young person's life. Riddell and Wilson (2001) have pointed out that the Employment Service (an agency of the Department for Education and Skills) has responsibility for employment programmes while Local Enterprise Councils (Training and Enterprise Councils in England and Wales) have responsibility for training programmes, often resulting in confusion and an overlap in service provision. Devolution complicates matters further as employment remains a reserved area controlled by Westminster while Lifelong Learning and Enterprise is the responsibility of the Scottish Executive. Bringing different agencies together with their different ways of working and different priorities was perceived to be problematic by the service providers interviewed. In addition, there were issues around information sharing and confidentiality that were thought to limit interagency working. These issues have been brought further into the spotlight with the advent of the Data Protection Act (1998) and it would appear that developing protocols for information sharing was seen as a priority for a number of agencies:

the relationships are easier, freer, more open, more trusting, there's still a lot to be sorted like information protocols and all that, and all the usual issues of confidentiality and transferring information but there is active practical things happening on the ground and they increase things that make systems work better.

Careers Scotland Representative, Renfrewshire

These three areas of significance that have been highlighted by service providers are recognised at policy level. The Beattie committee acknowledged the need for improved planning processes to aid young people making transitions and greater joint working to make transitions smoother. The committee also recognised the need for greater clarity around issues of responsibility. In making a set of recommendations they aimed to help tackle some of the issues that have been outlined in the previous section. The aim of the next section is not to discuss the Beattie report in any depth (see chapter two for a more

detailed discussion) but to look briefly at the perceived impact it has had on practice from the perspective of service providers. The remainder of the chapter will then highlight the key trends that are emerging as a result of changes in policy and practice.

Opinions on the potential impact of the Beattie Report

Overall the key informants in the study saw the Beattie report as a positive development. However, despite the fact that the Beattie report was published five years prior to the research, most of those interviewed felt it was too soon to say what the impact of the changes were on the ground. The issues that were perceived as likely to have most impact were the introduction of key workers and inclusiveness projects.

Key Workers and Inclusiveness Projects

The Inclusiveness projects, and in particular the introduction of key workers, were perceived by key informants to be one of the most significant developments (see Scottish Executive, 2005b for the most recent evaluation of the Inclusiveness Projects). The fifteen pilot inclusiveness projects have been in existence in Scotland since 2001. At the time of the research, further funding had recently been granted from the Scottish Executive to mainstream the projects. This will enable differences across the country to be ironed out and the projects will lose their individual identities and become part of Careers Scotland's inclusiveness service. In order to be funded initially, the projects had to identify sources of funding from partner agencies. In Glasgow for example, the Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) provided funding and this encouraged greater joint working between Careers Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and the Social Inclusion Partnerships. In other areas partnerships would have been formed between other agencies. Although this can be seen as a highly positive development, the partner agencies brought their own priorities, which resulted in differences across the country. In Glasgow, for example, only young people living in a SIP area could access the key worker service. These inequalities should be reduced with the advent of mainstreaming.

The introduction of the key worker role has been seen as the single most important development within the Inclusiveness projects. Beattie money has enabled the appointment of between 120 and 140 key workers across Scotland. They come from different backgrounds including careers, social work, community education and youth work and therefore bring a variety of different skills to the job. The interviews with key informants identified a number of positive features with regard to the introduction of key

workers. These included the fact that key workers were a dedicated resource for individual young people and a named point of contact. They had small case loads and therefore they could give young people more attention than was possible previously. In Renfrewshire the Co-ordinator of the Inclusiveness project had asked partners whether they felt key workers were a beneficial resource and the reasons for this. Her response sums up well the perceptions of the key informants:

the fact that its holistic, they look at the individual and all their needs, em that they are flexible in their ability to respond, em that sometimes they are the missing bit of the jigsaw, you know they were able to take their clients so far but no further, for all they wanted to get a job or into learning or whatever but they could never find how to make that happen, the key worker has been the route in because the key worker can quickly identify if going straight into a job or whatever is an option and of course it is not...they've appreciated I think the multi-disciplinary background of the key workers...So that's been good, those are the main things.

Inclusion Project Co-ordinator, Renfrewshire

Key workers can clearly spend a significantly greater amount of time with vulnerable young people than has previously been the case. In Glasgow, one of the careers advisors was able to provide examples of young people who, without the intervention of the key worker would have “slipped through the net” because traditional careers advisors simply do not have the resources to provide such significant levels of input. Only two of the young people in the sample had access to a key worker yet despite this intervention neither of these young people had attained a “positive outcome” (defined by the Scottish Executive as a placement in employment, supported employment, training or further education). This is not to say that the young people had not made progress. Jamie for example, was now able to travel independently and had developed his personal skills during various placements with agencies such as Springboard Scotland and on outward-bound activities. However, he had stopped attending for appointments with his key worker and was missing meetings that she had set up for him. Therefore despite the extensive support that was available, Jamie was continuing to disengage with services (see chapter six for a more detailed discussion of Jamie’s case).

The fact that only two of the young people in the sample had been able to access a key worker highlights one of the problems with the key worker service that has been identified by key informants. Limited resources have meant that only certain groups of young people with additional support needs have been targeted. In Glasgow, the focus has been on young people with additional support needs living in SIP areas and young care leavers. A

similar situation was apparent in the Renfrewshire Inclusion Project while the Fife Inclusion Project for example, focused on the more traditional group of young people with learning disabilities leaving special schools. It would appear that in Glasgow and Renfrewshire, where this research was conducted, having a learning disability alone was not enough to access support from a key worker. Indeed in Renfrewshire tension was apparent on the strategy group between those who wanted to adopt a more traditional approach (young people with Special Educational Needs) and those who wanted to focus on a wider grouping of young people with additional support needs.

That has caused some I don't know about difficulties but tensions within the strategy group that oversee our project because the people from the various councils who represent, that are supportive of the strategy, it includes two principal psychologists, two principal educational psychologists and a special needs co-ordinator from the third council, so all steeped in the record of needs, special school or integrated in mainstream but record of needs type child...And that was who Beattie was originally focusing on and that's who they saw as who this was about but other reps from the strategy group come from economic planning within the councils and from em the SIP partnership type backgrounds, social inclusion partnership and of course their take on it is rather different. They see this as being about issues to do with disadvantage, economic exclusion, chaotic lifestyles and sometimes at some of the meetings you can see that neither side understands where the other side's coming from in the, you know, its just interesting I think. And I went round, when I first came to this I thought I can't get a handle on what's going on here and I went out to see, ticked them off one by one, just to say what way would you see our priorities being and that's when I realised what I half suspected that there was some gulf in understanding em between the various interests in the groups in our project. So I've had to kind of steer a line there ... I've been trying to just do a balancing act.

Inclusion Project Co-ordinator, Renfrewshire

Clearly the nature of the group being offered support is changing. As well as the traditional group of young people who were traditionally targeted by services, i.e. those with special educational needs, young people with a range of additional support needs are being targeted by the Scottish Executive. These include in particular young people who are leaving care and young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (see for example, Scottish Executive 2003d). This is further emphasised by the introduction of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004 and this has created tensions. Other difficulties with the key workers and inclusiveness projects include the fact that despite the intention to provide clarity around service availability and who should provide certain services, key workers have found themselves taking on responsibility that some would argue is beyond their remit. They have had to

deal with a variety of issues including homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, providing support to young people who have been arrested or in court and dealing with personal issues such as pregnancy. Their focus is on employability (see Black, 2002, Bynner, 2002; Tett, 2003 for a critique of the concept) and it would seem that their role might need to be more clearly defined. On the other hand it could be argued that in order to assist young people to become employable, these other issues must be dealt with first, therefore the boundaries are not well defined. This is an issue that has been recognised by the Scottish Executive.

These people have in a sense been working outside the box. They've been doing everything from arranging plumbers, picking them up from court, getting them out of jail, you name it, they've been doing everything...another aspect of mainstreaming is that the key worker role has to be clearly identified in that where help or support is required from another agency then that support should be used by that other agency, social work or health or whatever.

Representative, Scottish Executive Beattie Implementation Group

It seems then that the role of the key worker needs to be more clearly defined. This is particularly true given that resource implications mean that key workers will find certain things to be beyond their remit. In Renfrewshire, a backlog of young people waiting to be allocated a key worker already exists. Increasingly, careers advisors have been referring young people to the key worker service when they cannot find appropriate provision for them, however:

look, you can't refer them just because there's no opportunities for them and okay yes they might be kind of poor wee soul and all that but em, we can't sort that problem, its not our job to create more training places or more jobs...we may have to just push them back to you, em and okay these people could lose motivation quite quickly but I suppose its almost one of these kind of like a medicine analogy, that careers advisors obviously wanting these people to get support to prevent them becoming de-motivated but we can't do that, you know so em, we really I think have to wait till they're so de-motivated that they're rowed with their families and been made homeless or whatever, then we'll deal with them, which is not right.

Inclusiveness Project Co-ordinator, Renfrewshire

Scarce resources mean that key workers can only get involved with young people after their problems have become so serious that traditional services can no longer support them. Identifying those young people who are likely to be at risk from becoming de-motivated seems an eminently sensible idea, however resource implications mean that key workers presently cannot offer a preventative service, even if this is likely to save resources in the

longer term. Similarly the service is restricted to those who are post-school, which means that even if someone at fourteen is identified as being at risk, the key worker cannot get involved until after they have left school when their problems might be even more substantial. Overall, most service providers appeared to see the key worker as a positive development, although it is important to note that the impact of their services do not yet appear to have reached the ears of colleagues in areas such as social work. This suggests that further work is needed in relation to joined-up or partnership working. The service key workers provide is seen as a valuable one for those young people who are most at risk. However “hard targets” in terms of “positive outcomes” in relation to gaining an employment, further education or training placement may not be seen until much further down the line given the additional barriers that the young client group have to overcome before even reaching that stage (see also Scottish Executive, 2005b).

Developments stemming from the recommendations of the Beattie report such as the development of Inclusiveness projects and psychological services post-school are a response to the recognition that young people with additional support needs require increasing support as they make transitions. They have attempted to make the transitional process smoother by encouraging joint working and providing clarity about roles and responsibilities. They have reshaped roles to a certain extent, extending the group of young people who should receive support in some cases and extending the age of coverage in others. This section has explored perceptions about how successful these developments have been and has highlighted both positive and negative features. These developments are part of wider trends that have developed in relation to policy and practice. The remaining section in this chapter will look at these trends in more detail.

Key trends in policy and practice

Redefinition of group – move from learning disability to additional support needs

The initial focus of the Beattie committee was to look at the transitional experiences of young people with learning disabilities. Very quickly it was recognised that there was a much broader group of young people who needed support when making transitions. As well as young people with learning disabilities and other disabilities such as physical disabilities, visual and hearing impairment and mental health problems, this group also includes young people with emotional and behavioural problems, young people affected by drug and alcohol misuse, young carers, young care leavers and young people with

offending behaviour. This group can be classified as having additional support needs. This definition has been formalised by the Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004. The effect of the Act, which has been discussed in more detail in chapter two, will be to widely extend the group of young people who traditionally receive support.

At the time of the interviews with key informants, there was some uncertainty around the extent to which the Act would impact on their work. There was recognition of some of the problems attached to the Record of Needs and Future Needs system; however overall the views on whether the future needs process was a positive or negative process and whether or not this should be abolished were extremely mixed. The two quotes below illustrate this point.

I think future needs assessments work very well, we give future needs assessments to youngsters with a record of needs, we also give it to other youngsters who have special needs beyond a record of needs so it's working well. Em, it says in the Bill we [education department] will have a duty to co-ordinate support post-school, that means we would have to sit down almost in a future needs assessment meeting with social work and health who have no duty to be there and with careers, who have no duty to be there, we are the only ones with a duty to make post-school provision. Em how effective that can be without other people being forced to do it, I don't know. I mean can the systems say that a youngster should go to an FE college if the college aren't there to say that they'll take him.

Representative, East Renfrewshire Education Department

And a lot of the work traditionally that's been done in special needs lately has been pointless, pointless sitting through future needs assessments, endless, to no outcome because at the end of the day because where you actually need to the person to be available in that point of transition, you need a key worker to go with that young person as they leave school into what comes after and that's a much better use of our time, in my view than sitting through 101 FNAs which is a bureaucratic process at the end of the day. and we know because you sit there and they all go round the table and they all spout forth their views on wee Johnny and then they all turn and look at the careers advisor because they haven't the foggiest what will happen to them after they leave school and the careers advisor hasn't the foggiest either because they're not going to be leaving until maybe two years hence and who knows what they will be doing. So they do their professional best to say oh there's this and that, you know there's this course and that course and blah, blah, blah, but the reality is it's just a guess. Em whereas when they actually leave and that's when parents suddenly become...nobody wants to know but we're seen as the fall guys at that point because the schools and everybody else says well they've left now and they've moved on to the next lot of people and they turn to careers expecting careers to solve their problems when in actual fact we can't because the provisions not there.

Representative, Careers Scotland, Renfrewshire

These quotes not only illustrate the mixed feelings around the impact of the new Act but also highlight the confusion around who will have a duty to carry out assessments and identify and provide appropriate services. For example, although the duty will be on Education Departments to co-ordinate post-school provision, if young people fall into a community care category there is also a duty on Local Authority Social Work Departments to carry out an assessment of need (under guidance from the Scottish Office under section 5 (1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968). Local Authority Social Work departments also have a legal duty to provide suitable training and occupation for people with learning disabilities who are over school age (under the Mental Health (Scotland) Act, 1984) (see Mandelstam and Schwehr, 1995; Baillie et al, 2003 for a more detailed discussion of community care and the law).

The key informant interviews also identified an overall concern around resource issues as potentially the group of young people requiring support could be much larger as the following quote suggests:

you know [names primary school] they gave me an example of one of their classes round about primary four where all but four kids would have additional support needs because they identified dyslexia at an early time, because they had EAL pupils, English Additional Language, because they had a few ADHD's, they had somebody who was visually impaired and it built up.

Representative, East Renfrewshire Education Department

Key informants felt that the positive features of the Act were around recognition of the needs of a larger group of young people. Some suggested that the previous record of needs system meant that someone with emotional or behavioural difficulties (who was perhaps unlikely to have a record of needs) would have been unlikely to have their needs recognised (although this was not the result of the system per se but the way in which the legislation was interpreted). The new Act was also seen as an attempt to remove some of the unwanted bureaucracy that existed under the previous system, although some argued that it had the potential to create "a whole raft of bureaucracy that is not going to be of particular benefit to children and young people". Some service providers also felt that the Act had the potential to give too much power to parents with an overly heavy focus on mediation, dispute resolution and tribunals.

The key feature would appear to be a move away from a more targeted provision of services to a much more inclusive model that recognises the needs of a greater number of young people. While greater recognition of need should be welcomed, widening the net in this manner may result in those with less need getting a greater share of services. The impact of these changes in definition for young people with learning disabilities is not yet clear. However, the changes in policy and practice discussed above and the experiences of some of the young people in the sample might suggest that in order to access certain services having a learning disability is no longer enough, unless it is accompanied by a range of additional support needs. Young people with learning disabilities increasingly have to compete with a much larger group for resources and it is possible that this will affect the services they receive. There is some evidence from the interviews with Beattie key workers and the Inclusiveness projects that suggests that young people with learning disabilities can not always be a priority for key worker support. Scotland has tended to lag behind other European countries in terms of the qualifications attained by young people upon leaving school and also the number of young people moving on to Further Education, training and employment (see Scottish Executive, 2003a for a discussion of progress towards social justice targets). As a result, the focus of the Beattie Implementation Team at the Scottish Executive has increasingly moved to young care leavers, who have particularly poor outcomes in relation to education, employment and training and the NEET group (See Howison, 2003; Raffe 2003; Scottish Executive, 2005c for a more detailed discussion). However, it should be noted that many young people with learning disabilities may not be in education, employment and training; indeed this is reflected in the sample group where seven of the twenty young people were economically inactive. The result is that they are likely to be part of the NEET group by default.

Increased focus on inclusion and mainstreaming of services

As well as redefining the target group for services, recent developments in policy and practice have also resulted in an increased focus on inclusion and mainstreaming of services. The developments stemming from the Beattie recommendations such as the inclusiveness projects and the BRITE initiative (see chapter two) highlight the increased commitment to inclusion and a move towards more inclusive practices. However there was recognition among key informants that inclusion means different things to different people. The perceived challenge was to ensure that service providers and others were not simply paying lip service to the notion of inclusion but were being genuinely inclusive in their practices. According to one key informant from the Further Education sector, inclusion was not about simply allowing anyone on any course regardless of ability, rather

it was about offering appropriate provision based on the needs of the individual (see chapter three for a more detailed discussion of the concepts of social inclusion, exclusion and citizenship). In East Renfrewshire, parent support groups work with parents while their children are young to “educate them about what inclusion really means and the shape of the world ahead”. The aim is to change attitudes and get people thinking more broadly about what inclusion really means. It is about more than simply integrating young people with disabilities in mainstream schools as the following quote suggests:

just because we've got a high level of inclusion in schools doesn't mean we are fully integrating these young people or fully raising the awareness of other young people. Inclusion is only one kind of...do they get invited to parties...have they got friendships? Are they genuinely included? Does it extend out-with the school day...so it's looking at inclusion in a very broad sense, not just for the children with disabilities but about what it means to all children...?

Representative, East Renfrewshire Social Work Department

It would appear that professionals recognise that if inclusion is not to become a meaningless concept there has to be greater recognition of what it means among service professionals, parents and young people. The key point is that inclusion should be about more than simply including young people with learning disabilities (or other marginalised groups) within mainstream services. Indeed, the findings presented in chapter five and chapter six suggest that young people with learning disabilities often continue to be marginalised despite the greater opportunities afforded to them.

In response to this growing awareness of the concept of inclusion there has been an increased move towards mainstreaming by certain services. Careers services in Scotland have been completely restructured. What were previously careers service companies have merged to form a national organisation, Careers Scotland in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The focus of the organisation is on the economic success of the nation and it is now an all age guidance company (see Scottish Executive, 2005d for an evaluation of the All Age Guidance Projects). As well as providing careers guidance for young people the service is also available to adults. Prior to the restructuring there were a small number of special needs careers advisors who provided specialist careers advice to young people in special schools and young people with records of needs in mainstream schools. As part of the mainstreaming process, this role will change and these specialist advisors will now take on a much more strategic role that will involve planning services and providing training for mainstream advisors. This will enable

the mainstream advisors to provide a guidance service to all young people, whatever their needs might be.

Since the restructuring there has been a movement away from specialist provision within Careers Scotland and special needs careers advisors now have a new role. We are much more involved in training school advisors so they can advise anyone. It's quite a big change in thinking. It can be seen as a move towards total inclusion.

Special Need Careers Advisor, Renfrewshire

In terms of inclusion, this can be seen as a positive development. It would seem that young people might value having access to and using the same service as their peers thus reducing the perceived stigma of using specialist services, a concern for a number of the young participants in the current study (see chapter seven). However some of the young people in the study particularly valued the close relationship they had with their special needs careers advisor while at school. Mainstream advisors, who are likely to have larger caseloads, may not be able to invest the time needed to build up these relationships.

JobCentre Plus has also undergone a period of restructuring. The Employment Service and the Benefits Agency now come under the banner of JobCentre Plus and are able to provide guidance in relation to benefits and employment opportunities in one place. This is a logical development as the benefits system can be seen as a significant barrier for some people who may wish to return to work. As part of this restructuring there has been a move towards the local provision of disability services within a mainstream rather than specialist setting. Specialist disability services that were previously provided in rehabilitation centres are now provided locally and there has been a movement away from centralised functions to services being provided at a local level. Disability Employment Advisors are based in local Job Centres and there is recognition that not everyone with a disability will need access to specialist provision. However, it is important that the continuing need for specialist provision for some groups is recognised. It could be suggested that it about obtaining a balance between using mainstream services where possible, but having specialist services where appropriate. This is illustrated well by the following quote:

our policy is to mainstream as much as possible. I think that's the balance isn't it where you can mainstream it, to do that but it is very, very important that some things are specialist and we've always recognised that most disabled people do not need highly specialised help and some can lead to employers having a stereotypical view that everyone has problems and issues and all of that, yet the majority of people find jobs themselves, you know so we've always had that recognition, although we've always had specialist provision too...but with Job Centre Plus dealing with more and more people coming through with disabilities obviously there has been training there for all our staff so we've invested a lot more in training and interviewing for people who have a disability but they don't need specialist programmes they just need someone to interview them, a good discussion about the issues and how to approach them, a discussion of what the issues and a way to resolve them, its straight forward. So we've invested quite a lot in staff training.

Representative, Job Centre Plus

Reconfiguration of traditional day services

Again following this trend towards the mainstreaming of services is the reconfiguration of traditional social work day services. In Glasgow, there has been a move away from centre based services towards locality based services, with a focus on providing more opportunities within the community (Glasgow City Council, 2000). For young people there were three main aims; to make greater use of Further Education, to look at employment opportunities and to make greater use of mainstream leisure opportunities. This is a trend that has been reflected in other local authority areas across Scotland. This would seem to be a positive development and social work departments would argue that traditional day centre settings are not always the best option for young people leaving school. However, the alternatives have not always focused on further education, training and employment. In East Renfrewshire for example, a school leavers group was run "in the spirit of not assuming they would automatically leave school and go the day centre". Young people met outwith the day centre and did a range of activities. These were mainly leisure activities and there was no focus on employment or training. Additionally there was no exit plan for young people to leave the group and so it would appear that it took on the day centre role in a different setting. The group is now being run down and alternative sources of provision will be examined. Although this was a genuine attempt to move away from the traditional day centre model, it did not offer an imaginative or flexible alternative that might have assisted young people to move on to further education, training or employment.

The move away from the traditional day centre model does not appear to have been welcomed by everyone. One key informant from a social work background in Glasgow

suggested that for a lot of parents in particular the traditional day centre approach provided a respite function. This discussion also raises the crucial issue that some young people may perhaps need a long term alternative to employment and training. Indeed, the three models of transition developed in chapter five illustrate the difficulties that some young people have faced in terms of sustaining a position in paid employment, training or education. It is likely that these difficulties will be exacerbated for those young people with more severe disabilities. For these young people, the movement away from the traditional day centre is perhaps unhelpful. These issues have interesting parallels to the literature on the closure of long-stay hospitals in Britain (see for example, Cattermole et al 1990; Stalker and Hunter, 1999; Forrester Jones et al, 2002; Whoriskey, 2003). To summarise, these studies have suggested that people with learning disabilities returning to the community are likely to enjoy some benefits in terms of their quality of life although social inclusion is by no means guaranteed. Initially, the closure of long-stay hospitals focussed on a rehabilitation model with a series of progressions. Independent living was the end goal. More recently it has been accepted that this model is not suitable for everyone. Some people will require lifelong support (see for example, Petch et al, 2000). The evidence from the current study would suggest that the same is true in relation to further education, training and employment. It would appear then that the most important thing would be to provide both choice and flexibility coupled with an acknowledgement that long-term support may be a necessity:

I think there is an opinion when you talk to various people that everything about traditional day services is bad and everything out there is good. But it's not as straightforward as that. So what we're trying to do is say for some people traditional day services are fine...but everyone doesn't have to do that and they don't have to do it all the time, there are options, what we're trying to do is broaden it out a wee bit.

Representative, Renfrewshire Council Social Work Department

Services need to be flexible enough to provide a balanced approach, with mainstream services where appropriate with specialist provision for those whose needs make it essential or for those who prefer it. This does have resource implications, but these need to be worked through if the principles of inclusion are to be embraced. Alongside this move towards the mainstreaming of services is an increasing focus on employment and training. This is the final area to be discussed in this chapter.

Increasing focus on employability

Traditionally employment was not seen as a high priority for young people with learning disabilities. In particular social work services have not previously considered employment but have instead focused on their own provision.

I mean people start thinking right someone's coming to the end of their schooling, what can they do now in terms of further education or employment and that should be the first thing that people think of. And I don't think it always is you know or I think it gets dismissed quite early with some people.

Representative, Social Work Department, Glasgow

What we don't have within this authority at the moment is a clear I suppose within social work certainly, an employment kind of strategy, you know I'm not really sure that we comprehensively know what we should be doing around how we support people in the road to employment.

Representative, Social Work Department, Renfrewshire

There would appear to be a lack of understanding among certain service providers around how best to support people with disabilities into employment as the quotes above suggest yet, policy developments such as the Same As You? (Scottish Executive, 2000b) and the Equal Access strategy document, recently published in Glasgow (Glasgow City Council, 2003) have resulted in an increasing focus on employment options for people with learning disabilities. The report of the short life working group entitled Working for a Change? (Scottish Executive, 2003g) recommended the supported employment model as the best way to assist people with learning disabilities into the labour market (see chapter two). Likewise, the Equal Access strategy document recommended the use of the supported employment model, not only for people with learning disabilities but for other client groups who are furthest away from the labour market. The aim was to encourage people to move from benefits into the labour market, increasingly making use of mainstream employment services rather than specialist health and social work vocational services.

Both policy documents advocated supported employment as the best model to assist people with learning disabilities to move into the labour market despite the fact that there is not conclusive evidence in a British context that supported employment actually works (see chapter four for a detailed discussion of the pros and cons of supported employment). Those interviewed appear to regard supported employment as the panacea. The majority of people questioned believed that supported employment was one of the most appropriate

ways to assist young people with learning disabilities to move into the labour market. It was seen as particularly appropriate for those young people who were perceived to be particularly vulnerable with a wide range of needs.

You know if you're looking at opportunities for school leavers with learning difficulties or any young person who has got issues, be they learning difficulties or you know drugs or homelessness, you need to look at things like supported employment. Training has its place but some young people just want jobs.

Beattie Key Worker, Glasgow

One of the key issues for young people in the sample group was the difficulty they had in sustaining placements. Supported employment was seen as a way to overcome this difficulty by providing on-going support within the workplace. However, there was perceived to be a real lack of provision in both of the sample areas:

to be honest about it I think if there were more options there...and there really is a need for some kind of supported employment provision in terms of job coaching and things for a lot of these young people. There is actually a need for more provision like that.

Careers Advisor, Renfrewshire

In terms of supported employment projects in the sample areas, there are several examples. In Renfrewshire a supported employment pilot project got underway in 2003. Related to but not directly resulting from the Beattie recommendations, the Scottish Executive had additional money and invited seven Inclusiveness Projects including the Renfrewshire Inclusiveness project to devise a project which would use the supported employment model, to see if it could be used for clients who have additional chaotic lifestyles. Working in partnership with Enable, at the time of the research they had two supported employment workers, one was employed by Enable and the other by Careers Scotland. The group targeted by the project was very flexible and encompassed those with a learning disability of any kind where the young person had failed to achieve and there had been significant barriers (see Scottish Executive, 2005e for an evaluation of the supported employment pilot projects). In Glasgow the learning disability partnership (between health and social work) set up an employment team, Opus, which aimed to assist people with learning disabilities into employment. They also provided funding through Section 12 money to Enable to provide a supported employment service to assist young people with learning disabilities into the labour market.

There seemed to be no doubt among the service providers questioned that supported employment was the best way to support young people with learning disabilities into employment. However, at the time of the research, the Renfrewshire supported employment project had to revise its targets after the start up period took a great deal longer than anticipated. In Glasgow, the target for the Opus project was to get thirty people into employment in the first year. Again, the project took longer than anticipated to set up and at the end of the year only six people had moved into employment. None of the young people in the current study had participated in a supported employment project and so it not possible to gauge their views on the effectiveness of supported employment. For some respondents in the current study, supported employment was regarded as a panacea to assist young people with learning disabilities into employment. However it would appear that the complexity of supporting young people with learning disabilities into employment and the length of time this takes were not always appreciated when devising supported employment projects.

Discussion

As well as examining the views of the young people with learning disabilities and their significant others, this chapter has drawn on interviews with a range of key informants in order to identify key trends in relation to service provision for young people with learning disabilities making the transition from school to further education, training and employment. It has been possible to identify a number of key messages which should raise questions as to the future direction of policy for this group of young people.

It has become apparent from mapping the experiences of young people in the sample that there are several support services and training programmes available to assist young people upon leaving school although this can vary by locality as different local authority areas may have different priorities (as the example of the Inclusiveness Projects suggests). Although theoretically a wide range of services should result in greater choice for young people, in actual fact, the result has been confusion for young people and their parents with different service providers offering similar, often overlapping projects and programmes. In addition, despite the number of programmes available these often do not meet the needs of young people. The main difficulty would appear to be a misunderstanding about the nature of the programme and which client group the project is suitable for. The Get Ready for Work programme is a prime example of a service which, although introduced to create greater flexibility, is still not flexible enough to meet the needs of those furthest from the labour market. Indeed, there would appear to be a gap in provision for those young people

who need greater support. This raises questions about what the overall goal of services should be – are they about assisting young people with learning disabilities to find real, paid work or are they simply providing young people with experience in order to improve their employability?

Related to this confusion about the goal of services is confusion about who should be responsible for providing on-going support for young people. A key finding of the current study suggests that young people need ongoing, often intensive support if they are to sustain a placement. However, funding mechanisms and other resource pressures mean that most service providers regard this as being something that is beyond their remit. Until the situation is clarified and appropriate funding is made available to provide this ongoing support, young people with learning disabilities are likely to continue to fail to sustain placements.

The situation is likely to be exacerbated by some of the key policy trends identified towards the end of this chapter. In particular, the re-classification of the group of young people to receive support from “special educational needs” to “additional support needs” as a result of the introduction of the Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004, may stretch already scarce resources even further. Although it is too early to predict the impact of the new Act there is a possibility that young people with learning disabilities may find themselves at a disadvantage to other marginalised groups such as young care leavers.

The difficulty some young people in the current sample had in terms of sustaining placements raises broader questions as to the appropriateness of employment for all young people and of supported employment as the means to achieve this. Recent policy drives to encourage employment for disabled people have been influenced by the social model of disability and by the growing trend towards inclusion. Drawing on arguments developed in the literature around the closure of long-stay hospitals, this chapter has suggested there is a need to recognise that some people will need long term support and may never be able to sustain employment without this help. This is likely to be problematic given the nature of current support services, which lack the flexibility to support the most vulnerable groups. Addressing these questions will be crucial for the future development of appropriate services for young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from school to further education, training and employment and they will be discussed in greater detail in the final, concluding chapter of this thesis.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions and implications

The previous three chapters have presented the main findings of the research. Chapter six looked in detail at the lived experience of young people with learning disabilities making the transition from school to further education, training and employment. Chapter seven focused in more detail on the impact that being labelled as having a learning disability has had on young people's sense of identity, exploring the potential knock-on effect of this in terms of experiences. Chapter eight drew on in-depth interviews with a range of key informants to discuss the potential impact of policy changes on young peoples' transitional experiences.

Each of these chapters raised a number of interesting issues and highlighted areas for further research. It is the aim of this chapter to bring some of these issues together, highlighting particular areas of interest in relation to the research questions posed in chapter five. The chapter will begin by providing a critical discussion of the research process overall before looking in more detail at some of the key findings and policy implications. Finally, the chapter will suggest some potential areas that would benefit from further research.

Critical reflection on the research process

The research process adopted was outlined in some detail in chapter five and it was argued that qualitative methods, in particular, the use of in-depth, individual interviews were entirely appropriate, given the nature of the research. The research attempted to be constructivist in nature which is associated with the idea that:

Social life is the product of social interaction and the beliefs of actors, that the social world is not populated with things but by relationships and actions...emphasis [is] on micro-interactions as the source from which to gain information about the creation of social life...

(David and Sutton, 2004: 36)

Constructivists...tend towards the antifoundational...a refusal to adopt any permanent, unvarying (or "foundational") standards by which truth can be universally known...truth – and any agreement regarding what is valid knowledge – arises from the relationship between members of some stake-holding community..

(Guba and Lincoln, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:205)

One of the major aims of the research, as has been mentioned throughout, was to ensure that young people with learning disabilities were at the centre of the research. In order to do this, it has been attempted as far as possible to present the transitional experiences of young people with learning disabilities as perceived by them. The methods selected provided a reasonable mechanism for doing this. In-depth interviews with young people allowed the young people to talk about issues of salience to them. Although the interview schedule was semi-structured in nature, there was sufficient scope to allow young people to talk about issues of their choosing. During the analysis of data and the writing up of the research, attempts were made to construct the world as perceived by individuals as far as possible. Respondents were presented with the data they had generated and were offered the opportunity to add to or change aspects of this. In the event, none of the young people took up this offer, raising questions about the accessibility of the research process and power relationships within the process.

Upon reflection, the nature of the research participants and the methods adopted resulted in some challenges in terms of taking a constructivist approach and how far this was possible. Interviewing young people with learning disabilities two years after leaving school resulted in difficulties relating to factual recall. Attempts were made to overcome these difficulties by interviewing a range of significant others as identified by the young participants. This worked well when the accounts provided by significant others complemented those of the young person, allowing a detailed picture of the individual's social world to be constructed. Difficulties arose however, when the account presented by a significant other differed from that of the young person. This raised questions as to which account should given privilege. The decision was taken to present all accounts as equally valid, while at the same time maintaining the commitment to keep the young person at the centre of the research. Reflecting further, it seems likely that the adoption of more imaginative research techniques such as the use of photography may have assisted further in the process, allowing the researcher greater opportunity to tap into the experiential rather than the factual. The use of innovative research methods is discussed in greater detail below.

Efforts were made to ensure that the research process was as participatory as possible for the research participants and the research was conducted in partnership with a research advisor who himself had a learning disability. This helped to ensure that the perspective of people with learning disabilities was represented. Overall, working with the research advisor was a positive experience and the research generally benefited from his input. Of particular importance was his assistance in terms of designing and piloting the interview schedules in order to ensure they were relevant to the lives of people with learning

disabilities. He also proved to be invaluable in terms of identifying a range of sources likely to be interested in the research, thus assisting to disseminate the findings to relevant people and organisations. The researcher and research advisor attended a meeting of the Scottish Executive to present preliminary findings and this proved to be a helpful and worthwhile experience. Despite these attempts, it was acknowledged that greater efforts could have been made to include more young people with learning disabilities at various points throughout the research, particularly at the stages of planning and dissemination. Questions must also be raised as to how representative the research advisor was in relation to young people with learning disabilities more generally. These issues have been tackled in depth elsewhere in the literature (see for example Stalker, 1998, discussed in more detail in chapter five). Given his involvement in a range of committees and organisations, his experiences were not always typical, but given his lived experience as a person with a learning disability his experiences and contribution to the research were entirely valid. It would have been helpful to form an advisory group of young people with learning disabilities which would have brought with it a more diverse range of experiences, however, this brought its own logistical and resource implications as discussed below.

Involving a research advisor with a learning disability created some challenges that were not easy to overcome. For example, attempts to involve the research advisor in the analysis of the data in a way that was meaningful and not tokenistic took some thought. In the end, a method of regular meetings where the researcher discussed the emerging codes and themes with the research advisor in the context of recently completed interviews worked well and allowed the advisor to offer his own thoughts and opinions. This however, was a time consuming process. Further thought and development is needed if people with (learning) disabilities are to be meaningfully involved in all aspects of the research process. This must take into account the need to adopt more inclusive ways of working whilst at the same time acknowledging the necessary skills and expertise of the researcher.

The development of inclusive research methods

The development of inclusive research brings its own particular resource implications. As mentioned earlier in chapter five, the researcher worked in partnership with a Research Advisor. This decision was taken initially as a compromise when it became apparent that it would not be feasible to work with an advisory group of people with learning disabilities and their supporters. This was the case for a number of reasons, although principally the resource implications of setting up such a group. Although it was not possible for the

researcher, as a student, to overcome these resource implications, they do raise important issues for future research. For example, when involving people with (learning) disabilities in the research process, who should be responsible for providing the training that will be required? There are a number of options ranging from the organisation represented by the disabled person to the researcher or research team or the Higher Education Institution (HEI). HEI's, will have to bear the associated costs in mind when costing research proposals. In addition, HEI's will be required to provide a more welcoming and user-friendly environment than is currently the case. Developing more inclusive research and research processes is not only the responsibility of researchers and HEI's however. Funding bodies also need to consider the resource implications when awarding research grants. There have been moves from certain funding bodies such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Lottery Fund to specify that researchers must work in partnership with organisations of disabled people or other voluntary organisations. This must be accompanied however, by an associated increase in funding to recognise the resource implications that inclusive research brings.

The use of innovative research methods

Critically reflecting on the process as a whole, it becomes apparent that the relative inexperience of the researcher resulted in a reluctance to adopt more innovative research methods that may have been beneficial to the study (see for example Barker and Weller, 2003; Harris and Roberts, 2003; Wilson, 2003; Germain, 2004; Pawson et al, 2005 and Williams and Simons, 2005). For example, in an attempt to provide a longitudinal aspect to the study, young people were visited twice, once at the start of a six month period and again at the end of this time. In addition, young people were visited initially on an informal basis at the start of the research period to introduce the research, providing an opportunity for the young person to ask questions about the research and get to know the researcher. If research of a similar nature was to be conducted in future, it is likely that a broadly similar approach would be adopted. However, it would be helpful to provide young people with a means of recording significant events over the six month period that could then be used as a tool for discussion at the follow up interviews. Several studies have successfully used this method, adopting the use of video cameras, cameras and diaries (see for example, Riddell, et al, 2001; Wilson, 2003). The data captured by these means can then be used to trigger memories resulting in more fruitful follow up interviews. This may be particularly helpful when working with people with a learning disability, those with dementia or brain injuries where problems with recall may be more significant (see Cook, 2003). Although the follow up interviews in the current study generated some

useful data, this could possibly have been enhanced by the adoption of more innovative research methods. It must be recognised however, that these innovative methods have their own challenges. They require for example, the commitment of additional time and energy on behalf of the participants who will have to record significant events in their lives over a given period. In addition, there are the challenges posed by the use of technology during the research process – this may not only be complicated, but costly.

Impact of gate-keepers on participants recruited

The process of recruitment was outlined in some detail in chapter five. However, it is worth re-emphasising the impact that gate-keepers had on the type of young person recruited to take part in the study. The sample of young people was recruited with assistance from Careers Scotland who held a database of all young people in Scotland who had been diagnosed as having some form of special educational needs (now additional support needs). As a result of discussions taking place prior to the start of the research (between the researcher and research supervisors) it was agreed that the target sample would be young people with moderate learning difficulties. Given the variability in definitions between agencies and across different policy arenas (see Riddell and Banks, 2001) it was agreed that the operational definition used by Careers Scotland would be adopted. All of the young people on the database had been assessed by Psychological Services as having a Moderate Learning Disability. The eventual sample of young people recruited appeared to be at the milder end of the spectrum in terms of ability and communication. Although the young people had been classified as having a moderate learning disability, most had experience of both mainstream and specialist services and several did not regard themselves as having a disability. Often those who did see themselves as having a learning disability considered this to end when they left school (see chapter seven for a more detailed discussion). The nature and level of the young peoples' learning disability had an impact on both their experiences of transition and their identity as a (non)disabled person. As a result, the findings of the current research are very specific to young people with a moderate level of learning disability and could have been very different if the research had involved, for example, young people with more severe learning disabilities.

Comparison of two geographical areas

Working alongside Careers Scotland also led to the adoption of a comparative strategy whereby the experiences of young people in two local authority areas were to be

compared. This decision was taken as a result of suggestions by Careers Scotland staff who felt that such a comparison would yield interesting results. In the event, the experiences of young people in both areas appeared to be broadly similar (see chapter six for a more detailed discussion). The one exception was in relation to the post-school destinations of young people. In the Glasgow sample, the number of young people in the NEET category (Not in Education, Employment or Training) was double that of the Renfrewshire sample (see McGregor et al 2003 for a more detailed discussion of levels of Incapacity Benefit claimants in Glasgow). When reflecting upon this decision, it becomes clear that such a comparison would only have produced useful results with a much larger sample size and the collection of more detailed socio-economic data. Despite the socio-economic differences between the two areas (see chapter five), their close geographical proximity meant that in any event, many of the young people were recipients of very similar services (albeit with greater choice in Glasgow), making shared experiences even more likely.

Discussion of key findings

Bearing in mind the points raised above, the remainder of the chapter will return to address the research questions posed in chapter five before going on to explore the policy implications of these findings. The chapter is organised around some of the key themes and areas of interest that emerged during the course of the research. These areas of interest are discussed in relation to the particular research questions they addressed. It should be noted, however that the findings in relation to each of the research questions (posed) overlap somewhat and run throughout the remainder of the chapter. As stated in chapter five, the overall aim of the research was to highlight the experiences of young adults with learning disabilities as they made the transition from childhood to adulthood. This involved:

- *exploring in depth the experiences of young adults with learning disabilities as they made the transition from childhood to adulthood and*
- *identifying the range of outcomes experienced by school leavers identified as having special needs in Glasgow and Renfrewshire.*

The in-depth interviews with young people, their families and other significant people in their lives made it possible to build up an extremely detailed picture of the range of experiences and outcomes shared by the young people as they made the transition from school to further education, training or employment. Careful consideration of these

experiences made it possible to identify three models of transition that broadly reflected the young people's experiences.

Models of transition

Young people who took part in the research fitted into one of three models of transition – the logical transition, the chaotic transition and the disengaged transition. The models of transition are outlined and discussed in detail in chapter six. To summarise briefly, the logical transition represents a linear model whereby the young person makes a relatively straightforward transition from school onto a post-school destination of their choice (such as further education or training). This may represent an endpoint in itself or may be a step on the ladder towards a future goal. The key factor is that there has been some sign of progression. The chaotic transition on the other hand, has a much more unstable, fluctuating nature. Young people who fit into this model are likely to make a series of transitions in relatively quick succession (for example from one short term job to another). Young people within this group find it difficult to sustain placements. There is less of a sense of progression and young people in this category may be less likely to make progress in terms of hard targets such as attaining qualifications. Finally, those young people who fit into the disengaged model of transition are those young people who no longer aspire to the traditional “norms” of society such as attaining paid employment. It is likely that after a period of time within the chaotic model of transition, these young people have grown disillusioned. After a series of difficult or unsuccessful placements they may no longer be willing to engage with the support services available.

The experiences of the young people in the study led to the development of the models outlined above. These models can be supported by work carried out by Fergusson (2000), who developed three discourses of transition along complementary lines. Interestingly, Fergusson (2000) carried out his research with young people in the general population as opposed to young people with learning disabilities. This raises the question as to how different the transitional experiences of young people with learning disabilities are to those of young people in the general population.

Are young people with learning disabilities particularly disadvantaged?

The research also attempted to:

- *identify key themes from the literature about the transitional process for young adults with learning disabilities compared to the transitional process for other young adults and*
- *identify factors that have influenced the choices made by young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood.*

Although it was not possible to undertake a comparative study that contrasted the experiences of young people with learning disabilities with the experiences of a group of young people from the general population, it was felt that it was important to highlight the ways in which the experiences of young people with learning disabilities fitted or differed from those of young people in the general population. Reviewing the literature on youth transitions in the general population would suggest that the experiences of the young people in the current study are similar to those of other disadvantaged or marginalised groups (see for example Howison 2003; Raffe, 2003; Webster et al, 2004). The position of young people with learning disabilities making the transition from childhood to adulthood appears to have changed in recent years (see chapter four for a more detailed discussion of the literature). The impact of policy changes such as the reconfiguration of day services has meant that young people with learning disabilities (or other disabilities) are no longer automatically considered for a place at an adult resource centre. Instead young people are likely to have a greater range of options available to them in the fields of further education, training and employment. Indeed, the young people in the sample had a range of options available to them upon leaving school that were broadly similar to those available to young people in the general population (with the exception of Higher Education). This would suggest that they are in a better position than peers with learning disabilities may have been ten years earlier (where the reality would have been likely to be a transition from school to an adult resource centre). Some may even suggest that the young people who took part in the current study were in an advantageous position in that they could access support or services not always available to young people in the general population.

Yet, despite the increased choice of routes post-school and access to support services, young people with learning disabilities are more likely than young people in the general population to be part of the NEET group (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Indeed, seven of the twenty five young people in the current study were economically inactive. In addition, it must be remembered that these young people occupy a borderline position - although they have been classified as having a moderate learning disability, most have also accessed mainstream services. If the research had been conducted with a group

of young people with more severe learning disabilities the picture is likely to have been very different.

Barriers to transition – factors that influence the choices made by young people

The young people who took part in the study faced a range of barriers that affect all young people but appear to affect young people with learning disabilities in very specific ways. Drawing on interviews with young people and the significant others in their lives, it was possible to explore in depth the decision making process identifying factors that influenced or constrained young people's choices as they made transitions. For example, young people's choices were often restricted as a result of feeling unsafe in certain areas. This is a territorial issue that is common to all young people (see Skelton and Valentine, 1998). However, for the young people in the study, there was the additional barrier of bullying and stigma as a result of being labelled as having a learning disability (see chapter six and chapter seven for a more detailed discussion). Likewise, the unrealistic expectations of parents, employers and other professionals represented another barrier not often faced by young people in the general population. These expectations often stemmed from a lack of understanding about the nature of the learning disability. Chapter six showed the ways in which well meaning parents can often hold the young person back as a result of being over-protective or under-estimating their child's abilities (see also Pascall and Hendey, 2002, 2004). Finally, the benefits system can represent a particularly difficult barrier for young people with learning disabilities (and other disabilities) to overcome. In the current study, benefits such as Disability Living Allowance restricted the number of hours that young people could work. Some young people and their parents discussed a reluctance to work more than a small number of hours each week for fear of losing their benefits. However, being in receipt of benefits did not appear to dissuade many of the young people from looking for paid employment. This suggests that the young people valued employment for more than simply financial reasons.

The findings from this study suggest that young people with moderate learning disabilities experience transitions that are increasingly similar to those of young people in the general population. They have an increasing range of options open to them and the models of transition developed to aid understanding of how young people experience transitions are similar to those developed for young people in the general population. However, young people with learning disabilities are more likely to be economically inactive than young people in the general population and therefore occupy a similar position to other

disadvantaged groups of young people. In addition, young people with learning disabilities experience barriers to participation in a particular way. This raises the question as to whether increased participation in further education, training and employment results in increased social inclusion.

Are young people with learning disabilities enjoying greater social inclusion than previously?

The young people, their parents and other “significant others” who took part in the study acknowledged the many positive aspects that participating in further education, training and employment can bring (see chapter six). Young people benefited in terms of increased self-confidence, improved self-esteem and they enjoyed greater experience of the world of work. They valued their participation within mainstream college and employment settings for a variety of reasons including financial reward, control over daily activities, greater independence and improved prospects in terms of social activities.

However, the evidence from the research suggests that young people’s participation within these settings was by no means unproblematic. For young people in further education, although satisfaction was expressed in terms of “soft” targets achieved (such as increased self-confidence) young people and parents expressed some disappointment at what appeared to be a lack of emphasis on “hard” targets within development courses (such as qualifications). Young people and their families hoped that participation in further education might lead on to further study on mainstream courses or employment, but for many young people in the study this proved not to be the case and young people found themselves within the “revolving door” setting of continued participation in a variety of courses and training programmes (see Riddell et al, 2001; Watson et al; 2003).

For young people in employment, supported employment and work placements, the labour market often did not live up to their expectations. The type of work obtained by young people tended to be monotonous, routine tasks, in low-paid often unstable environments (see chapter six for a more detailed discussion). Although most of the young people in the study appeared able to find employment, sustaining that employment or making progress was difficult. Although young people claimed to value the social aspects of college or the workplace, in reality they were often excluded during lunch breaks or social events. Participation in mainstream settings therefore did not automatically result in social inclusion (although the term itself can be problematic and can mean different things to different people; see for example, Levitas, 2001, 2004). Although experiencing a situation

that has been greatly improved in recent years young people within the study continued to experience segregation and social isolation, even within mainstream settings. This finding is supported by previous research that has been carried out in the arenas of further education, lifelong learning and supported employment (see for example, Wehmen et al, 1995; Beyer, et al, 1996; Shearn et al, 2000; Riddell, et al, 2001; Watson, et al, 2003).

Is the concept of transition still a useful one?

An on-going debate within the sociological literature relates to the concept of transition and whether it is still a useful way to understand the experiences of young people. Most academic writing in the area agrees that although the concept continues to be useful it needs to be modified (see for example Wyn and White, 1997; Mitchell, 1999; EGRIS, 2001; Furlong et al, 2003; Valentine, 2003). The findings from this study would support that view. Based on the experiences of the young people the concept of transition can no longer be understood as something that has a beginning and end point. Rather the concept of transition must be regarded as a process. This study has shown that young people do not make an unproblematic transition to a particular destination. One of the key findings highlighted the difficulties that young people have in sustaining placements. The majority required on-going support if they were to maintain a placement. As a result, policies that promote services that are designed to withdraw after a set period are fundamentally flawed. These findings have clear policy implications. These will be discussed in the following section.

Policy implications

The research also looked in detail at:

- *the impact of policy and service changes on the lives of young adults with learning disabilities*

As mentioned throughout the course of the thesis, the research took place at a time of change for young people with learning disabilities, largely as the result of various developments including the publication of *The Same As You* (Scottish Executive, 2000), the recommendations of the Beattie Committee and the passing of the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004). The research drew on interviews with a range of key informants as well as discussions with young people and their significant others to explore the likely impact of these changes on the lives of young people. These findings are discussed in

greater detail in chapter eight. It was possible to identify a number of particular implications for policy makers and practitioners which will be discussed in the following section.

Who should be responsible for the provision of on-going support?

If it is accepted that the transition from school to further education, training or employment does not have an end point but is an on-going process, policy makers will need to rethink how they deliver services and provide the on-going support that is likely to be required. Current training and employment services such as Get Ready for Work, Training for Work, Work Step and Supported Employment are all time-limited. Many service providers interviewed for the current study regarded the provision of on-going support as being beyond their remit. In the majority of cases, funding for these services relies on staff meeting certain predefined targets. This usually involves moving a certain number of clients on to a “positive outcome” such as a paid job, a supported employment place, a training programme or college place. This can put pressure on staff to move clients on before they are ready and without the adequate support measures being put in place (see chapter eight for a more detailed discussion). This raises the dilemma of who should be responsible for providing on-going support. The hope is that natural support mechanisms can be developed within the workplace (indeed this is one of the key principles of the supported employment model – see for example, Schneider, 1998b; O’Brien et al, 2000; Wilson; 2003). However, these natural support mechanisms are not always forthcoming. Due to the associated financial implications, this dilemma is unlikely to be an easy one to resolve.

The introduction of the key worker as a result of the recommendations of the Beattie Committee (Scottish Executive, 1999) was regarded as a means of addressing this dilemma. Key workers are in an ideal position to provide support to young people with additional support needs on a longer term (although not indefinite) basis. However, the passing of the Additional Support for Learning Act into statute in 2004 is likely to have a knock-on effect on the ability of key workers to support certain groups of young people. The new definition of Additional Support Needs (ASN) incorporates a much broader range of children and young people than the previous category of Special Educational Needs (SEN). As well as young people with a range of disabilities, the new category includes young people with emotional and behavioural problems, young people affected by drug and alcohol misuse, young carers, young care leavers and young people with offending

behaviour. The effect of this is that stretched resources will become further over-stretched as a result of competing demands for services from a variety of equally deserving groups. Indeed, the impact of this can already be felt in both Glasgow and Renfrewshire where having a learning disability alone is not enough to guarantee a young person the services of a key worker.

The findings from this research clearly show that young people require on-going support that is flexible in nature if they are to make successful transitions. The provision of such support has proved to be problematic as a result of resource implications and the unwillingness of service providers to take responsibility. Although the introduction of key workers appeared to be the solution to these difficulties, young people with learning disabilities are now faced with a situation where they must compete with other groups of young people for scarce resources. In addition, there are ongoing discussions as to the remit of key workers. Increasingly heavy workloads for key workers have led for calls to re-emphasise their overarching role – i.e. to help young people to improve their employability. However, the diverse nature of their workload to date – for example accompanying young people to court, assisting with life skills – raise questions as to the value of policies that support such a narrow focus on employability.

Should employment be regarded as the panacea?

During the course of the research it has become increasingly apparent that employment is regarded as a panacea. This view exists at all levels – amongst policy makers, service providers, disability activists and people with learning disabilities. The review of current policy in chapter two shows clearly a move towards a view of employment as an achievable goal for everyone. Supported employment is regarded as the best vehicle for assisting people with learning disabilities into paid employment. This is reflected in strategy documents such as the report of the short life working group on employment for people with learning disabilities (Scottish Executive 2003g) and the Equal Access Strategy Document published by Glasgow City Council in 2003. Both of these documents advocate supported employment. The short life working group recommended the setting up of a national centre for supported employment, while the Equal Access Teams, currently being set up in Glasgow, will use a supported employment model. Yet supported employment does not yet appear to be widely available. None of the young people who took part in the current research project had participated in a supported employment scheme. In addition, previous research suggests that supported employment is not necessarily always successful

in terms of assisting people with learning disabilities into employment (see chapter four where the literature on supported employment is reviewed).

Policies that focus narrowly on improving young people's employability may be setting young people up to fail. By focusing on improving employability, the onus is on the young person to develop new skills and adapt their behaviour. There is no onus on the employer to change working practices or structures within the workplace (see Corden et al 2003; Stafford et al, 2003 for a similar discussion in relation to the New Deal Programme). Indeed, the principle of a "real job", which underpins the philosophy of supported employment would argue against adapting a job to suit the needs of disabled people, advocating instead the provision of on-going, flexible support to enable the disabled person to carry out the "real job" (see Wilson, 2003). By focusing narrowly on employability the wider social and personal issues which often make it difficult for young people to sustain employment are not being addressed. For the majority of young people in the current study finding a job or a training place or place at college was not difficult, yet sustaining that placement proved to be too much. Clearly the support mechanisms currently available are not adequate and there is a need for more flexible, on-going support for young people as discussed above. Yet perhaps for some young people, employment should not be considered the panacea at all.

This is likely to be a controversial view given the direction of recent policy which to some extent has been influenced by the powerful arguments put forward by proponents of the social model of disability (see chapter three). Yet for some of the young people who took part in the research it became clear that despite several years of trying, employment was not an achievable goal. Some of the young people who took part in the research became disaffected after a series of unsuccessful or difficult placements. These young people felt disappointed in the services they received, which appeared to have little meaning to them or their lives. Such experiences can have a very negative impact on an individual's sense of self and identity. It is worth noting that if this is the case for young people at the milder end of the spectrum, the situation is likely to be further exacerbated for those with more severe or profound disabilities. Although strategy documents promoting employment for people with disabilities are extremely helpful and empowering for some individuals, they are misguided and misleading for others.

Service providers therefore need to question the objectives, goals and roles of their services. Is an intervention worthwhile if it assists a young person into an employment situation where they are likely to continue to be marginalised both financially and socially,

as discussed earlier in the chapter? A more meaningful intervention might offer young people with learning disabilities support to make choices and empower them to act upon these choices. Linked to the discussion around mainstream and special education in chapter seven, there are no straightforward solutions. Mainstream education is not necessarily the most effective form of education for everyone. For example, within the current study, some of the young people questioned felt more socially included within MLD schools. Similarly, although traditional day centres are no longer regarded as an appropriate post-school option for the majority of young people with learning disabilities, there was evidence in the current study of young people being marginalised within mainstream college and employment settings. Ultimately value must be given to the range of activities and options available to young people with learning disabilities rather than promoting an unrealistic or unattainable goal of employment.

How can we understand and give value to the transitional experiences of young people with learning disabilities?

As discussed in chapter three, proponents of the social model of disability, in its most extreme form would argue that disability would not exist if it were not for the structural barriers created by society. This view has influenced a range of policy developments which suggest that anyone can get a job if adequate support is available. The experiences of some of the young people who participated in the current study suggest that this is not always the case. This has resulted in the creation of a legacy of unrealistic expectations. Traditional theories of citizenship and social justice have exacerbated the pressure to aspire to paid employment by undervaluing alternative roles and ways of participating in society (see chapter three for a more detailed discussion). They re-emphasise the view that those people who are unable to sustain paid employment (or training and further education), even with support, have failed and should be less valued than others in society. What is needed is a concept that values the different roles and activities undertaken by disabled people within society. Writers from the disability studies tradition (see Sapey, 2000; Williams 2001; Harris 2002; Watson et al, 2004) have drawn on feminist theories of citizenship to call for renewed concepts of independence and interdependence. The experiences of the young people who took part in the study suggest that independence should not only be understood as the ability to sustain a place at college or on a training course or the ability to hold down a paid job. Instead independence should be about having the support to make choices about one's own life and to pursue these choices without encountering disabling barriers. Independence is likely to take different forms for young people who fit into the three different models of transition. Young people who fit into the logical model of

transition might need some initial support from a careers advisor or key worker as they establish themselves on the road to paid employment. Beyond this they might need further support from colleagues or employers to maintain that placement. At a later stage as they continue to establish their independence they might need support from other professionals such as social workers or housing officers as they explore, for example potential housing options. Young people who fit into the disengaged model are likely to need more intensive support over a longer period of time in order to assist them in sustaining placements. Given the chaotic nature of transition experienced by this group of young people, they are likely to require someone to act in a co-ordinating role to ensure they access the support services they need to enjoy optimum levels of independence. For young people who experience the disengaged model of transition, on the other hand, independence might look rather different. Currently a shared experience of this group of young people is isolation. They have chosen to disengage from services which they do not regard as helpful or relevant to them. It is necessary therefore for support services such as social work to consider alternative ways to promote independence for this group of young people. This should involve maximising income to ensure that young people in this group are not financially excluded as well as promoting contact with other young people in similar situations. This involves recognising the continued relevance of services such as adult resource centres and other leisure activities for certain groups of young people.

Discussion

Ultimately this research may have raised more questions than it has answered. Overall, the picture for young adults with learning disabilities making the transition from school to further education, training or employment is mixed. They clearly have more options than their peers did ten years previously. It is not unrealistic for young people with learning disabilities to expect to leave school and go on to a placement in further education, training or employment. In addition the young people who took part in this research project were able to experience mainstream services to a greater extent than would have been the case previously, as a result of a move towards providing mainstream services wherever appropriate. The development of three models of transition – the logical, chaotic and disengaged models – has shown that the experiences of young people with learning disabilities are increasingly similar to those of young people in the general population. However, in line with previous research this study has found that the concept of transition can no longer be understood as something that has an end-point. Rather it must be understood as an on-going process - young people with learning disabilities require on-

going support if they are going to be able to sustain their transition to their chosen destination.

Although young people with learning disabilities' experiences of transition are increasingly similar to those of young people in the general population they face a range of barriers that are specific to them. In addition they remain in a marginalised position, similar to that of other groups of disadvantaged young people. They are more likely to be over-represented in the group of young people who are not in education, employment or training. In addition, those who do manage to attain employment find it does not necessarily lead to greater social inclusion. This study suggests that the type of job occupied by a young person with a learning disability is likely to be routine, manual work with poor pay and little chance of progression or promotion. Likewise, for those in further education there was very little opportunity to progress from a specialist onto a mainstream course. In addition the research found evidence of only superficial social contact with peers within the workplace or college setting, backing up the findings of previous research.

This research has also highlighted the type of support and services required by young people with moderate learning disabilities if they are to make a "successful" transition into further education, training or employment. Support must be flexible, tailored to the needs of the individual and on-going. Who should provide this support is a difficult question to answer. However, the experiences of the young people who took part in the current study suggest that services such as Get Ready For Work and the Beattie Key Worker service have not always been successful in helping young people attain the sustainability that has proved so illusive. Very little research has yet been carried out into the success of these relatively new support services and further research is required. In addition, there is a need for more longitudinal research that explores the experiences of young people five or ten years after leaving school (as opposed to the two years that was the criteria for the current study). This would allow greater exploration of how young adults with moderate learning disabilities fare when the traditional supports available for school leavers are no longer available.

Perhaps most controversially, the research questioned current policy, which regards employment for all people with disabilities as the panacea. The study highlighted the support needs of young people who fitted into three models of transition, all of which require very different policy responses. Those young people who fitted into the disengaged model of transition had been unable to sustain employment even with (in some cases) very intensive support, with damaging consequences for their self esteem and

identity. This suggests that policies that promote a vision of everyone being the same are misguided. Instead greater effort should be made to promote valued alternatives to employment for those people for whom employment may not be the best option.

The argument is not that employment be abandoned as a goal for people with learning disabilities. There is a need however for realism. As this research has shown, many people with moderate learning disabilities can attain employment and would be able to sustain this with adequate long-term, intensive and flexible support. Yet, even those within the mainstream settings of the workplace or the further education college continue to experience marginalisation raising questions as to the extent to which they are experiencing greater social inclusion. It might be argued that even low paid, mundane work is better than no employment at all and it is reasonable to assume that someone who is economically inactive and in receipt of benefits cannot be socially included. Much depends however, on how social inclusion and its opposite social exclusion are viewed. Levitas (2004) provides a helpful account of the different ways in which social exclusion and inclusion can be viewed. Of particular relevance in present day Britain is the social integrationist discourse which focuses on paid employment as the route out of social exclusion. This can be problematic as it downplays the problems of in-work poverty, low wages, poor conditions and insecurity. The redistributive discourse however, is more helpful, focussing as it does on extending citizenship rights, reducing inequality and redistribution of wealth as the route out of social exclusion. This would suggest that we place value on the differing roles people play in society rather than focusing solely on paid employment. This would suggest that spending time in a day centre with friends and peers should be valued equally alongside paid employment.

Levitas (2001) suggests that the way forward is to use a utopian method to think about where we want to be and how we might get there. She draws on the work of Gorz (1999) who argued for a basic income for everyone in order that we might abandon the work ethic altogether. This would not necessarily be desirable or realistic as for many disabled people employment is a valuable goal, attainable with the right support. The work ethic is such a deeply rooted principle within contemporary society that it is even apparent in alternative models of support for those for whom employment is not currently a realistic model. One such alternative may be the clubhouse model favoured by some in the mental health field or the sheltered workshop, most common in North America (see for example Di Masso et al, 2001; O'Flynn and Craig, 2001). The ultimate goal of the clubhouse is some form of employment. Even for those for whom employment is not a possibility, activities are structured around the "work-ordered day". The deep rooted work ethic was also apparent

in the current study in the attempts of those who were economically inactive to impose some kind of structure onto their daily lives.

Ultimately, only a small number of young people who took part in the current research project fell into the disengaged category where employment no longer seemed to be a viable option. Further research is required however, with young people with more severe levels of learning disabilities. If young people with such disabilities had taken part the picture may have been very different. It is likely that the need for more imaginative support services and alternatives to employment would have been all the more pressing. Perhaps the most helpful way to understand the experiences of these young people and others for who work is not an appropriate option is to adopt a feminist ethic of care outlined in greater detail in chapter three. This ethic of care would suggest the need to accept the value of caring, parenting, civic, social and political engagement that disabled (and other disadvantaged groups) undertake while challenging the perception that it is only through paid work that individuals can fulfil their citizenship duties (Rummery, 2006). This is helpful as it brings value to the unpaid yet essential tasks carried out within the family and the community, introducing the concept of interdependence. Another valued alternative to employment might be volunteering. Traditionally volunteering has been regarded as a stepping stone to employment, allowing potential employees to gain valuable experience while looking for paid work. Volunteering can offer wider benefits however. Drawing on a social capital perspective which acknowledges other ways of participating in the community, volunteering can be viewed as a useful means of generating social contacts and friendships and bringing opportunities to make a social contribution and challenge some of the negative stereotypes of disabled people as passive recipients of care. Corden and Ellis (2004) suggest this is something that has not yet been fully explored in Britain. Drawing on the principle of reciprocity it is clear to see the ways in which volunteering might allow people with disabilities to fulfil their citizenship duties or responsibilities by contributing something to the community. In return, as mentioned above volunteers are able to build social networks and gain valuable experience thus developing their human and social capital. Other ways in which (young) people with (learning) disabilities might be enabled to participate within their communities as active citizens relate to parallel developments in the fields of social work and community care. The introduction of Direct Payments as a result of the 1996 Community Care (Direct Payments) Act (see Pearson et al, 2006 for a more detailed discussion) allowed disabled people to purchase their own services using Local Authority funding. Rummery (2006) builds a powerful argument to suggest that direct payments should enable disabled people to be treated as full citizens:

In campaigning for direct payments, disabled people are campaigning for the right to undertake their citizenship duties – not only to “share in the full social heritage and to live the civilised life according to the standards prevailing in society” but also to “live the life of a good citizen, giving such services as can promote the welfare of the community”

Likewise the introduction of individualised budgets (in England and Wales) and personalised budgets (in Scotland) (see *Changing Lives*, Scottish Executive 2006 for more details) have been particularly significant for people with learning disabilities. In a similar way to Direct Payments, these new budgets offer service users the freedom, choice and control to tailor-make packages of support best suited to their needs. Again, this may assist in shifting perceptions of disabled people as passive recipients of care, giving them the right to be treated as equal citizens.

It would appear that what is needed therefore is not an abandonment of the concept of work and the work ethic but a change in the way it is viewed and ultimately valued in society. Until there is an acknowledgement that employment is not necessarily the best option for all disabled people and resources are made available to develop valued alternatives, policy makers and service providers will continue to fail a significant number of disabled people.

Priorities for future research and development

As mentioned above, the situation for young people with more severe or profound learning disabilities in relation to the transition to further education, training or employment is likely to be very different to that of the young people who took part in the current study. Further research, using inclusive research techniques is required to explore the experiences of this group of young people. In addition, this research attempted to introduce a longitudinal element by tracking young people for a period of six months in order to highlight changes or developments in their lives. It would be extremely valuable to conduct longer term research which followed a group of young people with moderate learning disabilities to explore what happens after the initial two year period upon leaving school where the traditional transitional support services such as Careers Scotland do not play such an active role. For example, for those young people who do make it into the workplace, how likely are they to sustain that placement and if they do, how likely are they to gain promotion, join trade unions or other societies and integrate socially with colleagues within the workplace. Finally, further research is required to look at the other key markers of the transition from childhood to adulthood, namely the transition to

independent living and the transition from the family of origin to the family of choice. Relatively little research focusing specifically on young people with learning disabilities has been conducted, particularly in relation to the latter.

Overall, this research has contributed to knowledge in several ways. It has provided a detailed picture of the experiences of young adults with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. Throughout the process, the research has been committed to being as inclusive as possible and young people were kept at the centre of the research and given control of the process at certain points, for example by being asked to nominate “significant others” for the researcher to speak to and by being given the opportunity to comment on earlier interview transcripts. Few studies previously were available which have provided a platform for the voices of a vulnerable group, too often silenced to be heard. Obviously much was learned during the course of the research about the extent to which truly inclusive research is possible and a critical reflection of the process suggested that new, innovative research methods could be used in future to further enhance the experience of participation in research for young people with learning disabilities while at the same time acknowledging the expert role that researchers bring to the process. The research developed three models of transition which illustrate well the experiences of young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from further education, training and employment. These models highlighted the need for different responses from policy makers and service providers for each group. In addition, the findings challenged the assumption that employment was the best option for all young adults with learning disabilities. The research showed that all too often it has resulted in increased marginalisation and social exclusion for this group of young people, who found it difficult to sustain placements without adequate support. The research highlighted the need for policy makers to consider valued alternatives for those young people for whom employment was not a realistic option.

Appendices

Appendix A: Example of Information Pack given to young people prior to them giving consent

Letter of invitation

Dear

My name is Gillian and I am a PhD student at Glasgow University. To do my PhD I have to work on a research project. I am writing to you because I would like to ask you for your help with this.

Along with this letter you will find an information sheet which tells you much more about the project. It also tells you what you would have to do if you agree to help. Please look at it carefully before you decide whether to take part.

You have been chosen to take part in the project because you may have needed extra support with learning while you were at school and also because you had advice from a careers advisor in the past. Your name was picked out at random and a careers advisor from Careers Scotland helped me with this.

If you would like to help me with the project you do not have to do anything just now because I will get in touch with you in about a weeks time.

If you do not want to take part, please phone [Careers Advisor] from Careers Scotland on [Telephone Number] or fill in the enclosed sheet and send it back to her in the envelope provided. You must do this within one week.

I hope you will agree to take part in the project and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Thanks and best wishes

Gillian MacIntyre

INFORMATION FOR YOU TO KEEP

What is the project about?

The aim of the project is to find out more about what has happened to young people who need support with learning since they have left school.

I want to find out what young people have been doing since they left school and hear all about their experiences and what they hope to do next.

The project is important because it will help me to find out about the good things that are happening to young people as well as what services need to do to improve things in the future.

What would I have to do?

I would like to meet you and ask you some questions about what you have been doing since you left school and why you made the choices you did. I am especially interested in your experiences of college, training or getting a job. This will take about forty-five minutes but you can have a break if you wanted to.

I would then like to come back and see you in six months time to find out what has been happening to you during that time.

You will not have to answer any questions that you do not want to and all the answers that you give me will be kept safe and private. If you change your mind you can stop taking part at any time. Any services you receive will not be affected by your decision.

I would also like to speak to people who have been involved in your life recently – maybe your lecturer at college or your boss or your parents or carers – if you do not want me to speak to them then that is okay. You can let me know after we meet for the first time.

If you have any questions about the project you can phone me or write to me:

Gillian MacIntyre

Nuffield Centre for Community Care Studies
University of Glasgow
Gregory Building
Lilybank Gardens
Glasgow
G12 8QQ

0141-330-3291

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN

**Study of opportunities for young people
who need support with learning after leaving school**

My name is

I have read the information sheet. I understand it and have my own copy.

I have been able to talk to the researcher and to ask her questions about it.

I understand that I can stop taking part in the study at any time. I understand that I do not have to give a reason for this and that any services or support I receive will not be affected.

I understand that the information collected for this study will be kept safe and private and that my name will not be used in any writing about it.

I agree to take part in this study.

Signature.....

Date.....

I confirm that this person has been given information about this study and has understood as far as possible what was expected and that they have freely given their consent.

Witnessed by:

Name (please print)

Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix C: Characteristics of research participants

Name	Age	Area	School Attended	First post-school destination	Destination at time of last interview	Number of moves since leaving school	Model of transition that best applies	Living arrangements	Benefits received
Nadia	20	Glasgow	MLD School	Further Education (Development course)	No structured daily activity although about to return to FE College after a period of ill health	3	Chaotic	Lives at home with parents and extended family including several younger brothers and sisters	Disability Living Allowance with Severe Disablement Allowance
Craig	21	Glasgow	MLD School	Further Education (Development course)	Currently in paid employment after securing permanent post after a period on work placement with the company as part of a training course	3	Logical	Lives at home with parents. Has older siblings that he is close to who have encouraged his career choices	None
Peter	21	Glasgow	MLD School	Employment	No structured daily activity although still keen to find work or perhaps undertake a college course. Has had several paid jobs but has been unable to sustain these for long periods	4	Chaotic	Lives alone in a council flat. Considering giving this up to move in with his mum. Had a fairly chaotic time while growing up. Mother was abused by father who is an alcoholic. Has two sisters	Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit
Imran	20	Glasgow	MLD School	Further Education (Development course)	No structured daily activity. Has become disillusioned with the process after several training placements broke down. Perhaps stems from a lack of	3	Disengaged	Lives with his parents and several brothers and sisters as well as extended family members. Would like to get married soon as several of his younger	Job Seekers Allowance

					understanding as to the nature of services. Currently has no input from service providers					siblings and cousins are in the process of getting married	
Patrick	19	Glasgow	Mainstream School	Further Education (Mainstream course)	Recently managed to secure paid employment after a long period on placement with a company as part of a Training for Work programme	4		Logical	Lives with his parents and younger sister. Has a very close relationship with his family. Has become more independent recently after passing his driving test and purchasing his own car	Disabled Tax Credit	
Adam	20	Glasgow	MLD School	Training	Recently secured paid employment in a local supermarket with assistance from a Disability Employment Advisor at the local Job Centre. Has difficulty in sustaining placements and has had many periods in and out of work	8 (approx)		Chaotic	Lives with his mum, older sister and younger brother.	None at present although previously on Job Seekers Allowance	
Simon	19	Glasgow	Mainstream School	Further Education (Mainstream)	Currently has no structured daily activity. Does not appear to be actively seeking employment although he has spoken about going back to college in the next academic year. Has attended	3		Disengaged	Lives at home with his mum and her boyfriend. Dad lives close by with his sister and he has regular contact with both of them. Has diabetes and has been hospitalised on more than one occasion recently as a result	Job Seekers Allowance	

					he has had several jobs but has been unable to sustain any of these on a long term basis. Not currently looking for work or wishing to return to work. No input from services at the moment				he sees on a regular basis. Also keeps in contact with his mother, who has an alcohol dependency problem.	
Joanne	18	Renfrewshire	Mainstream	Further Education (development course)	Training Course. She is about to leave this course and her careers advisor is trying to assist her find some kind of supported employment with the voluntary agency Remploy. She is not thought to be capable of open employment yet.	3	Logical	Lives with parents and older sister. Gets on well with her family	Incapacity Benefit	
Sam	18	Renfrewshire	Mainstream	Further Education (development course)	Training Course. Currently on the Get Ready For Work Training Programme. This is his second time on the course. He returned after a period in employment. He was unable to sustain this placement	4	Chaotic	Lives with his mother and younger brother. His father lives in England although he does have regular contact with him. Has been seeing his girlfriend for over a year and they are thinking about getting engaged.	None	
Ben	19	Renfrewshire	Mainstream	Further Education (development)	No structured daily activity. After completing his	2	Disengaged	He lives at home with his dad and younger sister. His mum passed	Incapacity Benefit	

					college course he has not had any further activities. He has not tried to find a job or expressed an interest in undertaking further study or training. He is not currently in contact with any services				away when he was younger	
Ali	20	Renfrewshire	MLD School	Further Education (development course)	About to finish a mainstream college course and is now looking for a further course of study (which is looking unlikely) or some kind of training or employment opportunity.	4	Chaotic	Lives with his parents, older sister and younger brother. His young brother is profoundly disabled. He has a fairly good relationship with his mum and dad, although his dad is very keen for him to find work and this has created some tension at home	None	
Mandy	21	Renfrewshire	MLD School	Further Education (development course)	Currently in paid employment in the catering sector. She managed to obtain this job after a work placement there as part of a training course	3	Logical	Lives with her parents. Has a good relationship with them although her mother can be very protective of her. Has no brothers or sisters	Disabled Tax Credit	
Jamie	20	Renfrewshire	Mainstream	Employment	Currently has no structured daily activity after many periods in and out of paid employment. Was previously in receipt of the services	6 (approx)	Disengaged	Lives with his parents and younger brother. Gets on very well with his parents and is particularly close to his dad. Had difficulties with his parents in the	Incapacity Benefit	

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Appendix D: Interview Schedule 1 (for interviews with young people)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Note – this schedule is for guidance only. It is important to explore issues of relevance to the young person

**Section One
Current situation**

What do you do now?

Talk me through a typical day?

How did you come to be in your current situation?

(Note – I am hoping to tease out how any previous placement helped young person to current situation, is it a direct result of their previous situation (i.e. did they get a job as a result of a training course or college course?)

Why did you choose to come to college/ training/ work?

Did anyone help you decide?

(I am trying to find out here whether anyone influenced decisions)

Did you get any help or preparation to come here?

(Who was involved? Who gave advice/ assisted/ influenced choices?)

Do you enjoy college/ work/ training?

Is it what you expected?

Is there anything you would change?

What would you like to be doing in one year's time?

What are your hopes for the future?

**Section Two
Schooling**

I would like you to try and think back now to when you were still at school

What school did you go to?

Did you enjoy school?

Can you remember how many years ago you left school?

What did you want to do when you left school?

Did your school do anything to help you before you left?

(Likely to say no so use this prompt: Did you have to attend any meetings? Who was there?)

Did you find this useful?

Post-school placement:

(Note – will have to be flexible here, depending upon how many placements young person has had prior to leaving school and their current placement. If their current placement is their first miss this section out. If not repeat for every placement they have had)

What did you do after you left school?

Why did you decide to do this?

Who helped you decide?
(Who helped/ influenced this decision? Who was involved in the process (e.g. parents, careers advisor, friends, teacher)

Talk me through a typical day?

Was it what you expected?

Did you enjoy it?

Why did you leave?

What did you want to do next?

Did you get any help to prepare for your next move?
(Did you attend meetings/ courses? Did you have a meeting? Speak to anyone? Who helped?)

Section Four
Employment situation

Have you ever had any kind of job – either voluntary or paid, part time or full time?
If yes, can you tell me more about it?

If no, is this something you would like in the future?

What kind of job would you like?

Did you do work experience at school or college?

Where did you do it?

Section Five
Housing situation

Where do you live?

Who do you live with?

Are you happy with this situation?

(Note - try to find out whether living arrangements are influenced in any way by employment/ training or education. Prompts: Who has helped or influenced your living situation? Who or what has hindered your living situation?)

Where would you like to be living in one year's time?

(if still living with parents ask)

Would you like a home of your own one day?

Section Six Relationships/ friendships/ social life
--

How well do you get on with your parents?

What do you feel are the reasons for this?

What do you like to do when you are not working? How do you relax?

Do you have close friends that you see on a regular basis?

Did you meet them through college/ training/ work?

Will you keep in touch when you leave?

Have you kept in touch with any of your friends from school?

(if yes, what do they do now? If no, why do you think that is?)

Do you have a relationship/ boyfriend/girlfriend?

(If yes, what are your plans for the future? If no, would you like one in future?)

Would you like to get married or have children?

(Note – try to find out whether this is this influenced in any way by current job/ education/ training? Did anything/ anyone else influence this decision?)

Appendix E: Interview Schedule 2 (for interviews with young people)

FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Section one

Begin by asking the young person how they are and discuss something light such as holiday plans as an ice-breaker

**Section two
Current situation**

Ask the young person what they are doing at the moment. Try to find out as much as possible about the current situation and whether this meets with their expectations

What are you doing with yourself at the moment?

How did this happen/ come about?

Whose idea was it?

Who was involved?

Are you happy with your current situation?

Is it what you expected to be doing?

Is there anything you would like to change about it?

What do you plan to do next?

**Section Three
Other jobs/ placements/ courses you have been on in the last six months**

Begin this section by reminding the young person about what they were doing the last time I saw them. Then ask them to talk me through each different job, placement or college course they have done since then. Begin with the thing they did prior to seeing me and work forward to the present situation.

For each situation ask:

How did this happen/ come about?

Whose idea was it?

Who was involved?

Did you enjoy it?

Why did you leave?

What did you do next?

Section Four

Anything else that has happened to you in the last six months

This section will explore anything significant that has occurred in relation to the young person’s personal life, family life or living arrangements in the past six months. If there were any ongoing issues in these areas explore these first.

Possible prompts

Are you still living at home/ in your own home?

Are you still happy/ unhappy there?

Are you still getting on well with/ not getting on with your family?

Are you still seeing your girlfriend/ boyfriend?

How is your best friend?

Has anything interesting or exciting happened to you that you would like to tell me about?

Section Five

Future expectations

What would you like to do next?

What do you think you will be doing in a year’s time?

If you had to give one piece of advice to someone in the same situation as you, what do you think it would be?

Is there any other help or support that you would have wanted?

Is there anything that would have made things easier for you?

Appendix F: Interview Schedule 3 (For Interviews with Significant Others)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

PARENTS

Section One – About You

The aim of this section is to find out as much background information about the parent/ family member as possible

Family

Prompts

- What is your relationship to the young person?
- Do you live in the same house as the young person?
- Are you married?
- Do you have any other children? If yes, what age are they, what do they do?

Employment situation

Prompts

- Do you have a job?
- Do you work full time or part time?
- How long have you worked there?
- What do you like/ dislike about your job?

Living arrangements

Prompts

- How long have you lived here?
- Who lives in this house with you?
- Do you anticipate anyone leaving home in the next twelve months?
- What are your reasons for this?

Section Two – About your son/ daughter/ relative

The aim of this section is get information about the young person's situation from the perspective of the parent or relative and to clarify any issues that arose during the interview with the young person

Current situation

Can you tell me as much as possible about what your son or daughter is doing just now?

Prompts

- How long have they been doing this?
- What do they do on a typical day?

- What do they like/ dislike about their current placement?
- How did they come to be in this situation?
- Did you have any involvement in arranging this placement?
- Did you help them to choose this placement?
- How do you feel about their current situation? What are the reasons for this?
- Do you feel the placement is appropriate for them? What are the reasons for this?
- Do you feel that your son/ daughter gets enough support at their placement?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the situation?
- Do you have any suggestions about what could be done to improve things?

Previous placements

Has your son or daughter had any other placements prior to their current one? If so, can you tell me as much as you can about it?

Prompts

- What did they do there?
- What did they like/ dislike about it?
- Why did they leave?
- How did you feel about the situation?
- Again did you have any involvement in arranging/ helping them to choose this placement?

Schooling

Prompts

- What school did your son/ daughter go to?
- Did you have any say in the school they went to?
- How did you feel about the fact that your son/ daughter went to a mainstream or special school?
- How satisfied were you with the support your son/ daughter got at school?
- Did the school do anything to help prepare your child for leaving school?
- How well informed were you kept about decisions made about your child

Employment

Prompts

- (if not currently in employment) Has your son/ daughter ever had any form of employment – paid or voluntary?
- How do you feel about your son/ daughter's employment situation?
- How happy would you be about your son/ daughter getting a job in the future?
- What sort of job would be appropriate for your son/ daughter?
- What kind of support would your son/ daughter need to get into employment and maintain employment?

Living arrangements

Prompts

- How likely is it that your son or daughter will leave home in the near future?
- How would you feel about this?
- What type of accommodation/ setting would be appropriate for your son or daughter?
- Do you feel that your son/ daughter would need support to live independently?

The future

- What do you think your son/ daughter will be doing in six months time?
- What do you think your son/ daughter will be doing in a year's time?
- What do you think will happen to them in relation to their education/ training/ employment?
- What do you think should happen?
- What would be the most appropriate placement for your son or daughter?

Specific issues arising from interview one with the young person

Insert any specific questions arising from the first interview with the young person here for clarification.

<h2>Section Three – About young people with learning difficulties</h2>

The aim of this section is to discover the views of the parent on generic issues relating to young people with learning difficulties.

Planning

- Is sufficient planning done by schools, Careers Scotland and other agencies to ensure that young people make a smooth transition from school to work or further education?
- Who should be involved in the process?
- What can be done to improve this process?

Support

- Do young people get enough support from various agencies to make the transition between school and work/ education?
- Do young people get enough support to move on from college or training to employment?
- Do young people get enough support to remain in employment, gain promotion or change jobs?
- Who is best placed to provide this support?

Information

- Do young people receive adequate information about what their options are upon leaving school?
- Do parents have enough information to assist young people in making choices?

- Are parents well enough informed about decisions taken about their son/daughter?
- What sort of information would be helpful for young people?
- What sort of information would be helpful for parents?

Further Education lecturers/ tutors/ support staff

Section One – About You

The aim of this section is to find out as much as possible about the role of this person within the further education system

Can you tell me a bit about your role within the college?

Prompts

- What is your job title?
- What does your job involve?
- Can you talk me through what you would do on a typical day?
- How long have you been in your current post?
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- Is there anything you don't like about your job?
- Do you have any responsibility for recruiting young people with learning difficulties to the course?
- Do you have any responsibility for assisting young people who are moving on from college?

Section Two – About the Young Person

The aim of this section is to find out more about the experiences the young person has had in college

Knowledge of the young person

Prompts

- How well do you know the young person?
- How long have you known the young person for?

Current situation

Can you tell me as much as possible about what the young person is doing just now?

Prompts

- How long have they been doing this?
- What do they do on a typical day?
- Do you know what they like/ dislike about their current placement?
- How did they come to be in this situation?

Did you have any involvement in arranging this placement?

Prompts

- Did you know whose idea it was for the young person to come here?
- Do you feel the placement is appropriate for them? What are the reasons for this?

Do you feel that that the young person gets adequate support?

Do you have any suggestions about what could be done to improve things?

Employment

Has the young person been on a work placement during their time at college?

Prompts

- Where did they do their work placement?
- How long did it last for?
- How was the work placement set up? (For example, do you have a bank of employers that you use, or are placements set up on the basis of individual needs and wants?)
- How appropriate was the placement for the young person's needs/ wants?
- How successful was the placement?

Future Planning

Has the young person been given any advice or guidance to prepare for leaving college?

Prompts

- If yes, who was involved in this process? And what sort of advice was the young person given?
- If no, is this something that will take place at a later stage

Where do you predict the young person will be in:

- Six months time
- One years time

What are your reasons for this?

What do you think will happen to this young person in relation to their education/ training/ employment?

- What do you think should happen?
- What would be the most appropriate placement for this young person?

<h2>Section Three – About young people with learning difficulties</h2>

The aim of this section is to discuss the views of the lecturer/ tutor on appropriate courses and future opportunities for young people with learning difficulties more generally.

Examples of questions that could be asked are:

- Can you talk me through the different courses available at the college that are appropriate for young people with learning difficulties?
- Are young people with learning difficulties able to transfer to a mainstream course or progress on to a mainstream course if this is what they would like to do?
- Is support available for them to do?
- Are you aware of the different options that are available for young people when they leave college?
- What sort of support do young people get to plan for leaving college?
- Do you work together with training providers or businesses to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible for young people?
- What additional support do you think would be beneficial to young people?

- Is there anything you would like to change that you think would improve the future prospects for young people with learning difficulties when they leave college?

Employers/ Supervisors in the work place

Section One – About You

The aim of this section is to find out as much as possible about the role of this person within the place of employment

Can you tell me a bit about your role within workplace?

Prompts

- What is your job title?
- What does your job involve?
- Can you talk me through what you would do on a typical day?
- How long have you been in your current post?
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- Is there anything you don't like about your job?
- Do you have any responsibility for recruiting young people with learning difficulties?
- Do you have any responsibility for supporting/ supervising young people?

Section Two – About the Young Person

The aim of this section is to find out more about the experiences the young person has had in employment

Knowledge of the young person

Prompts

- How well do you know the young person?
- How long have you known the young person for?

Current situation

Can you tell me as much as possible about what the young person is doing just now?

Prompts

- How long have they been doing this?
- What do they do on a typical day?
- Do you know what they like/ dislike about their current placement?
- How did they come to be in this situation?

Did you have any involvement in arranging this placement?

Prompts

- Do you know whose idea it was for the young person to come here?
- Do you feel the placement is appropriate for them? What are the reasons for this?

Do you feel that that the young person gets adequate support?

Do you have any suggestions about what could be done to improve things?

Further Education/ training

- Does the young person receive any on the job training?
- What does this consist of?

Does the young person receive any training from an outside agency such as a further education college or training provider?

- Do you know any of the details of this training?
- Do you liaise in any way with the training provider?

Future Planning

If the young person is on a placement:

Has the young person been given any advice or guidance to prepare for leaving this placement?

Prompts

- If yes, who was involved in this process? And what sort of advice was the young person given?
- If no, is this something that will take place at a later stage

If the young person is an employee:

Is this job a temporary or permanent position?

Prompts

- What is the likelihood of the young person getting kept on?
- Are there any opportunities for promotion?

Where do you predict the young person will be in

- Six months time
- One years time
- What are your reasons for this?

What do you think will happen to this young person in relation to their education/ training/ employment?

- What do you think should happen?
- What would be the most appropriate placement for this young person?

<h3>Section Three – About young people with learning difficulties</h3>

The aim of this section is to discuss the views of the employer/ supervisor on appropriate employment and future opportunities for young people with learning difficulties more generally.

Examples of questions that could be asked are:

- What is your general policy with regard to employing young people with learning difficulties?
- Does your company have a reputation of employing young people with learning difficulties?
- If yes, how did this come about?
- Do you work in partnership with further education colleges or training providers?

- Has your experience of employing this young person made you more or less likely to employ people with learning difficulties in the future?
- What are your reasons for this?
- If any aspect of employing young people with learning difficulties has been unsuccessful in the past, what could be done to improve things?
- What additional support would you like to see for young people with learning difficulties in the work place
- What additional support would you like to see for employers of young people with learning difficulties?

Careers Advisors/ Employment Advisors/ Key workers

Section One – About You

The aim of this section is to find out as much background information as possible about the role of this person

Can you tell me a bit about your role in relation to young people with learning difficulties?

Prompts

- What is your job title?
- What does your job involve?
- Can you talk me through what you do on a typical day?
- How long have you been in your current post/
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- Is there anything you don't like about your job?
- What age are the young people when you start and stop working with them?
- Are you only responsible for young people when they are at school?

Section Two – About the young person

The aim of this section is to find out more about the experiences the young person has in relation to further education/ training and employment. Questions will be asked about each young person in turn.

Knowledge of the young person

Prompts

- How well do you know the young person?
- How long have you known the young person for?
- When was the last time you seen the young person?

Current situation

Can you tell me as much as possible about what the young person is doing just now?

Prompts

- How long have they been doing this?
- What do they do on a typical day?
- Do you know what they like/ dislike about their current placement?
- How did they come to be in this situation?
- What was your involvement in arranging this placement?

Support

Do you feel that the young person gets adequate support?

Do you have any suggestions about what, if anything could be done to improve things?

Previous placements

Can you tell me about any previous placements the young person has been on?

Do you know whether these placements were successful or not? What were the reasons for this?

Future planning

Can you talk me through what is happening to the young person at the moment?

- What are the different options that you are pursuing?
- Are other agencies involved?
- Do you work in close partnership with other agencies?
- Do you feel that there is enough information available to assist the young person to make choices?

Where do you predict the young person will be in:

- Six months time
- One years time
- What are your reasons for this?

What do you think will happen to this young person in relation to their education/employment situation?

- What do you think should happen?
- What would be the most appropriate placement for this young person?

<h3>Section Three – About young people with learning difficulties</h3>

- What should be the role of the careers advisor in a case like this?
- Have you been involved in cases like this in the past? If so what was the outcome?
- What other issues are common when dealing with young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood?
- Do you as an organisation work in partnership with other agencies?
- What additional support, if any would you like to see for young people with learning difficulties after they leave school?
- Is there any information or support that would make your role easier in a case such as this?

Advocacy workers or other professionals not directly in the employment field

Section One – About You

The aim of this section is to find out as much background information as possible about the role of this person

Can you tell me a bit about your role in relation to young people with learning difficulties?

Prompts

- What is your job title?
- What does your job involve?
- Can you talk me through what you do on a typical day?
- How long have you been in your current post?
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- Is there anything you don't like about your job?

Section Two – About the young person

The aim of this section is to find out more about the experiences the young person has in relation to further education/ training and employment.

Knowledge of the young person

Prompts

- How well do you know the young person?
- How long have you known the young person for?
- When was the last time you seen the young person?

Current situation

Can you tell me as much as possible about what the young person is doing just now?

Prompts

- How long have they been doing this?
- What do they do on a typical day?
- Do you know what they like/ dislike about their current placement?
- How did they come to be in this situation?
- What was your involvement in arranging this placement?

Support

- Do you feel that the young person gets adequate support?
- Do you have any suggestions about what, if anything could be done to improve things?

Previous placements

- Can you tell me about any previous placements the young person has been on?
- Do you know whether these placements were successful or not? What were the reasons for this?

Future planning

Can you talk me through what is happening to the young person at the moment?
What are the different options that you are pursuing?

- Are other agencies involved?
- Do you work in close partnership with other agencies?
- Do you feel that there is enough information available to assist the young person to make choices?

Where do you predict the young person will be in:

- Six months time
- One years time
- What are your reasons for this?

What do you think will happen to this young person in relation to their education/employment situation?

- What do you think should happen?
- What would be the most appropriate placement for this young person?

<h3>Section Three – About young people with learning difficulties</h3>

- What should be the role of the advocacy worker in a case like this?
- Have you been involved in cases like this in the past? If so what was the outcome?
- What other issues are common when dealing with young people with learning disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood?
- Do you as an organisation work in partnership with other agencies?
- What additional support, if any would you like to see for young people with learning difficulties after they leave school?
- Is there any information or support that would make your role easier in a case such as this?

Bibliography

- Abberley, P. (1986) The concept of oppression and the development of a social theory of disability, *Disability, Handicap and Society*, Vol 2, pp 5-21
- Adams, E. and Smart, D. (2005) *Mapping employability and support services for disengaged young people*. Edinburgh: Blackwell Publishing
- Anderson, E.M. and Clark, L. (1982) *Disability in Adolescence*. London: Methuen
- Allatt, P. (1997) Conceptualising youth: transitions, risk and the public and the private in Bynner, J., Chisholm, L. and Furlong, A. (Eds) *Youth, Citizenship and social change in a European context*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Armstrong, D., Galloway, D. and Tomlinson, S. (1993) Assessing special educational needs: The child's contribution *British Educational Research Journal* 19 (2): 121-131
- Armstrong, D. (2002) The politics of advocacy and people with learning difficulties *Policy and Practice* 30 (3) 333-347
- Ashton D. and Maguire, M. (1986) *Young adults in the labour market*. Department of Employment Research Paper Number 55. London: Department of Employment
- Ashton, D. and Lowe, G. (eds.) (1991) *Making their way: Education, training and the labour market in Canada and Britain*. Milton Keynes. Open University Press
- Ashton, D., Maguire, M. and Spilsbury, M. (1990) *Restructuring the labour market: The implications for youth*. Basingstoke: Macmillan
- Atkinson, D. and Walmsley, J. (1999) Using autobiographical approaches with people with learning difficulties. *Disability and Society* 14 (2): 203-216
- Audit Commission (2002) *Integrated services for older people: Building a whole system approach in England*. October 2002. London: Audit Commission
- Baillie, D., Cameron, K., Cull, L, Roche, J. and West, J. (2003) *Community Care and the law in Scotland*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Banks, M. and Ullah, P. (1988) *Youth unemployment in the 1980's: Its psychological effects*. London: Croom Helm
- Barbour, R. (1998) Mixing Qualitative Methods: Quality Assurance or Quantitative Quagmire? *Qualitative Health Research* Vol 8, 3 (1998)
- Barbour, R. and Featherstone, V. (2000) Acquiring Qualitative Skills for Primary Care Research. Review and reflections on a Three Stage Workshop. Part One: Using Interviews to Generate Data. *Family Practice*, Vol 17, no 1 pp76-82
- Barker, J. and Weller, S. (2003) "Never work with children?": The geography of methodological issues in research with children *Qualitative Research* 3 (2): 207-227
- Barnes, C. (1990) *Cabbage syndrome: The social construction of dependence*. London: The Falmer Press

- Barnes, C. (1992) Qualitative research: Valuable or irrelevant? *Disability, Handicap and Society* 7 (2)
- Barnes, C. (1996) Disability and the myth of the independent researcher *Disability and Society* 11 (1):107-110
- Barnes, C. (2000) A working social model: Disability, work and disabled politics in the twenty first century. *Critical Social Policy* 20 (4): 441-457
- Barnes, C. (2003) Work is a four letter word? Disability, work and welfare. Paper to the Working futures: disability and work seminar, University of Sunderland, 3rd December 2003
- Barnes, C. and Mercer, G. (1996) *Exploring the divide: illness and disability* Leeds: Disability Press
- Barnes, C. and Mercer, G. (1997) *Doing disability research*. Leeds: Disability Press
- Barnes, C., Mercer, G. and Shakespeare, T. (1999) *Exploring disability: a sociological introduction*. Cambridge: Policy Press
- Barnes, M. and Bennett, G. (1998) Frail bodies, courageous voices: older people influencing community care *Health and Social Care in the Community* 6 (20): 102-111
- Barnes, M., Newman, J., Knops, A. and Sullivan, H. (2003) Constituting "the public" in public participation. *Public Administration* 81 (2): 379-399
- Baron, S., Riddell, S. and Wilson, A. (1999) The secret of eternal youth: identity, risk and learning difficulties *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 20 (4)
- Barton, L. and Oliver, M. (Eds) (1997) *Disability Studies: past, present and future*. Leeds: Disability Press
- Bass, M. and Drewett R. (1997) *Real work: Supported employment for people with learning disabilities*. Sheffield: Joint Unit for Social Services Research
- Bates, J. and Riseborough, G. (eds.) (1993) *Youth and inequality*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Bates, P. and Davis, F. A. (2004) Social capital, social inclusion and services for people with learning disabilities. *Disability and Society* 19 (3) 195 – 207
- Bauman, Z. (1988) *Freedom*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press
- Bauman, Z. (1996) From Pilgrim to tourist – or a short history of identity in Hall, S. (Ed) *Questions of cultural identity*. London: Sage
- Beck, U. (1992) *Risk society: towards a new modernity*. London: Sage
- Berzins, K., Petch, A. and Atkinson, J. (2003) Prevalence and experience of harassment of people with mental health problems living in the community. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 183: 526-533

- Beyer, S. and Kilsby, M. (1996a) The future of employment for people with learning disabilities. A keynote review. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 24: 134-137
- Beyer, S. and Kilsby, M. (1996b) Supported employment in Britain. *Tizard Learning Disability Review* 2 (2): 6-14
- Bignall, T., Butt, J. and Pagarani, D. (2002) *"Something to do": The development of peer support groups for young black and minority ethnic disabled and Deaf people*. York: The Policy Press
- Black, S. (2002) Whose economic wellbeing?: A challenge to the dominant discourse on the relationship between literacy and numeracy skills and (un) employment http://www.staff.vu.edu/alnarc/onlineforum?AL_pap_black.htm
- Bonjour, P., Knight, G. and Lissenburgh, S. (2002) *Evaluation of New Deal for young people in Scotland: Phase 2*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Booth, T. and Booth, W. (1996) Sounds of silence: narrative research with inarticulate subjects. *Disability and Society* 18 (4): 431-442
- Boyle, J. Crichton, R. and Wellier, C. (2003) *Developing post-school psychological services: Interim report*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive
- Bradley, A. (2002) *Positive approaches to understanding and managing risk*. Glasgow: BookSource
- Brannen, J. and Nilsen, A. (2002) Young people's time perspectives: From youth to adulthood. *Sociology* 36 (3): 513-537
- British Council of Disabled People (2002) The social model of disability and emancipatory research – briefing document <http://www.bcodp.org.uk/about/research/html>
- Bromley, C. and Curtice, J. (2002) *Attitudes towards discrimination in Scotland*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Burchardt, T. and McKnight, A. (2003) *Disability and the national minimum wage. A special case? Working Paper*. Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion. London School of Economics, April 2003
- Burchardt, T. (2003) *Being and becoming: social exclusion and the onset of disability*. London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion
- Burchardt, T. (2005) *The education and employment of disabled young people: frustrated ambition*. York: The Policy Press
- Bury, M. (1996) Disability and the myth of the independent researcher: a reply *Disability and Society* 11 (1): 111-113
- Bynner, J., Chisholm, L. and Furlong, A. (eds) (1997) *Youth, citizenship and social change in a European context*. Aldershot: Ashgate

- Bynner, J., Chisholm, L. and Furlong, A. (1997) A new agenda for social change in Bynner, J., Chisholm, L. and Furlong, A. (eds) (1997) *Youth, citizenship and social change in a European context*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Bynner, J. (2001) British youth transitions in a comparative perspective *Journal of youth studies* 4 (1): 5-23
- Bynner, J. (2002) Literacy, numeracy and employability http://www.staff.vu.edu/alnarc/onlineforum?AL_pap_bynner.htm#top
- Bynner, J., Elias, P., McKnight, A., Pan, H. and Pierre, G. (2002) *Young people's changing routes to independence*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Campbell, J. and Oliver, M. (1996) *Disability politics: understanding our past, changing our future*. London: Routledge
- Canny, A. (2001) The transition from school to work: An Irish and English comparison *Journal of youth studies* 4 (2): 133-154
- Carstairs, V. and Morrow, R. (1991) *Deprivation and health in Scotland*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press
- Castells, M. (1997) *The power of identity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- Cattermole, M., Jahoda, A. and Markova, I (1990) Quality of life for people with learning difficulties moving to community homes. *Disability, handicap and society* 5 (2): 137-152
- Chappell, A. L. (1992) Towards a sociological critique of the normalisation principle. *Disability and Society* 7 (1): 35-51
- Chappell, A. L. (1997) From normalisation to where? In Barton, L. and Oliver, M. (Eds) *Disability studies: Past, present and future*. Leeds: Disability Press
- Chappell, A. L. (2000) Emergence of participatory methodology in learning difficulties research *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 28 pp38-43
- Clark A., and Hirst, M. (1989) Disability in adulthood: ten year follow-up of young people with disabilities. *Disability, Handicap and Society* 4: 271-283
- Cocks, E. and Cockram, J. (1995) The participatory research paradigm and intellectual disability. *Mental Handicap Research* 8: 25-37
- Cohen, P. and Ainley, P. (2000) In the country of the blind? Youth studies and cultural studies in Britain. *Journal of Youth Studies* 3 (1): 79-95
- Cole, B. (1995) *Youth and social policy. Youth, citizenship and young careers*. London: UCL Press
- Coleman, J. and Hendry, L. (1999) *The nature of adolescence*. London: Routledge
- Connors, C. and Stalker, K. (2002) *The views and experiences of disabled children and their siblings: A positive outlook*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

- Cook, A. (2003) Using video to include the experiences of people with dementia in research. *Research, Policy and Planning* 21 (2): 23-32
- Corden, A., Harries, T., Hill, K., Kellard, K., Lewis, J., Sainsbury, R., and Thornton, P. (2003) *New Deal for Disabled People national extension: Findings from the first wave of qualitative research with clients, job brokers and JobCentre Plus staff*, Sheffield: Department of Work and Pensions
- Corden, A. and Ellis, A. (2004) Volunteering and employability: exploring the link for Incapacity Benefit recipients. *Benefits* 4 (12); 112-118
- Corker, M. and French, S. (Eds) (1998) *Disability discourse*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Corker, M. and Shakespeare, T. (2003) *Disability and postmodernity*. London:
- Corra, M. and Willer, D. (2002) The gatekeeper, *Sociological Theory*, 20, 180-207.
- Cote, J. (2002) The role of identity capital in the transition to adulthood: The individualization thesis examined. *Journal of Youth Studies* 5 (2)
- Crow, L. (1996) Including all our lives: renewing the social model of disability in Barnes, C. and Mercer, G. (eds) *Exploring the divide: Illness and disability*. Leeds: Disability Press
- Curtice, L., Collacott, R., Espie, C., Ibbotson, T., Long, L., Morrison, J., Ayana, M. and MacIntyre, G. (2001) *Whose responsibility? The health needs of people with learning disabilities living in the community*. Edinburgh: Chief Scientist Office
- Darling, R.B. (2003) Towards a model of changing disability identities: A proposed typology and research agenda *Disability and Society* 881-895
- Davis J.M. and Watson, N. (2001) What are the children's experiences? Analysing social and cultural exclusion in "special" and "mainstream" schools. *Disability and Society* 16 (30): 671-687
- Deal, M. (2003) Disabled people's attitudes towards other impairment groups: A hierarchy of impairments *Disability and Society* 18 (7) 897-910
- Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) (2004) *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd Edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Department for Education and Skills (2001) *Special educational needs: Code of practice*. Nottinghamshire: DfES Publications
- Department for Education and Skills (2002) *Classification of special educational needs. Consultation Document*.
[Http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen)
- Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Youth Matters*. London: HMSO
- Department for Work and Pensions (2002) *Pathways to work: Helping disabled people into employment*. London: HMSO

Department for Work and Pensions (2006) *A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office

Department of Health (2001) *Valuing people: A new strategy for learning disability for the 21st Century*. London: HMSO

Department of Social Security (1998) *New ambitions for our country: A new contract for welfare*. London: HMSO

Di Masso, J., Avi-Itzhak, T. and Obler, D.R. (2001) The clubhouse model: An outcome study of attendance, work attainment and status and hospital recidivism. *Work* 17 (1): 21-30

Diesfield, K. (1999) International ethical safeguards: genetics and people with learning disabilities. *Disability and Society* 14 (1): 21-36

Disability Rights Commission (2004) *Disability in Scotland 2004: Key facts and figures*. Edinburgh: Disability Rights Commission

Dowler, L. (2001) Fieldwork in the trenches: participant observation in a conflict area in Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (Eds). *Qualitative research methods in human geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Drake, R. (2000) Disabled people, New Labour, benefits and work. *Critical Social Policy* 20 (4) 421-430

European Group for Integrated Social Research (EGRIS) (2001) Misleading trajectories: Transition dilemmas of young adults in Europe. *Journal of Youth Studies* 4 (1): 101-118

Evans, K. and Furlong, A. (1997) Metaphors of youth transitions: niches, pathways, trajectories or navigations in Bynner, J. et al (eds) *Youth, citizenship and social change in a European context*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Fawcett, B. (2000) *Feminist perspectives on disability*. Harlow: Pearson Education

Felce, D. and Perry, J. (1995) Quality of life: Its definition and measurement. *Research in Developmental Disabilities* 16 (1): 51-74

Fergusson, R., Pye, D., Esland, G., McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J. (2000) Normalised dislocation and new subjectivities in post-sixteen markets for education and work. *Critical Social Policy* 20 (3): 283-305

Fergusson, R. (2002) Rethinking youth transitions: Policy transfer and new exclusions in New Labour's New Deal. *Policy Studies* 23 (3/4)

Filmer, P., Phillipson, M., Silverman, D. and Waisn, D. (1972) *New directions in sociological theory*. London: Macmillan

Finkelstein, V. (1981) *Attitudes and disabled people: Issues for discussion*. New York: World Rehabilitation Fund

Finkelstein, V. (1993) The commonality of disability in Swain, J., Finkelstein, V., French, S. and Oliver, M. (Eds) *Disabling barriers – enabling environments*. London: Sage

- Finlay, L. (2002) Negotiating the swamp: The opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research. *Qualitative Research* 2 (2): 209-230
- Finlay, W.M.L, and Lyons, E. (2002) Acquiescence in interviews with people who have mental retardation. *Mental Retardation* 40 (1): 14-29
- Fish, J. and McGinty, J. (1992) *Learning and support for young people in transition: Leaving school for further education and work*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Forrester Jones, R., Carpenter, J., Cambridge, P., Tate, A., Hallam, A., Knapp, M. and Beecham, J. (2002) The quality of life of people 12 years after resettlement from long stay hospitals: Users views on their living environment, daily activities and future aspirations. *Disability and Society* 17 (7): 741-758
- Forsyth, A. and Furlong, A. (2003) *Losing out? Socioeconomic disadvantage and experience in further and higher education*. York: The Policy Press
- Foucault, (1980) *Power-knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings. 1972-1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. Brighton: Harvester Press
- Frank, A. (2002) Why study people's stories? The dialogical ethics of narrative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1 (1)
- Furlong, A. (2000) Introduction: Youth in a changing world. *International Social Science Journal* 164: 129-134
- Furlong, A. and Cartmel, F. (1997) *Youth and social change: Individualization and risk in late modernity*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Furlong, A., Cartmel, F., Biggart, A., Sweeting, H. and West, P. (2003) *Youth transitions: Patterns of vulnerability and processes of social inclusion*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Gardner, G. (2001) Unreliable memories and other contingencies: problems with biographical knowledge *Qualitative Research* 1 (2): 185-204
- Geertz, C. (1993) *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. London: Fontana Press
- Germain, R. (2004) An exploratory study using cameras and talking mats to access the views of young people with learning disabilities on their out-of-school activities *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 32: 170-177
- Gibbs, D. (1999) Disabled people and the research process. Paper given to the theorising social work research seminar on 20th September, 1999.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Giddens, A. (1998) *The third way: the renewal of social democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Gilbert, T. (2004) Involving people with learning disabilities in research. Issues and possibilities. *Health and Social Care in the Community* 12 (4): 298-308

- Gillman, M., Heyman, B. and Swain, J. (2000) What's in a name? The implications of diagnosis for people with learning difficulties and their family carers. *Disability and Society* 15 (3): 389-409
- Glasgow City Council (2000) *Glasgow City Joint Community Care Plan, 2001-2004*. Glasgow: Glasgow City Council
- Glasgow City Council (2001) *Glasgow's School Leavers 2000-2001*. Glasgow: The Printing Works
- Glasgow City Council (2003) *Equal access to employment. Consultation document*, Glasgow: Glasgow City Council
- Gooding, C. (2003) The disability discrimination act: winners and losers. Paper to the Working futures: disability and work seminar, University of Sunderland, 3rd December 2003
- Goodlad, R. and Riddell, S. (2003) Social justice and disabled people: principles and challenges. Paper given to the disabled people and social justice conference, The Lighthouse, Glasgow. 14th November 2003.
- Goodley, D. (1996) Tales of hidden lives: a critical examination of life history research with people who have learning difficulties. *Disability and Society* 11 (3):333-348
- Goodley, D. (2001a) Learning difficulties, the social model of disability and impairment: Challenging epistemologies *Disability and Society* 16 (2): 207-231
- Goodley, D. (2001b) Against a politics of victimisation: disability, culture and self-advocates with learning difficulties in Riddell, S. and Watson, N. (eds.) *Disability, culture and identity*
- Gosling, V., and Cotterill, L. (2000) An employment project as a route to social inclusion for people with learning difficulties? *Disability and Society* 15 (7): 1001-1018
- Green, E., Mitchell, W. and Bunton, R. (2000) Conceptualising risk and danger: An analysis of young people's perceptions of risk. *Journal of Youth Studies* 3 (2): 109-126
- Greener, J. (2002) Agency, social theory and social policy. *Critical Social Policy* 22 (4): 688-705
- Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. (1998) Competing paradigms in qualitative research in Denzin, N, and Lincoln, Y. (eds) *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and Issues*. London: Sage
- Hales, G. (Ed.) (1996) *Beyond disability: towards an enabling society*. London: Sage
- Hall, S. (Ed) (1996) *Questions of cultural identity*. London: Sage
- Hammersley, M. (1995) *The politics of social research*. London: Sage
- Hammersley, M. and Gomm R. (2000) Introduction in Gomm. R., Hammersley, M. and Foster, P (Eds) *Case Study Method*. London: Sage

Hanley, B. (2005) *Research as empowerment? Report of a series of seminars organised by the Toronto Group*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Harris, J. (2002) Caring for citizenship *British Journal of Social Work* 32, pp 267-281

Harris, J. and Roberts, K. (2003) Challenging barriers to participation in qualitative research: involving disabled refugees *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 2 (2)

Hendey, N. and Pascall, G. (2002) Disability and transition to adulthood: Achieving independent living. Paper given to Young People 2002: Research, practice and policy Conference, University of Keele, 22nd-24th July, 2002.

Hertz, R. (1997) (Ed) *Reflexivity and voice*. London: Sage

Higgins, E., Raskind, M.H., Goldberg, R.J. and Herman, K.L. (2002) Stages of acceptance of a learning disability: The impact of labelling. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 25: 3-18

Hirst, M. (1989) Patterns of impairment and disability related to social handicap in young people with cerebral palsy. *Journal of Biosocial Science* 21 (1): 1-12

Hirst, M. and Baldwin, S. (1994) *Unequal opportunities: Growing up disabled*. London: Social Policy Research Unit.

Ho, A. (2004) To be labelled or not to be labelled: That is the question. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 32: 86-92

Howison, C. (2003) *Destination of early leavers: Evidence from the Scottish school leaver's survey*. Special Centre for Educational Research Briefing Number 28. Edinburgh: Centre for Educational Research

Hughes, B. (2000) Bauman's strangers: Impairment and the invalidation of disabled people in modern and postmodern cultures *Disability and society* 17 (5) 57-584

Humphrey, J. (2000) Researching disability politics, or, some problems with the social model in practice. *Disability and Society* 15 (1):63-85

Huxley, P. (2001) Work and mental health: An introduction to the special section. *Journal of Mental Health* 10 (4): 367-372

Hyde, M. (1998) Sheltered and supported employment in the 1990s: The experiences of disabled workers in the UK. *Disability and Society* 13 (2): 199-215

Hyde, M. (2000) From welfare to work? Social policy for disabled people of working age in the UK in the 1990's *Disability and Society* 15 (2) 327-341

Jackson, B. and Segal, P. (2004) *Why inequality matters*. A Catalyst Working Paper. October 2004. London: Central Books

Jenkins, S. and Rigg, J. (2003) *Disability and disadvantage: Selection, onset and duration effects*. London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion

Johnston, L., MacDonald, R., Mason, P., Riddell, L. and Webster, C. (2000) *Snakes and ladders: Young people, transition and social exclusion*. Bristol: The Policy Press

- Jolly, D. (2000) A critical evaluation of the contradictions for the disabled worker arising from the emergence of the flexible labour market in Britain. *Disability and Society* 15(5): 795-810
- Jones, G. (1995) *Leaving home*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Jones, G. (2002) *The youth divide: Diverging paths to adulthood*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Jones, G. and Wallace, C. (1992) *Youth, family and citizenship*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Jones, S., Morgan, J., Murphy, D. and Shearn, J. (2002) *Making it work: Strategies for success in supported employment*. Brighton: Pavilion Publishing
- Kane, J., Riddell, S., Millward, A., Banks, P., Boynes, A., Dyson, A. and Wilson, A. (2003) Special Educational Needs and Individualised Education Plans: Issues of parent and pupil participation *Scottish Educational Review* 35 (1):38-47
- Kiernan, C. (1999) Participation in research by people with learning disability: Origins and issues. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 27: 43-47
- King, N.M.P and Churchill, L.R (2000) Ethical principles guiding research on child and adolescent subjects in *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 15 (7): 710-727
- Klotz, J. (2001) Sociocultural study of intellectual disability: moving beyond labelling and social constructionist perspectives. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 32: 93-104
- Kregel, J. (1997) Supported employment. *Remedial and Special Education* 18 (4):194-196
- Lee, R. and Renzetti, C. (1993) *Researching sensitive topics*. Newbury Park: Sage
- Levitas, R. (2001) Against work: A utopian incursion into social policy. *Critical Social Policy* 21 (4): 449-465
- Levitas, R. (2004) Lets hear it for humpty: Social exclusion, the third way and cultural capital. *Cultural Change* 50 13 (2): 41-56
- Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (1985) The only generalization is: there is no generalization in Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (Eds) *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Llewellyn, A. and Hogan, K. (2000) The use and abuse of models of disability *Disability and Society* 15 (1) 157-165
- Lloyd-Jones, G. (2003) Design and control issues in qualitative case study research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 2 (2)
- Lund, B. (1999) 'Ask not what your community can do for you': Obligations, New Labour and welfare reform. *Critical Social Policy* 19 (4) 447-462
- Lyon, E. (1995) "Dilemmas of Power in Post-graduate Practice: A Comment on Research Training" in *Sociology* 29 (3): 531-540

- Mabbett, D. (2005) Some are more equal than others: Definitions of disability in social policy and discrimination law. *Journal of Social Policy* 34: 215-233
- Mandelstam, M. with Schwehr, B. (1995) *Community Care Practice and the Law*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishing
- Mank, D. Cioffi, A. and Yovanoff, P. (1997) Analysis of the typicalness of supported employment jobs, natural supports and wage and integration outcomes. *Mental Retardation* 35 (3): 185-197
- Manthorpe, J., and Walsh, M. with Alaszewski, A. and Harrison, L. (1997) Issues of risk practice and welfare in learning disability services. *Disability and Society* 12 (1): 69-82
- Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. (1999) *Designing Qualitative Research* Sage: London
- Martin, M. (2000) *Verstehen: the uses of understanding in the social sciences*. New Jersey: Transaction Publications.
- Martin, M. and MacIntyre, L. (Eds.)(1994) *Readings in the philosophy of social science*. London: MIT Press
- Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching*. Sage Publications
- Matthew, D and Sutton, C. (2004) *Social research: the basics*. London: Sage
- May, D. and Simpson, M. K. (2003) The parent trap: Marriage, parenthood and adulthood for people with intellectual disabilities *Critical Social Policy* 23 (1): 25-43
- McCollam, A. (1988) *An evaluation of an employment project for mentally ill people*. Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of Edinburgh
- McGregor, L. et al, (2003) *The Glasgow challenge*, final report. Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Training and Employment Research Unit
- McKenzie, G., Powell, J. and Usher, R. (Eds.) (1997) *Understanding social research. Perspectives on methodology and practice*. Brighton: Falmer Press
- McMaster, K., Donovan, L.A. and MacIntyre, P. (2002) The effects of being diagnosed with a learning disability on children's self-esteem. *Child Study Journal* 32 (2):101-108
- Meagre, N. (2003) Disabled people and the labour market. Has the Disability Discrimination Act made a difference? Paper to the Working futures: disability and work seminar, University of Sunderland, 3rd December 2003
- Mencap (2000) *Living in fear. The need to combat bullying of people with a learning disability*. London: Mencap
- Meuser, K.T., Becker, R. and Wolfe, R. (2001) Supported employment, job tenure and satisfaction. *Journal of Mental Health* 10 (4): 411-417
- Millward, A., Riddell, S., Banks, P., Baynes, A., Dyson, A., Kane, J. and Wilson, A. (2002) An investigation of Individualised Education Programmes: Part 2: Raising the attainment of pupils with Special Educational Needs *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 2 (3)

Mishna, F. (2003) Learning disabilities and bullying: Double jeopardy. *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 36 (4): 336-347

Mitchell, W (1999) Leaving special school: the next step and future aspirations. *Disability and Society* 14 (3): 753-769

Morris, J. (1991) *Pride against prejudice. Transforming attitudes to disability*. London: Women's Press

Morris, J. (1992) Personal and political: a feminist perspective on researching physical disability *Disability and Society* 7 (2): 157-166

Morris, J. (1998) *Don't leave us out: Involving disabled children and young people with communication impairments*. York: YPS for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Morris, J. (1999) *Hurtling into a void: Transition to adulthood for young people with complex health and support needs*. Brighton: Pavilion Publishing

Morris, J. (2001) *That kind of life. Social exclusion and young disabled people*. Milton Keynes: Scope

Morris, J. (2002a) *A lot to say! A guide for social workers, personal advisors and others working with disabled children and young people with communication impairments*. London: Scope

Morris, J. (2002b) *Moving into adulthood: Young disabled people moving into adulthood*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Foundations

Morrow, V. and Richards, M. (1996) *Transitions to adulthood: A family matter?* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Murphy, B., Cockburn, J. and Murphy, M. (1992) Focus Groups in Health Research *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* 2 (2):37-40

Nocon, A. and Qureshi, H. (1996) *Outcomes of community care for users and carers: a social services perspective*. Buckingham: Open University Press

Northway, R. (1997) Integration and inclusion: illusion or progress in services for disabled people? *Social Policy and Administration* 31 (2) 157-172

Norwich, B. and Kelly, N. (2004) Pupils views on inclusion: moderate learning difficulties and bullying in mainstream and special schools. *British Educational Research Journal* 30 (1): 43-65

O'Bryan, A., Simons, K., Beyer, S. and Grove, B. (2000) *A framework for supported employment*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

O' Flynn, D. and Craig, T. (2001) Which way to work? Occupations, vocations and opportunities for mental health service users. *Journal of Mental Health* 10 (1): 1-4

Oakley, A. (1998) People's ways of knowing in Mayall, B., Hood, S., and Oliver, S. (eds) *Critical issues in social research: Power and prejudice*. Buckingham: Open University Press

Office for National Statistics (1998) *1991 Census*. London: Office for National Statistics

Oliver, M. (1990) *The politics of disablement*. Basingstoke: Macmillan

Oliver, M. (1992) Changing the social relations of research production? *Disability Handicap and Society* 7 (2)

Oliver, M. (1996) *Understanding disability: from theory to practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Press

Orme, J. (2000) Culture of partnership, interactive social sciences: Patronage or partnership *Science and Public Policy* (27) 3: 211-219

Orme, J. (2002) Social work: Gender, care and justice. *British Journal of Social Work* 32 (6): 799-814

Parent, W., Kregel, J., Wehman, P. and Metzler, H. (1991) Measuring the social integration of supported employment workers. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 1 (1): 35-49

Pascall, G. and Hendey, N. (2002) *Disability and transition to adulthood: Achieving independent living*. Bristol: Pavilion Publishing

Pascall, G. and Hendey, N. (2004) Disability and transition to adulthood: The politics of parenting *Critical Social Policy* 24 (2): 165-186

Patton, M. Q. (2002) *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Pawson, N., Raghavan, R. and Small, N. (2005) Social inclusion, social networks, and ethnicity: the development of the social inclusion interview schedule for young people with learning disabilities *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 33: 15-22

Payne, J. (1995) *England and Wales youth cohort survey. Routes beyond compulsory schooling. Youth Cohort Report, number 31*. London: Policy Studies Institute

Pearson, C. (Ed) (2006) *Direct payments and personalisation of care*. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press

Petch, A., Rosengard, A., Naumann, L. and Dean, J. (2000) *"Help me out, let me in": Reprovisioning, resettlement and the scope for social inclusion in Scotland, Volume 2*. Edinburgh: Scottish Homes

Pias, J. M. (2000) Transitions and youth cultures: forms and performances. *International Social Science Journal* 164: 219-231

Pinder, R. (1997) Response to Shakespeare and Watson *Disability and Society* 12 (2): 293-300

Pitt, V. and Curtin, M. (2004) Integration v segregation: The experiences of a group of disabled students moving from mainstream school into special needs further education. *Disability and Society* 19 (4): 352-361

- Priestly, M. (1999) *Disability, politics and community care*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishing
- Putnam, (2000) *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community*. London: Simon and Schuster
- Ramcharan, P. and Grant, G. (2001) Views and experiences of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. *Journal of Applied Research in intellectual Disabilities* 14: 348-363
- Raffe, D. (1988) *Education and the youth labour market*. London: Falmer Press
- Raffe, D. et al (1998) Conclusion: where are the pathways going? Conceptual and methodological lessons from the pathway study in *Pathways and participation in vocational and technical education and training*
- Raffe, D. (2003a) *Young people not in education, employment or training*. Centre for Educational Studies (CES) Special Briefing Paper. Edinburgh: Centre for Educational Studies
- Raffe, D. (2003b) Pathways linking education and work: A review of concepts, research and policy debates. *Journal of Youth Studies* 6 (1): 3-19
- Raffo, C. and Reeves, M. (2000) Youth transitions and social exclusion: Developments in social capital theory. *Journal of Youth Studies* 3 (2): 147-166
- Reeve, D. (2002) Negotiating psycho-emotional dimensions of disability and their influence on identity constructions *Disability and Society* 17 (5) 493-508
- Reindal, S. M. (1999) Independence, dependence, interdependence: Some reflections on the subject and personal autonomy *Disability and Society* 14 (3) 353-367
- Riddell, S. (2004) The classification of pupils at the educational margins in Scotland: Shifting categories and frameworks. Issues in the classification of students with disabilities revisited: perspectives and purposes of disability classification systems. Paper to the third Anglo-American symposium on special education and school reform, June 2004
- Riddell, S. and Banks, P. (2001) *Disability in Scotland: A baseline study*. Edinburgh: Disability Rights Commission
- Riddell, S. and Tett, L. (eds) (2001) *Education, social justice and inter-agency working: Joined up or fractured policy*. London: Routledge
- Riddell, S. and Watson, N. (2001) *Disability, culture and identity*. Harlow: Pearson Education
- Riddell, S and Wilson, A. (2001) Disabled people, training and employment. Joined up policy and its tensions in Riddell, S. and Tett, L. (2001) *Education, social justice and inter-agency working: Joined up or fractured policy*. London: Routledge
- Riddell, S., Baron, S. and Wilson, A. (1999a) Social capital and people with learning difficulties. *Studies in the Education of Adults* 31 (1) 49-64

- Riddell, S., Wilson, A. and Baron, S. (1999b) Captured customers: people with learning disabilities in the social market. *British Educational Research Journal* 25 (4): 445-461
- Riddell, S., Wilson, A. and Baron, S. (1999c) Supported employment in Scotland: Theory and practice. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 12: 181-194
- Riddell, S., Adler, M., Mordaunt, E. and Farmakopoulou, N. (2000) Special educational needs and competing policy frameworks in England and Scotland. *Journal of Educational Policy* 15 (6): 621-635
- Riddell, S., Baron, S. and Wilson, A. (2001) *The learning society and people with learning difficulties*. Bristol: Policy Press
- Riddell, S., Banks, P. and Wilson, A. (2002a) A flexible gateway to employment? Disabled people and the Employment Service's Work Preparation programme *Policy and Politics* 30 (2): 213-230
- Riddell, S., Wilson, A., Adler, M. and Mordaunt, E. (2002b) Parent's, professionals, and special educational needs policy frameworks in England and Scotland. *Policy and Politics* 30 (3): 411-425
- Riddell, S., Banks, P. and Thornton, P. (2003) Disabled people, employment and the work preparation scheme. Paper to the Working futures: disabled people and work seminar, University of Sunderland, 3rd December 2003
- Riddell, S., Tinklin, T. and Banks, P. (2005) *Disability and employment in Scotland: A review of the evidence base*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Riele, K. (2004) Youth transitions in Australia: Challenging assumptions of linearity and choice. *Journal of Youth Studies* 7 (3): 243-257
- Roberts, B. (2002) *Biographical research*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Roberts, K. (1995) *Youth and employment in modern Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Rodgers, (1999) Trying to get it right: undertaking research involving people with learning difficulties. *Disability and Society* 14 (4): 421-433
- Roulstone, A. (2002) Disabling pasts, enabling futures? How does the changing nature of capitalism impact on the disabled worker and job-seeker? *Disability and Society* 17 (6): 627-642
- Roulstone, A. (2003) The legal road to rights? Disability, premises, Obiter Dicta, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 *Disability and Society* 18 (2):117-131
- Roulstone, A. (1998) *Enabling technologies: disabled people, work and new technology*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Roulstone, A., Gradwell, L., Price, J. and Child, L. (2002) *Thriving and surviving at work: Disabled people's employment strategies*. Brighton: The Policy Press
- K Rummery (2006) Disabled Citizens and Social Exclusion: the role of direct payments *Policy and Politics*, Vol 34 No 4; pp 633-650.

- Salisbury, J (2001) Exploring the tailored approaches of the new deal for 18-24 year olds in Riddell, S. and Tett, L. (2001) *Education, social justice and inter-agency working: Joined up or fractured policy*. London: Routledge
- Sapey, B. (2000) Disablement in the informational age. *Disability and Society* 15 (4): 619-636
- Scheff, T. (2000) Shame and the social bond: A sociological theory *Sociological Theory* 18 (1): 84-99
- Schneider, J. (1998a) Work interventions in mental health care: Some arguments and recent evidence. *Journal of Mental Health* 7 (1): 81-94
- Schneider, J. (1998b) Models of specialist employment for people with mental health problems. *Health and Social Care in the Community* 6 (2): 120-129
- Schneider, J., Simons, K. and Everatt, G. (2001) Impact of the national minimum wage on disabled people *Disability and Society* 16 (5): 723-747
- Scottish Enterprise (2002) *New Futures Fund: Summary of phase two interim evaluation*. Glasgow: Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Executive (1998) *Opportunity Scotland*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Scottish Executive (1999a) *Implementing inclusiveness: realising potential. Recommendations of the Beattie Committee*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Scottish Executive (1999b) *Life through learning, learning through life*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Scottish Executive (2000a) *A smart successful Scotland: ambitions for the Enterprise Networks*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Scottish Executive (2000b) *The same as you? Review of learning disability services in Scotland*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Scottish Executive (2000c) *Community Care: A joint future. Report by the Joint Future Group*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Scottish Executive (2001a) *Assessing our children's educational needs: The way forward* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Scottish Executive (2001b) *Destination of leavers from Scottish Schools: 2000-01*. Edinburgh: National Statistics Publication
- Scottish Executive (2002) *Research Governance Framework for Health and Community Care*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Scottish Executive (2003a) *Measuring Scotland's progress towards a smart successful Scotland*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office
- Scottish Executive (2003b) *Moving forward! Additional support for learning*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2003c) *Education (additional support for learning) Bill* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2003d) *Inclusiveness: being implemented. Potential: being realised. The Beattie National Action Group progress report and future priorities* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2003e) *A national evaluation of the inclusiveness projects. Interim report to Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

Scottish Executive (2003f) *Supported employment for young people project. Scoping exercise to Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

Scottish Executive (2003g) *Working for a change? Report of the short life working group on employment. Same As You? National Implementation Team* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2004) *Closing the opportunity gap.* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2005a) *Statistics Release: Adults with learning disabilities implementation of "the same as you?" Scotland 2004.* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive National Statistics Publication

Scottish Executive (2005b) *Beattie Inclusiveness Projects, final evaluation* November 2004. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2005c) *Literature review of the NEET group.* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2005d) *Evaluation of the all age guidance projects.* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2005e) *Supported employment for young people pilots.* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2005f) *Statutory guidance relating to the Education (Additional support for learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2005g) *Partnership matters: A guide to Local Authorities, NHS Boards and Voluntary Organisations on supporting students with additional needs in further education.* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2006a) *More choices, more chances.* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Executive (2006b) *Changing lives: Scottish Executive response to the report of the 21st century social work review.* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Office (1995) *Circular FE 13/ 95 to principals of further education colleges, directors of education, directors of social work, general managers of health boards and chief executives of NHS trusts.* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Office (1998) *Modernising community care: An action plan*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Scottish Parliament (2004) *The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act* Edinburgh: The Stationary Office

Seigel, S. and Gaylord-Ross, R. (1991) Factors associated with employment success among youths with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disability* 4 (1): 40-47

Select Committee on Work and Pensions (2003) *Employment for all: interim report*. London: HMSO

Shakespeare, T. (1996) Rules of engagement: Doing disability research *Disability and Society* 1 (11): 115-119

Shakespeare, T. and Watson, N. (1997) Defending the social model *Disability and Society* 12 (2) 293-300

Shakespeare T. (ed) (1998) *The disability reader: social science perspectives*. London: Cassells

Shaw, I. (2003) Qualitative research and outcomes in health, social work and education. *Qualitative research* 3 (1): 57-77

Shearn, J., Beyer, S. and Felce, D. (2000) The cost-effectiveness of supported employment for people with severe intellectual disabilities and high support needs: A pilot study. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disability* 13: 29-37

Sieber, J. (1993) Ethics and Politics in Lee, R. and Renzetti, C. (Eds) *Researching sensitive topics*. Newbury Park: Sage

Skelton, T. and Valentine, G. (1998) *Cool places. Geographies of youth cultures*. London: Routledge

Smith, N., Middleton, S., Ashton Brooks, K., Cox, L. Dobson, B. and Reith, L. (2004) *Disabled people's cost of living*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Smith, R. (2004) A matter of trust? Service users and researchers *Qualitative Social Work* 3 (3): 335-346

Smyth, M., and McConkey, R. (2003) Future aspirations of students with severe learning disabilities and of their parents on leaving special school. *British Journal of Learning Disability* 31: 54-59

Soares, C. (2000) Aspects of youth, transitions and the end of certainties. *International Social Science Journal* 164: 209-217

Stafford, B. (2002) New deal for disabled people: an appraisal. Paper for the Working futures: disability and work seminar, University of Sunderland 3rd December 2003

Stalker, K. (1998) Some ethical and methodological issues in research with people with learning disabilities *Disability and Society* 13(1): 5-19

- Stalker, K. (2003) *Young disabled people moving into adulthood in Scotland*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Foundations. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Stalker, K. and Hunter, S. (1999) To close or not to close? The future of learning disability hospitals in Scotland. *Critical Social Policy* 19 (2): 177-194
- Stalker, K., Baron, S., Riddell, S. and Wilkinson, H. (1999) Models of disability and the relationship between theory and practice in non-statutory organisations *Critical Social Policy* 19 (4), 5-29
- Stanley, K. (2003) The missing million: a longer term vision for disabled people. Paper given to the Working futures: disabled people and work seminar, University of Sunderland, 3rd December, 2003
- Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1990) Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes in Stanley, L. (ed) *Feminist practice*. London: Routledge
- Stepney, P., Lunch, R. and Jordan, B. (1999) Poverty, exclusion and New Labour *Critical Social Policy* 19 (1) 109-127
- Stewart, A., Petch, A. and Curtice, L. (2003) Moving towards integrated working in health and social care in Scotland: from maze to matrix *Journal of Interprofessional Care* 17 (4): 335-350
- Svenhuijsen, S. (2000) Caring in the third way: The relation between obligation, responsibility and care in third way discourse. *Critical Social Policy* 20 (1) 5-37
- Swain, J., Finkelstein, V., French, S. and Oliver, M. (Eds) (1993) *Disabling barriers, enabling environments* London: Sage
- Swain, J., Heyman, B. and Gillman, G. (1998) Public research, private concerns: ethical issues in the use of open-ended interviews with people who have learning difficulties *Disability and Society* 13 (1): 21-36
- Swain, J. and Cameron, C. (1999) Unless otherwise stated: discourses of labelling and identity in coming out in Corker, M. and French, S. (eds) *Disability discourse*: Buckingham: Open University Press
- Swain, J. and French, S. (2000) Towards an affirmation model of disability in *Disability and Society* 15 (4) 569-582
- Taylor, B., McGilloway, S. and Donnelly, D. (2004) Preparing young adults with disabilities for employment. *Health and Social Care in the Community* 12 (2): 93-101
- Taylor, G. (1999) Empowerment, identity and participatory research: using social action research to challenge isolation for deaf and hard of hearing people from minority ethnic communities *Disability and Society* 14 (3): 369-384
- Tett, L. (2003) *ABE and social inclusion*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh
- Tinklin, T. and Hall, J. (1999) Disabled student's experiences in Higher Education in Scotland. *Studies in Higher Education* 24 (2):183-194

- Tinklin, T., Wilson, A. and Riddell, S. (2004) Policy and provision for disabled students in Higher Education in Scotland and England: the current state of play. *Studies in Higher Education* 29 (5): 637-657
- Thomas, C. (1999a) *Female Forms: experiencing and understanding disability*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Thomas, C. (1999b) Narrative identity and the disabled self in Corker, M. and French, S. (eds.) *Disability discourse*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Thomas, C. (2002a) The social model of disability: Theoretical considerations and concerns. Paper given to ESRC Disability Studies Seminar Series, Centre for Disability Studies, University of Leeds, October 2002.
- Thomas, C. (2002b) Disability theory, key ideas, issues and thinkers in Barnes, C., Barton, L. and Oliver, M. (eds) *Disability studies today*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Thomas, N. and O'Kane, C. (1998) The ethics of participatory research with children *Children and Society* 12: 336-348
- Thomson, R. et al (2002) Critical moments: choice, chance and opportunity in young people's narratives of transition. *Sociology* 36 (2): 335-354
- Thornton, P. (2003) Jobcentre Plus: Specialism and mainstreaming. Paper to the Working futures: disability and work seminar, University of Sunderland, 3rd December 2003
- Trade Union Congress (2003) *Setting new goals: disabled people, work and poverty. A report published to mark the International Year of Disabled People* London: Trade Union Publications
- Usher, P. (1997b) Challenging the power of rationality in McKenzie, G., Powell, J. and Usher, R. (1997) *Understanding social research. Perspectives on methodology and practice*. Brighton: Falmer Press
- Usher, R. (1997a) Telling a story about research and research as story-telling: Postmodern approaches to social research in McKenzie, G., Powell, J. and Usher, R. (1997) *Understanding social research. Perspectives on methodology and practice*. Brighton: Falmer Press
- Valentine, G. (2003) Boundary crossings: Transitions from childhood to adulthood. *Children's Geographies* 1 (1): 37-52
- Veck, W. (2002) Completing the story: connecting relational and psychological processes of exclusion *Disability and Society* 17 (5) 529-540
- Vernon, A. (1999) The dialectics of multiple identities and the disabled people's movement *Disability and Society* 4 (3) 385-398
- Vogler, C. (2000) Social identity and emotion: the meeting of psychoanalysis and sociology *Sociological Review* 48 (1): 19-42
- Walker, A. (1982) *Unqualified and underemployed: Handicapped young people and the labour market*. London: Macmillan

- Wallace, C. (1987) *For richer, for poorer. Growing up in and out of work*. London: Tavistock
- Walmsley, J. (1991) Talking to top people: some issues relating to the citizenship of people with learning disabilities. *Disability, Handicap and Society* 6 (3): 219-231
- Walmsley, J. (2001) Normalisation, emancipatory research and inclusive research in learning disability *Disability and Society* (10) 2: 187-205
- Walmsley, J. (2004) Inclusive learning disability research: the non-disabled researcher's role *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 32: 65-71
- Walsh, P.N. and Lineham, C. (1997) Factors influencing the integration of Irish employees with disabilities in the workplace. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 8: 55-64
- Ward, L. (1997) *Seen and heard: involving disabled children and young people in research and development projects*. York: YPS for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Ward, L., Riddell, S., Dyer, M. and Thomson, G. (1991) *The transition to adulthood of young people with recorded special educational needs*. Edinburgh: Departments of Education, Universities of Stirling and Edinburgh
- Warr, P. (1983) Work, jobs and unemployment. *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society* 36: 305-311
- Warr, P. (1987) *Work, unemployment and mental health*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Warr, P. (1994) A conceptual framework for the study of work and mental health. *Work and Stress* 8 (2): 84-97
- Watson, N. (2002) Well I know this is going to sound very strange to you but I don't see myself as a disabled person: identity and disability *Disability and Society* 17 (5) 509-527
- Watson, N. and Farmakopoulou (2003) Motivations for entering and pathways of progression of disabled students in further education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 7 (3): 223-239
- Watson, N., McKie, L., Hughes, B., Hopkins, D. and Gregory, S. (2004) (Inter)dependence, needs and care: The potential for disability and feminist theorists to develop an emancipatory model. *Sociology* 38 (2): 331-350
- Wearmouth, J. Soler, J. and Reid, G. (2003a) *Contextualising difficulties in literacy development: exploring politics, culture, ethnicity and ethics*. London: Routledge Falmer
- Wearmouth, J. Soler, J. and Reid, G. (2003b) *Addressing difficulties in literacy development: responses at family, school, pupil and teacher levels*. London: Routledge Falmer
- Webster, C., Simpson, D., MacDonald, R., Abbas, A., Cieslik, M., Shilrick T. and Simpson, M. (2004) *Poor transitions: Social exclusion and young adults*. Bristol: The Policy Press
- Wehman, P. and Kregel, J. (1995) At the crossroads: Supported employment a decade later. *Journal of the Association of People with Severe Handicaps* 20 (4): 286-299

- Weston, J. (2002) *Choosing, getting and keeping a job: A study of supported employment for people with complex needs*. Scottish Human Services Trust. Final Report. Edinburgh: Scottish Human Services Trust
- White, M. and McRae, S. (1989) *Young adults and long term unemployment*. London: Policy Studies Institute
- Whoriskey, M. (2003) Progress with learning disability hospital closures in Scotland. *Tizard Learning Disability Review* 8 (1): 2-9
- Wilkinson, H. (2001) (Ed) *The perspectives of people with dementia: Research and motivations*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Williams, F. (2001) In and beyond new labour: Towards a new political ethic of care. *Critical Social Policy* 21 (4): 467-493
- Williams, F., Popay, J. and Oakley, A. (1999) *Welfare research: A critical review*. London: UCL Press
- Williams, V. (1999) Researching together. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 27: 48-51
- Williams, V. and Simons, K. (2005) More researching together: The role of non-disabled researchers in working with People First members *British Journal of Learning Disability* 33: 6-14
- Williamson, H. (1997) Status zero: Youth and the underclass in MacDonald, R. (ed) *Youth, the "underclass" and social exclusion*. London: Routledge
- Williamson, H. (1997) Youth work and citizenship in Bynner, J., Chisholm, L. and Furlong, F. (Eds) *Youth, citizenship and social change in a European context*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Wilson, A. and Riddell, S. (1998) *Disabled people, poverty and social exclusion in Glasgow*. Working paper for the Glasgow Regeneration Alliance
- Wilson, A. (2003) 'Real jobs'. 'learning difficulties' and supported employment. *Disability and Society* 18 (2): 99-115
- Wilson, A., Lightbody, P. and Riddell, S. (2000) *A flexible gateway to employment? An evaluation of Enable services' traditional and innovative forms of work preparation*. Glasgow: Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research
- Winch, P. (1990) *The idea of a social science and its relation to philosophy*. London: Routledge
- Witcher, S. (2003) *Reviewing the terms of inclusion: transactional processes, currencies and contexts*. London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion
- Wyn, J. and White, R. (1997) *Rethinking youth*. London: Sage.
- Yin, R. (2003) *Case study research. Design and methods*. Third Edition. London: Sage

Zarb, G (1992) On the road to Damascus: first steps towards changing the relations of disability research production *Disability, Handicap and Society* 7 (2): 125-138

Websites

Brite Initiative (Beattie Resources for Inclusiveness in Technology) Website
<http://www.brite.ac.uk>

Equal Access to Employment Website
http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/Residents/LearningEmployment_Training/Employment_Training/equalaccesstoemploymentinitiative.htm

New Futures Fund Website
http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom_home/stp/extra-support/newfuturesfund1.htm?siblingtoggle=1

Scottish Enterprise Website
<http://www.scottish-enterprise.com>

Legislation

Data Protection Act 1998

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003

Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944

Education (Scotland) Act, 1980

Education Act 1993

Education Act 1996

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004

Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act, 1992

Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Scotland Act, 1998

Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000