Sustainable Hub of Innovative Employment for People with Complex Needs (SHIEC)
WHY SHIEC?

To ensure that people of all ages with complex needs are properly supported to have the same life opportunities as everyone else, including employment, home life, education and leisure.
Work

Benefits
• Material rewards
• Increased independence/empowerment
• Choice (McNaire & Swartz 1997)

Secondary outcomes
• Increased self-esteem & status (Alheit 1994)
• Personal meaning & identity
• Deflects stigma/prejudice
• Community participation (Forrester-Jones & Broadhurst, 2004; 2007; 2008)

Unemployment
• Poverty
• Social Exclusion
• Chronic lethargy & grief (Archer & Rhodes 1987)
• Despair
• Physical & mental ill health
• Marginalisation and poor quality of life
• Attempted/actual suicide
• Unemployment generally unequally dispersed between able/disabled white/ethnic minorities skilled/unskilled and regions
The HUB - A meeting of minds

• a shared recognition from carer, academic, policy and service perspectives that for the most part....

employment for people with learning disabilities who have complex needs is not happening

• we know this from research but most directly from our lived experience

• within the region (and beyond) it is exceptionally rare to find any example of people with complex needs in employment.
Why is this the case?

Employment for people with learning disabilities and further complex needs is:

• Highlighted as a goal in policy (Valuing People Now/Employment Now)

• Evidenced as theoretically and practically possible in research (Gold)

• What carers and those with disabilities want and
  • have a right to
How can we change this?

• We need to find new ways of working through partnership. The skills, knowledge & resources are available but not being used effectively.

• We need to keep a definite focus on bringing about social change for people with the most complex needs through employment

• If we can ensure change for this most complex group, a ripple of positive influence will be generated for those with other needs, including people with milder learning disabilities

• It is not about re-inventing the wheel, but moving it in a different direction about working together to build on current systems and ensure sustainable support.
The innovative nature of the project:

• ensures commitment to a frequently neglected group of individuals
• maximizes and enhances existing resources
• draws stakeholders together in a fresh context
• reflects the diversity of employment needs and opportunities within the region
• allows for adaptation and creation of new resources and approaches to support people with complex needs who are socially excluded.
Hub Partners

- The Challenging Behaviour Foundation
- The Tizard Centre (University of Kent)
- South East Coast Strategic Health Authority
- Linkage Community Trust
- United Response
- John Townsend Trust
- Danshell
- Kingwood
- Care Management Group
- Avenues Trust
- Turning Point
- Barking
- NVFF
What are the Issues?

• Low Expectations
• Limited Opportunities
• Poor Employer Development
• Lack of Expertise in Identifying Individuals’ Employability
• Current Systems
• Fear of Change
• Always Last Group
The Story So Far

Following an initial period of development, the SHIEC project began in May 2010. Since this point the following milestones have been reached:

- Identification of **55** people across the UK who have learning disabilities and complex needs and are seeking employment.

- The **formation of a supportive network** comprising of provider organisations, educational services, family carers, policy makers and academics. SHIEC members meet on a regular basis to discuss progress, barriers and solutions regarding pathways to employment for people with complex needs.

- This has proved **invaluable in terms of sharing learning**, helping to solve problems encountered, providing continuous encouragement to those involved and maintaining the integrity and aims of the project. Further ongoing facilitation of the network and direct support is provided by a Project Manager.
SHIEC members have sought innovative ways of approaching and engaging with employers (including running an employer’s breakfast briefing forum and targeting large employer organisations at a senior level). SHIEC members have also shared learning with other supported employment organisations and projects.

SHIEC members have worked together to develop, share and complete materials for identifying and supporting the aspirations of people with complex needs to work (through systems of vocational profiling).

11 people with complex needs are now engaged in some form of paid employment. One individual has achieved 16 hours of paid work. A further 9 people with complex needs have been supported to access voluntary or work experience placements.

Organisations involved in the project have reported further positive outcomes among staff teams in terms of changing expectations and putting employment on the agenda for people with learning disabilities. Within one organisation, at the time the SHIEC project commenced, 3/31 people with learning disabilities but not complex needs were in voluntary work placements. Since then, 16/31 are using voluntary placements as a stepping stone to paid employment.
Work...Its happening!!

• BEN
• Justin
• Carl
• ++++++
MY STORY
by
CARL JOHNSON
I am 20 years old.

I was born in Kent.

I have been diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy & Epilepsy.

I am non-verbal however have the ability to say a selection of words e.g. Yes, No, Bye, Hello.

I communicate through using makaton signs & by using hand gestures e.g. pointing at what I want or to indicate what I am talking about.

I have a Moderate Learning Disability.
Before CMG

- I went to St Nicholas School in Canterbury, Kent.

- While at school I was offered no work experience placements & employment was not suggested as an option.

- Although I was offered the chance to go to college, I did not want to carry on full time education and the options available were limited.

- I lived at home with my mum and step-dad in Faversham, Kent. I chatted to my mum about my future and I was excited about moving out of home and becoming more independent.

- I started to become frustrated living at home and this was affecting my relationship with my family.
Now... within CMG

• I was really interested in getting into paid employment in a job that I would find interesting.

• I was then told about SHIEC and their involvement with CMG. I began having meetings with Frank to look at possibilities and how to begin getting into employment.

• I started by searching for voluntary employment to gain some more skills to put on my CV.

• When I moved into The Ridgeway, a supported living home, I had a meeting regarding my Person Centred Plan.

• I was asked about my future goals and employment was raised as an option.
Voluntary Employment

Volunteering at Wellgate Farm

Job Role Includes:
• Cleaning out, feed, pet & give water to rabbits.
• Water the plants.
• Brush the kids (baby goats)
• Hold chicks & move them from outside in to the warm.

• I loved looking after the rabbits so much I got my own named ‘Boo’.
I was successful in my interview for the position of assistant waiter, my first job interview!!

I have been there for just over 2 months and I really enjoy it.

I work 2 hours a week during cafe opening hours which are 11am-1pm every Thursday & I earn £7.20 per hour.

I help to lay the table cloths and set the table. I clear the dishes and clean up after everyone has finished eating.
Future Plans

...Dagenham & Redbridge Football Club

- I absolutely love Football & really want to work in the Football industry.
- A number of football clubs have been approached and I got a response from Dagenham & Redbridge.
- I have been offered the chance to sell Match Day Programs on the day of football matches and any other additional positions.
- This will be on a voluntary basis.
Issues facing SHIEC Members which outlined the structural barriers involved in the process (e.g. finances and mobility) as well as outlining staff anxieties surrounding supporting someone with complex needs into employment and the need for realism to deal with knockbacks and the slow pace of the process.

‘Sometimes you go into a place of employment and you can see that people are just seeing the wheelchair, they are not looking at the person’ (5, 4)

‘Some mental health issues, so we take three steps forward and a step back’ (10, 3).

‘I worry about the knock on effects for the young people because you know, we all suffer with disappointment but we are setting these guys up to fail if we continue on the same cycle.’ (10, 2)

[Job centre disability employment advisor] only works half a day per week’ (5, 3)

It’s like the 11th phone call and no-one has rung back, I sometimes think I don’t know how I am going to get through this’ (7, 1)

‘Well I have thought of a lot of things and anything we have thought of we have pursued but it is very, very difficult, very difficult’ (5, 3)
Commitment which depicts how staff and service providers needed high levels of commitment in order to support people with complex needs into employment. This included being resilient to knockbacks, maintaining a positive attitude and thinking creatively about employment solutions as well as being emotionally invested in the project personally.

‘We have got to keep looking and thinking of other ideas, there has got to be a job somewhere that he can do’ (5, 5).

‘You have got to be prepared to put a lot in for maybe a little return at times’ (6,8)

‘You have got to stay positive because I think if you start to be negative then it impacts on the service users’ (3,2)

‘Look at outcomes, be positive and see how you can get the best out of people’ (5, 8)
The Ripple Effect which outlines the positive outcomes on staff members involved in the SHIEC project which included a buzz which was reported within organisations and a general raising of expectations contributing to cultural change within organisations. It was also expressed however, that there were some ongoing goals related to organisational change and the ripple effect.
Questions

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