

**Evaluation of Lincolnshire Local Authority's Strategy for  
Post-16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or  
Disabilities**

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## Executive Summary

Lincolnshire Local Authority has much to celebrate in terms of the success it has had in addressing the issues highlighted in the 2010/2011 review of its post-16 provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). Significant progress has been made in addressing the recommendations within the review report. All the stakeholders interviewed as part of this evaluation were very positive about the progress that has been made, and several expressed the view that Lincolnshire Local Authority is at the spearhead of developments nationally in this area of work.

The appointment of a co-ordinator, line-managed by the Head of Service, to 'drive' the development and implementation of a new strategy for post-16 learners with LDD has been particularly successful. The financial support the Local Authority has given to support the developments has also contributed greatly to the success of the strategy.

The establishment of a steering group and local groups has resulted in good progress being made in networking and developing positive working relationships between providers. This in turn has enabled providers to work together and to make successful bids for funding to develop new provision and programmes. A much wider range of educational provision is now available within the county and this is enabling the needs of many more young people with LDD to be met locally than has previously been the case.

Of key importance for the future, is the continuation of the hard work being carried out to establish links with Adult Social Care and Health, necessary for the planning and commissioning of jointly funded provision. It is essential to recognise that education alone cannot meet all the needs of young people over the age of 16 who have LDD, particularly those who have very complex needs. The co-ordinator is continuing her efforts to secure the involvement of Adult Social Care and Health and progress is being made. The requirements of the Children and Families Bill which highlight the need for joint working between agencies should help to push this work forward.

Although considerable progress has been made in helping young people make a positive transition from school, there needs to be a continuing focus on ensuring that data relating to learners is captured and disseminated to those who need it, that young people and their parents/carers are helped to understand the options available to them, particularly through the use of personal budgets to purchase individually tailored 'packages' of provision, and that decisions about post-16 placements are made early enough to enable smooth transitions to be made to the next placement. Similarly, there needs to be a continuing focus on the transition of young people with LDD from colleges to ensure that they progress to placements that

will meet their ongoing needs and to avoid the potential for them to become part of the NEET (not in employment, education or training) cohort.

More work is also needed to ensure there is sufficient multi-agency funded provision to meet the needs of all young people with Id/d across the county, particularly those who have very complex needs, 'extreme' autism and those who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Work also needs to continue to ensure that the vocational programmes offered by colleges match the employment opportunities available and that there are sufficient supported internships to help learners to progress to employment.

Lincolnshire Local Authority should be commended for its determination to address the issues raised in the 2010/2011 review of its post-16 provision for young people with Id/d and congratulated on the considerable success it has had to date in developing and implementing its strategy for post-16 learners with Id/d. Many young people are already benefiting from the improvements that have come about as a result of the strategy. All the hard work that has been undertaken to plan and implement the strategy has created a firm foundation on which to build for the future. The Local Authority is now well placed to move forward with the next phase of the implementation of its post-16 strategy for young people with Id/d. The recommendations in this evaluation report will, it is hoped, highlight areas where further work will lead to even greater success in meeting the needs of young people with Id/d in Lincolnshire.

## **Introduction**

Lincolnshire's Strategy for Post 16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities was designed to address the issues identified and build upon the recommendations made in reviews that were undertaken in 2010 -2011 of the County's provision for young people with ld/d in its schools and colleges.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the progress that has been made in developing and implementing the strategy and to identify areas that require further development.

# **The Review of Post-16 Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD) in Lincolnshire**

## **National and local context**

The review of Lincolnshire's post-16 provision for young people with ld/d was undertaken at a time when there was a growing realisation nationally that current provision for young people with ld/d was not meeting their needs. The Government's Green Paper, '*Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability*' which was published in March 2011 highlighted the fact that children and young people with special educational needs were not achieving as well as they could and that changes were needed to ensure that education providers enabled young people with ld/d to have 'wider opportunities and support to make the most of their future and give them the best chance of a fulfilling adulthood with employment, good health and independence'.

Similar concerns about provision for young people with ld/d were raised by Ofsted in its report, '*Progression for Post 16 learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*' which was published in August 2011. One of the main findings in the report was that 'Too few young people with ld/d progress from school to complete programmes of learning in post-16 settings which develop greater independence, lead to further study, supported or open employment, or provide skills for independence.' In addition, the report stated that there was insufficient provision available locally to meet the needs of young people with the most significant needs. This resulted in them having to move to residential educational provision away from their families and the report concluded that this practice only 'postponed the issues' as the young people still required specialist provision on their return to their home area.

The review was also taken at a time when the government was emphasising the need for cost savings. For example, the National Audit Office's report '*Oversight of Special Education for Young People Aged 16-25*' which was published in November 2011 identified that when they left school, young people with ld/d were far more likely to be without employment, education or training than young people who did not have ld/d. The report pointed out the significant savings that could be made if young people with ld/d were taught the skills they need to live as independently as possible and to secure employment appropriate to their abilities rather than spend their adult lives being supported financially by the state.

Within Lincolnshire the decision to undertake a review of the post-16 provision available for young people with ld/d was determined partly by the authority's decision to undertake a review of provision within its special schools and mainstream units for children with special educational needs. However, one of the main drivers for the review of post-16 provision was the knowledge that there would be a reduction in the funding allocated by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) to the authority for

funding places for young people with ld/d at Independent Specialist Providers (ISPs) which would necessitate a cut in the budget for placements at ISPs of £2.5 million pounds over the next two years.

**Recommendations of the review of post-16 provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:**

- Develop a countywide strategy to meet the on-going education, care and independence and preparation for employment needs of young people aged 16 – 25 for whom the Local Authority has responsibility
- Establish a working group led by a suitably experienced and knowledgeable officer to lead on the development of the county strategy and delivery of an action plan designed to implement the review of Post-16 Provision
- Develop a baseline of information from which future trends can be identified
- Effectively respond to the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (16-19) and to reduce the need for residential placements with Independent Specialist Providers
- Through dialogue with all Principals of Further Education Colleges and Independent Providers in the county, to continue to secure their on-going participation in and commitment to the Local Authority's strategy in response to the Review of Post-16 Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities and subsequent Action Plan.
- Take full advantage of the facilities and services offered by Independent Training Providers and voluntary organisations in the community, as partners in the delivery of a relevant and personalised approach to young people's learning. Where possible these providers should be encouraged and supported to widen their offer to a larger group of learners
- Continue discussions with Linkage College to identify common ground in terms of implementing the outcomes of the Review of Post-16 Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, and to establish particular contributions which might be made by Independent Specialist Providers
- Build the capacity, competence and confidence of mainstream educational settings to provide for greater numbers of children and young people with special educational needs

- Secure a more collaborative approach to meeting the special educational needs of children and young people in the districts by encouraging greater partnership working between special schools, special schools and mainstream schools and special schools and the further education and training provider sector.

## **Progress to Date in Developing and Implementing Lincolnshire Local Authority's Strategy for Post 16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities**

To address the issues identified and the recommendations made in the Review of Post-16 Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD) in Lincolnshire the Local Authority appointed a Programme Co-ordinator to lead the development of the County's Strategy for Post-16 Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities. The co-ordinator took up her appointment in October 2011 and was line managed by the Head of Service.

The strategy developed by the co-ordinator to address the issues highlighted in the review has provided a useful framework for developments across the county. A great deal of work has been undertaken and considerable progress has been made in addressing all the recommendations made in the review and in improving the provision available within the county for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Without exception, all the stakeholders who were interviewed as part of this evaluation stated their support for the strategy and expressed the view that the co-ordinator, with the support of the Head of Service, had 'moved mountains' since her appointment. The Local Authority is to be congratulated for the commitment it has demonstrated in taking forward this area of work to ensure that young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within Lincolnshire have a range of provision to meet their needs within the county when they reach the age of 16.

The focus of much of the initial work was to establish a clear picture of the provision available for post-16 learners with ld/d across the county and to identify new provision that was needed. Careful thought and planning has gone into trying to ensure that the 'right' provision has been developed in the 'right' places to meet the needs of young people across all parts of the county. This hard work is now bearing fruit and young people are benefiting from a wider range of provision and learning programmes that should enable them to develop skills that will enhance their adult lives. Although it is too early to be able to evaluate the strategy in terms of its impact on young people's achievements and the benefits it has given them in their adult lives, it is a good time to assess the progress that has been made to date in developing and implementing the strategy. This assessment of progress to date is designed to highlight successes in developing and implementing the strategy and to identify areas where further work is needed. This assessment should then enable the Local Authority to plan the next steps in taking the work forward.

The progress that has been made in developing and implementing the county's strategy for post-16 provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is summarised below under the eight priorities listed in the strategic plan.

***Priority 1: To establish a clear working relationship between the range of agencies involved with funding/commissioning of services and provision for young people aged 16-25 who have a learning difficulty and/or disability, leading to creative joint planning and funding of the most appropriate provision for each individual to enable them to make the transition to adult life in their own community***

Good progress has been made in developing positive working relationships between educational providers within the county. The local groups established in each district of the county by the co-ordinator have worked well and have led to better communication, networking and sharing of good practice between providers. Providers feel that they are now able to 'speak with one voice' and this has resulted in them being able to make joint bids for funding for projects. The amount of time and work that has been needed to establish these groups should not be underestimated and all the stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation praised the co-ordinator for her commitment to the establishment of the groups and her continuing support for their work. These groups are now a major asset within the county and should prove to be particularly useful for planning and reviewing the Local Authority's provision for post-16 young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the future.

There is still work to be done in establishing clear working relationships with agencies outside education. The coordinator continues to work hard to secure the involvement of these agencies in the planning of the county's post-16 provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly the involvement of Adult Social Care and Health in relation to their role at the point when young people are making the transition from school to college and again when they are making the transition from college. It appears that responsibility for the transition process is still perceived to lie mainly with education. The stakeholders interviewed as part of this evaluation were of the view that turnover of staff and changes in roles of personnel within Adult Social Care and Health combined with budget and time constraints could be the main causes of slow progress in this area.

As it is very likely that many of the young people who are the focus of this strategy will need support from both Adult Social Care and Health in the future, it is crucial that these agencies work jointly with education to identify and plan the provision that will be needed and that they are actively involved at an early stage in the planning of the young person's transition to post-16 provision. This joint working will be even more important if the requirements of the new legislation (Children and Families Bill) are to be met, particularly in relation to Education, Health and Care plans.

***Priority 2: To establish a system of data capture and analysis which indicates projected needs as early as possible when a young person is making a transition from one provider to another up until the age of 25, allowing maximum opportunity for putting appropriate resources in place***

The stakeholders interviewed as part of this evaluation were of the opinion that this is an area that requires further work. They are of the view that although individual providers may have reliable data it is not clear that the Local Authority has the 'big picture' it needs in order to plan provision effectively.

It appears that the positive working relationships that have been formed within the local groups have led to sharing of data between providers. For example, the closer working relationships between schools and colleges have enabled them to share data about the young people who will be leaving school and making the transition to college and to plan provision to meet their needs.

However, several stakeholders highlighted the reluctance of some providers to share data and one stated that they have to 'drag information from whoever they can'. There appears to be significant differences between schools in terms of the review process and the timely production of reports to inform the transition process. In some, the review process works well and the information is available in good time. However, in others, reviews appear to be delayed and decisions about future placements are made very late causing stress and anxiety for the young people and their parents. It also appears that some young people start post-16 programmes without the provider having much information about their needs. In some cases learners' 139a reports are not received by the provider for some time after the commencement of the learners' placements.

The creation of transition co-ordinators posts to address these issues is now having a positive impact but there is concern about what will happen if these temporary posts are not continued.

A further issue appears to be the lack of information about young people who are leaving colleges. Although colleges are now required to provide destination data for their leavers, the Welfare to Work team reported that they are 'picking up young people who have been sitting at home for months'. This is of concern both in terms of the welfare of the young people themselves and also in terms of the Local Authority being able to identify the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

***Priority 3: To develop a clear knowledge of the provision available to post-16 LLDD within each local area including the offer from colleges, schools, independent training providers, social care, health and the voluntary and community sector and develop a system to share this information in the most appropriate way with the young person, their family/carers and other professional and interested parties involved in supporting the young person***

A great deal of work has been done over the past two years to establish a clear picture of the provision that is available across the county for post-16 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The local groups have again been very useful in facilitating this work. Many of the stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation commented that there is now a greater understanding amongst providers of the range programmes each of them offers and the nature of their specialisms. However, this 'picture' of provision consists mainly of educational provision together with that provided by the voluntary and community sector. There still needs to be greater clarity about the provision and services that are provided by Adult Social Care and Health.

The directory of provision that has been produced in order to share information about the provision available with parents/carers, young people and professionals appears to have been well received. Parents are positive about the fact that it is produced as a paper document whereas some professionals feel that it should be web-based so that the information can be updated as and when necessary. There is some concern that the information about provision might not be getting to everyone who needs it as some interviewees felt that some advisers are still not aware of all the provision available and the nature of this provision eg day only / residential. It also appears that the information may not be reaching all young people as some providers stated that applicants were not applying for places as a result of seeing the provision in the directory.

***Priority 4: To plan and develop the range and capacity of provision across Lincolnshire to meet the identified needs and aspirations of post-16 lldd within their local area, ensuring the learner can access the most appropriate provision and receive the required support and guidance to make the placement successful***

A great deal of progress has been made in extending the range of post-16 provision available for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The early groundwork to establish a picture of the provision available across the county and to identify the gaps where young people's needs could not be met within existing post-16 provision has proved invaluable in providing a firm foundation for planning. The work undertaken by the local groups and the opportunities they have been given by the Local Authority to bid for development funding (£600,000 over two years) have

been particularly positive. In addition, the Local Authority's success in securing approximately £2.75 million of funding from the Demographic Growth Capital Fund has further supported the development work. One interviewee commented that the strategy is 'the most successful thing the authority has ever done'. Members of the local groups have appreciated the opportunity to shape the post-16 provision and feel that a key element of their success in securing funding has been the strength of their joint bids.

The range of new provision that has been developed as part of the strategy is particularly impressive and includes the following:

- Development of the Inglelow Centre at Boston College which provides vocational learning opportunities and entrepreneurial activities including Inglelow cafe, an ebay shop and horticultural facilities;
- Enterprise facilities and the development of Supported Internship Study Programmes at Lincoln College;
- Enhanced personal care facilities at Grantham College
- New accommodation and provision for learners with complex medical needs at New College, Stamford (in partnership with Bourne Willoughby and Spalding Garth Schools);
- Growing Futures (development of a community hub in which space within the building and grounds is leased by a number of organisations including Lincoln College, the Pelican Trust, Mencap and Action for Children). A number of enterprise activities such as a cafe, photography and printing, a soapy car wash and Deals on Wheels (a service for renovating anything that has wheels) are available for learners and there is also a hydrotherapy pool;
- Lyte Bytes Internet Cafe and photography / printing enterprise which provides joint education and training facilities for young people at Grantham College, Earlesfield YPLP and Sandon School in association with the Jubilee Life Centre Charitable Trust;
- Horticultural enterprise for learners at Gainsborough College, Aegir School, Hill Holt Wood and YASIG;
- A high street shop in Stamford (a collaborative project between New College Stamford, Remploy, the Willoughby School, Queen Eleanor School and SENSE) to provide work placements and supported internships;
- Partnership arrangement to provide and share work experience placements for learners at Linkage College, Boston College, the Wolds Federation and Joseph Banks Charitable Trust. Learners can access work placements at each of the sites which enables them to progress from fully supported placements to less sheltered environments and helps them to learn how to travel to work. The partnership has also established a Young Enterprise Board;
- Development of the Pheasantry as a joint project between St Francis School and Grantham College to provide learning opportunities for young people who

have very complex physical, personal care and medical needs and require highly specialised facilities and support.

The extended range of provision that is now available in Lincolnshire for young people with Id/d has resulted in the needs of more of them being able to be met within their local areas. This in turn has enabled the Local Authority to reduce its spending on high cost learners at independent specialist providers and to focus its funding on the development of provision that will meet a wider range of needs both now and in the future. The financial impact that the developments have had can be seen from the fact that the authority's projected costs for high cost learners at ISPs for 2010/2011 were in excess of £8 million and these reduced to approximately £2 million for 2012/13 (which included £600,000 for supported placements in general further education colleges), and in 2013/14 only six learners have been funded for part or full time residential provision.

Although a great deal of progress has been made in developing provision it appears that there is still more to do. There is concern that more multi-agency funded provision is needed in some areas of the county for young people who have very complex and profound difficulties and for those who have 'extreme' autism. There is also a concern that there is insufficient provision for young people who have behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties (BESD). Several interviewees highlighted the need for more supported internships and the need for providers to offer provision at smaller 'satellite' sites to reduce the long commutes that are undertaken by some learners.

Although work based training providers accept learners who have Id/d it does not appear that there is any financial incentive for them to do so as they are not able to claim funding for the additional support many of them need. A further difficulty for work based training providers appears to be the Education Funding Agency's funding arrangements whereby learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are funded (as are all other learners) on the basis of 600 hours on a full-time programme when the learners often need additional time (as a result of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities) to reach their potential and achieve successful outcomes.

Although some progress appears to have been made in relation to supported internships, most of the stakeholders interviewed are of the opinion that there is still work to do. There is a perception that employers do not understand supported internships and finance for both supported internships and work experience is reported to be a problem for schools. There is also concern that individual providers are spending a lot of time negotiating placements for learners and in developing procedures and protocols for such things as applications and health and safety requirements. Duplication of effort could be avoided, and as a result much time saved, if the Local Authority took the lead in developing a working partnership with

the 'big' employers in the county to produce procedures and protocols that could be used by all providers.

The 'demise' of the Connexions service appears to have had a significant impact on this area of work and several interviewees were concerned that some young people had been given little or the wrong advice about the provision available for them. It is clear that the very helpful directory of provision that has been developed cannot itself fill the gap left by the demise of the Connexions service and that young people need high quality advice and guidance about the provision that is available to them. The appointment of three transition officers has been a very positive step in addressing this issue and there is clear evidence that their work is enabling young people to progress from school to post-16 placements that are appropriate for their needs. However, there is concern about what will happen if these temporary posts are not made permanent.

A major concern expressed by a number of interviewees is young people's transition from colleges. Adult Social Care provision is not perceived to be fully meeting needs and there is concern that some learners are quickly losing the skills they have developed at college as a result of this. There is also concern that responsibility for this transition often rests with individual education providers and there is insufficient help available to enable young people and their parents/carers to understand how they can use a personal budget to buy a 'package' of provision that is tailored to the individual needs of the learner. Although the involvement of the Welfare To Work Team in helping young people progress from colleges is seen as very positive and there is clear evidence that they are having significant success in placing young people into employment, there are concerns that they are unable to meet the demand for their service with the resources currently available to them.

***Priority 5: To ensure that post-16 learning opportunities prepare young people for their future lives in for example: sheltered/supported employment, volunteering, independent/supported living or day/residential care. This should be achieved through individual learning programmes incorporating measurable outcomes focused on retention, achievement and destination, captured and analysed through a robust, reliable information management system***

A major advantage of the new provision that has been developed is that providers are now able to offer more opportunities for learners to learn skills that are relevant to their future lives in real environments. Most of the stakeholders who were interviewed as part of the evaluation are of the opinion that 'wheels are slowly turning' and that this area of work is in the early stages of development but 'positive moves' are being made. It is perhaps inevitable that less progress has been made in

relation to this priority as the new provision had to be put in place before new programmes could be implemented.

There are, however, concerns that general further education providers have reduced the provision they have previously made at entry levels 1-3. There are also concerns that programmes within post-16 provision are not well-matched to the range of employment opportunities in the area. For example, colleges are offering programmes such as small animal care but the Welfare to Work team are aware that there are few employment opportunities available to young people with Id/d in this field.

The introduction of study programmes is perceived to be positive by many of the stakeholders who stated that they are now able to develop programmes that are very specific to individual learners rather than having to enter them, as they had previously had to do, for qualification driven programmes that did not meet the learners' needs. Many of the stakeholders expressed their appreciation of the work the co-ordinator has done to raise awareness of study programmes. The review template she has developed to reflect the stages in the RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) process which is at the heart of study programmes is considered to be helpful and is expected to lead to greater consistency in reviewing and recording learners' progress and providing better information about the progress learners have made.

Stakeholders felt that greater involvement from ASC/Health would have a positive impact on this area of work. Their knowledge and experience of, for example, supported living environments would enable them to influence the development of study programmes to ensure that the programmes would equip young people with the skills they need for such environments.

***Priority 6: To undertake a skills audit to identify the range, nature and location of existing skills. Implement a programme of training and development and a skills sharing strategy across the county to ensure that providers are able to meet the needs of young people within Lincolnshire***

The audit of staff skills provided very useful information about staff who have specialist skills and experience that they could share with other staff across the county. It also highlighted areas of need where training would be required to support the implementation of the strategy.

Many of the stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation were very positive about the training that had been provided. They stated that the meetings of the local groups had been very useful for sharing information and keeping up to date with national and local developments. They also welcomed the opportunities there had been to share skills such as Makaton signing between staff in schools and colleges.

The TSI (Training in Systematic Instruction) training was particularly valued and several stakeholders gave examples of how young people had made significant progress in developing skills as a result of this method of training. The RARPA training was also viewed positively and thought to be useful in helping staff understand how to use the RARPA process within study programmes.

The financial support that has been given by the Local Authority and CfBT to individual staff has been much appreciated. For example, a member of college staff has been supported financially to undertake a post-graduate degree in autism to help the college develop its provision to meet the needs of these learners. Financial support has also been very helpful in enabling a college to release a member of support staff to go into a special school for one day per week for two terms to work with learners who will be progressing from the school to the college to facilitate their transition.

***Priority 7: To create appropriate channels for sharing information between providers and other agencies and develop clear, transparent, timely lines of communication with young people, their families and/or carers***

The local groups have proved to offer a particularly effective means of sharing information particularly in the way they have enabled providers to develop the positive working relationships which are necessary for this. Several stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation stated their belief that there are now 'firmer foundations' for sharing information than there has been previously.

However, there are still concerns about the reluctance of some providers to share information. Although competition between providers and the new funding process were thought to be reasons why it might be difficult to get information, it is unlikely that these are the only factors. One stakeholder stated that providers 'miss Connexions dreadfully' and it may be that there is still a gap to be filled in terms of the role of Connexions officers in passing on information.

The issue of decisions about a young person's next placement after school being made very late was raised as a particular concern by several stakeholders. The lateness of these decisions is particularly stressful for young people and their parents and/or carers and impacts negatively on the transition process. Although some decisions appear to be delayed as a result of difficulties in completing reviews in schools, the main reason for late decisions appears to be related to funding. Parents are not clear about the criteria that are used to decide whether or not a young person is eligible for educational funding and similarly whether or not they are eligible for support from Adult Social Care and/or the Health Authority. Joint planning and commissioning of provision through Education, Adult Social Care and Health needs to be developed fully. A further factor may be the lack of a brokerage service that works with individual young people and their families/carers to make

them aware of the post-16 provision that is available and to help them create a 'package' of provision that is carefully matched to the needs of the young person and his/her family. Difficulties may also be a consequence of the fact that the practice of using personal budgets to purchase such a 'package' appears to be very underdeveloped.

***Priority 8: To ensure that the Local Authority continues to meet its legal obligations in relation to 16-25 provision for LLDD***

Much of the work that has been undertaken in relation to the planning and implementation of the Local Authority's strategy for post-16 provision for young people with Id/d has helped the authority to respond to government initiatives and recommendations. It is also helping the Local Authority to take positive steps towards being able to meet the requirements of new legislation within the Children and Families Bill which will come into force in September 2014.

The issues that the Authority has had to face in relation to its post-16 provision for lldd are common to many other local authorities across the country. Several of the stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation were of the opinion that Lincolnshire Local Authority is at the 'spearhead' of developments in this area of work.

The appointment of a co-ordinator to 'drive' the development of the new strategy and the provision of financial support for its implementation have contributed very significantly to the progress that has been made to date. The challenge now for the Local Authority is to build upon this progress to address the issues that have been identified as part of the evaluation.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for the consideration of the Local Authority. They are designed to build on the considerable successes of the strategy to date and to inform any future development work.

### 1 Multi-agency planning and commissioning of the 'local offer'

- Continue to work to secure further involvement of Adult Social Care, Health and voluntary organisations in the planning, development and delivery of multi-agency funded post-16 provision and support to meet the needs of young people with Id/d across the county
- Ensure there is sufficient multi-agency funded provision to meet the needs of young people who have profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities together with complex medical needs, those who have 'extreme' autism and those who have behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties
- Ensure the continuation of the local groups to support effective communication and to provide a focus for the joint planning and commissioning of post-16 provision and services to meet the needs of young people with Id/d in each area of the county.

### 2 Data and information sharing

- Continue to investigate reliable means of capturing accurate data
- Develop protocols for sharing information between providers and agencies
- Continue to update and produce the directory of provision as a paper document and investigate the possibility of producing a web-based version of the directory.

### 3 Advice and guidance

- Ensure young people with Id/d and their parents/carers are given good quality and timely advice and guidance to help the young people make successful transitions from school and from college
- Review the roles of the learning difficulty advisers and the transition officers to ensure they are used to best effect in supporting young people with Id/d and their parents/carers through the transition process
- Pilot the use of a brokerage system to help young people with Id/d and their parents/carers to use individual budgets to purchase individually tailored 'packages' of provision
- Ensure funding decisions re young people's placements on leaving school are made early enough to enable them to make a smooth transition to their next placement.

#### **4 Range of provision**

- Encourage the further development of study programmes
- Promote the development of supported internships to providers and employers and investigate the financial difficulties that might hinder this work
- Ensure the skills and experience of the Welfare to Work team are used to best effect in helping providers to identify vocational programmes that are well-matched to employment opportunities
- Allocate responsibility to a post holder in the Local Authority to take the lead in developing a working partnership with the 'big' employers in the county to explain supported internships and to produce procedures and protocols for matters such as applications and health and safety that can be used by all providers
- Ensure work based training providers are not discouraged from making provision for young people with Id/d through a lack of additional support funding and inflexibility in the number of hours for which learners with Id/d can be funded on a full-time programme.

## **Annex 1: Methodology**

The evaluation comprised the following elements:

- Scrutiny of relevant documents and reports
- Telephone interviews with stakeholders including representatives from: special schools; general further education colleges; independent specialist colleges; work-based training providers; Welfare to Work team; transitions officers; parents. Many of these representatives have also been members of the strategic planning group and/or local groups.
- Visit to Growing Futures
- Discussions with young people with Id/d.