

# East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership



East Midlands  
Improvement and  
Efficiency Partnership

## East Midlands successfully implements national scheme to support people with learning disabilities ▼



Families hearing about personal budgets

## 'Getting a Life' project helps people with learning disabilities in four East Midlands' local authorities ▼

As part of the Joint Improvement Partnership (JIP) plan to support people with learning disabilities to live an ordinary life, the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) funded the 'Getting a Life' (GAL) programme to be implemented in the region.

Four local authorities within the East Midlands region took part in projects to increase the number of

people between 14-25 years old with learning disabilities find paid employment.

From the two projects which have now completed, ten young people go into paid employment and a further twelve are being supported to look for full or part time work.

*"It is fantastic to see local authorities from across the East Midlands taking part in the successful GAL*

*programme. This initiative does excellent work for young people with learning disabilities across all areas of their lives. I am delighted to see the four authorities involved achieving such positive outcomes for the young people in our area, which will serve to provide them with a brighter future.”*

Councillor Robin Brown  
Cabinet Member for Health and Social Services  
Northamptonshire County Council

## Establishing GAL in the East Midlands ▾

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GAL is a national, cross-Government initiative, established in 2007, which is part of the Government’s Valuing Employment Now strategy. The aim of the strategy is to address the problems facing young people with learning disabilities and to get more people with learning disabilities into employment. GAL is showing how people in local areas can work together so that young people can move from school or college to paid employment.

In 2009, ten pilot sites had been set up across the UK, but none existed in the East Midlands. Following an advertising campaign to recruit interest from within the region, Lincolnshire County Council was selected by the national team to be the pilot local authority.

Northamptonshire County Council and Lincolnshire County Council are similar because they both cover wide rural areas, populated with market towns, which provide a different set of challenges to city locations. City locations have challenges such as higher levels of unemployment and to ensure fair representation of the entire county, Derby City Council and Nottingham City Council also took part.

Each of the four local authorities worked with 30 young people between the ages of 14 and 25 years old as part of the GAL scheme either across just one school, such as Derby and Nottingham City Councils or a range of schools.

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[www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk](http://www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk)

## Steering the project in the right direction ▾

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In order to ensure that the project remained on track across the four local authorities involved, a steering group was set up for each area and a lead person nominated in each as well.

The local steering group included representatives from the schools involved, Connexions, adult and social care, commissioners, education business partnerships and person centred planning staff. Alongside this the leads met monthly as a regional group to share best practice and resources such as person centred planning tools.

One successful local authority initiative, which was shared at

a regional steering group and subsequently implemented more widely in the region, was Lincolnshire's Industry Days. The Industry Days took place in the schools Lincolnshire was working with, and brought local employers in to talk about the possible careers options which may be available to the students. Lincolnshire felt it was important to expose the young people to the opportunities available to them and 92% of students said that they enjoyed the workshops. As a result of these Industry Days many young people considered careers they hadn't considered before.

## The Core Programme ▾

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### The Review Process

Nationally, the traditional transition reviews which took place with a young person at age 14 (in year nine), were identified as being very one sided and too focused on continuing education rather than looking at what a young person really wanted to do with their life beyond school.

GAL introduced person centred reviews to all of the trial sites across the East Midlands.

These put more emphasis on the child's point of view, giving them the opportunity to really voice their thoughts and opinions and providing a forum to discuss these in more detail. They also bring together all the people who are involved in the future of the young person including their family and friends, professional organisations such as Connexions, social workers, their teachers and sometimes health professionals if appropriate.

A DVD was made for YouTube to show the benefits of person centred reviews for school staff, children and families. Follow this link to view -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/helensandersonHSA#p/c/1FCA6DC3D7A1C241>

Head teachers from across the East Midlands endorse person centred reviews.

*“Person centred reviews ensure that the focus of support for each young person is on facilitating their choices about their future”.*

Debbie Withers  
Head teacher  
Wren Spinney School  
Kettering

*“Person centred reviews offer the opportunity for all people concerned with the young person to be present in the one forum enabling the sharing of positives and concerns.*

*What’s working/ what’s not working tool is invaluable when looking to deliver personalised learning packages.*

*Meeting with parents before the review gives a more holistic approach to planning the next stages for a young person.”*

Lynne Thompson  
Head teacher  
Friars School  
Wellingborough

## Creating individual plans for young people ▾

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A second important step in the process was to create an individual plan with each young person. These focus on identifying the right path for each individual young person to follow leading to

paid employment. The pathway analyses what options are available for young people such as doing a Saturday job or to start career planning at the age of 14.

## Co-production Events ▾

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Each local authority involved in the programme ran a co-production event early in the programme. Pre-meetings were held with young people and their families to prepare them for the format and style of the events.

The events brought together professionals and families to examine the local pathways and at this point young people signed up to the programme formally and agreed to set targets. For example, one of the key objectives was to

ensure young people with learning disabilities had the option to gain external work experience during year 10, consistent with the rest of the population.

The output of these events was a shared understanding among the attendees and action plan that drives the local programme priorities.

### Setting Individual Goals ▾

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As well as the group work at events, individual work with young people and families also took place as part of the programme. Each young person identified a personal goal for example to gain work experience, find paid employment, to receive a personal budget, which is part of the Government's new agenda to support people achieve their goals, providing the funding helps to meet their outcomes and leads to employment.

In line with this agenda, both Nottingham and Northamptonshire have linked personal budgets pilots for children and young people to their GAL programmes, Nottingham are still at the early stages but five young people in Northamptonshire have their own personal budget which they are using to fund their support.

### Preparation for Adult Services ▾

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The programme also works with young people with learning disabilities in supporting the move from child to adult services. This transition can often be difficult because people don't know what to expect from adults services. For example, young people with learning disabilities may never have visited their GP, as they will have been under the care of a paediatrician until the age of 18 and so there are many new experiences which need to be prepared for.

A key part of the programme is about raising aspirations of young

people and their families about what is positive and possible in the future. A Leadership Programme was established including six sessions for each of the 30 families in each of the East Midlands local authorities. These sessions were run by the Regional Programme Manager for GAL in her capacity as Regional Transitions Lead alongside local services and teams.

The sessions brought families and young people together to hear about and explore in more detail of all of the options that may be available to them in adult life.

Sessions covered Employment, Personalisation, Further Education, Housing, Health and Leisure.

For example during sessions on Housing and Employment families had the opportunity to examine the practical realities of what paid employment really entails and to dispel any myths which may exist among young people with learning disabilities around never being able

to have a home of their own.

To inspire the attendees at these sessions, young people with learning disabilities who have succeeded in either getting full time employment or had made a less traditional choice and started a work related qualification or course came along to share their stories and experiences.

## Learnings from the project ▾

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There have been some fundamental key learnings as a result of this project in the East Midlands.

- The programme has highlighted the benefits that come from working closely with schools both in terms of changing how they organise their curriculum and getting young people thinking and talking about jobs.
- The programme identified a need to collect information about requirement college courses at a much earlier stage. It was also important to make sure the right courses were available locally to avoid the need to go away to specialist provision out of the area.
- It was highlighted that some young people were going to college but not actually moving forward with their ability to learn or having to seek education in residential colleges away

from their local area and earlier discussion about future choices would help. As a result of the programme one young person has changed their mind about going away to college.

- There is still a need to get children and adult services working closely together to support young people through the difficult transitional phase. It is important that children are supported in planning for their future when they are 14 years old rather than waiting until they are moved to adult social care at 18 years old.
- The project has also highlighted that families and professionals need to have more confidence in young people with learning disabilities, so that they have higher expectations of themselves and different aspirations.

## Outcomes and Success Stories ▾

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As a result of this programme seven young people from Lincolnshire County Council have gone into paid employment and a further five young people are actively seeking work. In Northamptonshire three young people are in paid employment, four more are either doing work experience or college courses and fifteen have a PATHS plan mapping their own routes to employment with seven actively seeking work.

There is a wide variety of jobs and outcomes that the young people involved have been able to secure:

- Two young people from Lincolnshire have gone into admin roles and a further two are working in a shop.
- One young person in Northamptonshire now works as a lunchtime supervisor in a primary school.
- Another young person from Northamptonshire wanted to work with children in a nursery and is now taking an NVQ course in childcare.
- None of the young people involved are planning on attending day centres any more, which would have cost £12k per year per person and has therefore provided to be highly cost effective.
- Another young person has opted for local college instead of independent specialist residential college, which would have cost between £40-90k a year.

*“The results of this project speak for themselves and I am delighted to see such positive outcomes for so many young people with learning disabilities in our area. I am incredibly proud to be involved with the GAL project in the East Midlands. I have been very impressed with the huge amount of enthusiasm and hard work from everyone involved. It is great to see tangible results, with a number of young people with learning disabilities supported to get paid jobs and managing their support through personal budgets. Alongside this families are more confident that their children can go on to achieve the same things as other young people.”*

Rachel Holynska  
Deputy Regional Director for  
Social Care  
Department of Health East  
Midlands

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## East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership Case Studies

The East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) has funded this initiative with £85,000.

The East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) is committed to celebrating the successful, innovative and imaginative project work that exists in the East Midlands region.

The EM IEP Support Team publish case studies showing how East Midlands councils are improving services and delivering significant improvements and efficiencies.

The case studies are intended to inspire councils in the region, and indeed nationally, to transform services and benefit from the processes developed by those councils that have pioneered the way forward.



DERBY CITY COUNCIL



Northamptonshire  
County Council



Nottingham  
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