

Putting People in Control

This is a transcript of the Windows media video clip “putting people in control”.

Jonathan Elliott, Presenter with IHMTV: “The freedom to enjoy an active life and have all the chances that society offers is something that many people take for granted. But for people with learning disabilities participating in their community as fully as they can is a right they have only just started to enjoy. It wasn’t long ago that Paul Davidson wouldn’t have dreamed of a life of the typical 25-year old Cumbrian lad. A job, a girlfriend, his own place and the odd night down the pub would have once seemed hopelessly out of reach. But today Paul’s in early at the Whitehaven Sports Centre, eager to get stuck into his duties. It’s a part-time job he’s had for a year.”

John Carruthers, Manager of Whitehaven Sports Centre: “Over the past 12 months that we’ve known Paul I think he’s come on leaps and bounds. When he first came here he was quite shy and quite reserved. As time went on, certainly over a few months, he started to come out of himself and the reserved, shy Paul that we knew earlier became quite, I wouldn’t say boisterous, but quite well in with everybody and he wasn’t afraid to talk with people and ask questions.”

Jonathan Elliott, Presenter with IHMTV: “But this isn’t a case of Paul being helped out by a well-meaning local business. He’s building a life for himself with the help of a package of initiatives from Cumbria County Council that aims to get the very best out of people with learning disabilities. Paul not only has one job, but two. Oh, and he’s got a girlfriend, too. And if all goes according to plan he’ll be getting his own place soon as well.”

Paul Davidson: “I do what I have to do. I put bikes away, clean tables and put badminton nets up, mop the floor.”

Jonathan Elliott, Presenter with IHMTV: “And what’s the best thing?”

Paul Davidson: “Money and, I think, being happy here.”

Graham Hodgkinson, Learning Disability Services, Cumbria County Council: “Between 10 and 20 years ago most people with learning disabilities lived in hospitals, they didn’t take part in the community as a whole and it was considered at the time that people were best looked after together in large groups. In recent years what we’ve been trying to do is to change the nature of the way that we support people with learning disabilities.”

Jonathan Elliott, Presenter with IHMTV: “Paul was helped into the world of work by a partnership between Cumbria County Council and West House – a voluntary organisation working with people with learning disabilities. Today, Paul has dropped in to see a former employer, a market garden up the road from his house.”

Jonathan Elliott, Presenter with IHMTV: “Giving people the means to get the best out of life regardless of their disability is at the heart of Cumbria County Council’s policy. That means a package of services and opportunities tailored to the particular needs of each individual.”

Jonathan Elliott, Presenter with IHMTV: Not just that, it’s a package that puts individuals in charge of their life as well. The person-centred approach behind the partnership means for Paul and people like him self-directed support - and that also incorporates budgeting. Service users are given the freedom to buy in the support they need and shape the lifestyle that suits them best. And this weekend Paul’s going to enjoy the fruits of his labours just like his peers - with a couple of pints down the pub.”