Education and Training

It is sad but true that there is so much bullying in schools. The survey also shows how for people with learning difficulties it goes on in later life. It affects people badly, has on-going effects and more action to tackle it is needed. Bullying is one of the things that people with learning difficulties have always spoken up about.

In our experience the potential of people with learning difficulties has been missed. Training and education of people with learning difficulties is not linked to work. The survey shows that there is a gap in training directly linked to employment opportunities, including workplace training.

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We asked about different types of education and training. We asked people about:

- the school that they went to when they were children
- whether people were going to college at the moment
- whether they were doing any training courses at the moment
- whether they went to a day centre.

Schooldays

Overall, nearly three in four people (72%) went to a special school, one in ten (10%) went to a special unit in a mainstream school and just under one in five (18%) went to ordinary classes in mainstream school.
These figures changed a lot with the age of the person we interviewed. This is shown in Figure 13. These changes are probably due to changes in the way people with learning difficulties have been educated. It was only in 1971 that children with severe learning difficulties had a right to an education in England.

![Figure 13: The Percentage of People in Each Age Group Who Went to Special School, a Special Unit in a Mainstream School or a Mainstream School Mainstream](image)

We wanted to know whether some people were more likely than others to have gone to a special school. Because the Government has made lots of changes to the way special schools are used, we just looked at this for people under 30 years old.\(^{20}\)
There were only two things that were associated with having gone to a mainstream school: being younger and having lower support needs.

We asked people whether they liked school. Overall, three out of four people (75%) said they did like school. We looked for things that predicted whether people said they enjoyed school.

The following list starts with the things that were most important and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to say they enjoyed school if they:

- had not been bullied at school
- went to a special school
- were not poor
- did not live in a more deprived area
- were Asian.

Nearly half of the people we talked to (43%) said they had been bullied at school. We looked for things that predicted whether people said they had been bullied at school.

The following list starts with the things that were most important, and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to say they had been bullied at school if they:

- were younger
- went to a mainstream school (especially a special unit in a mainstream school)
- had lower support needs
- had a long-standing illness or disability
- had poor health
- were women
- were poor
- lived in more deprived areas
We asked people what type of school they would have preferred to go to. Overall, people said that they would prefer to go to the same type of school that they attended. Three out of four (72%) people who went to a mainstream school said they would prefer to go to a mainstream school. Four out of five (81%) people who went to a special school said they would prefer to go to a special school.

Finally, we asked people about what qualifications they got while at school. Because exams and qualifications have changed so much, we only looked at what younger people (aged under 25) told us. Overall, just under half (43%) of people said they had left school with at least one qualification. The most common qualifications younger people left school with were

- GCSEs (gained by 19%)
- NVQs (12%)
- City & Guilds (4%)
- Asdan (3%)
- A certificate (3%)

**Current Education and Training**

In the survey we talked to 928 people who were under 25 years old. Just over half (52%) of these people were attending school or college.

Over one in three people of all ages (36%) said they were currently doing some kind of course or training. Of the people who were not doing a course, nearly half (40%) said they would like to do one.

- Colleges (74% of people taking courses)
- At a day centre (22%)
- At work (5%)
The most common places people were taking courses were:
- Colleges (74% of people taking courses)
- At a day centre (22%)
- At work (5%)

The most common types of courses people were taking were:
- Life skills (26%)
- Arts, craft or drama (24%)
- Information technology or typing (19%)
- Literacy and numeracy (15%)
- Farming, gardening or horticulture (9%)
- Caring (2%)

We wanted to know whether some people were more likely than others to be doing a course. The following list starts with the things that were most important, and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to be doing a course if they:
- were younger
- had low or moderate support needs
- did a wider range of community-based activities
- saw friends with learning difficulties more often
- were not poor
- did not have a paid job
- saw friends who did not have learning difficulties less often

Day Centres
We asked people about going to day centres. Just over one in three people (39%) said they went to a day centre. Of the people who went to a day centre, nearly half (42%) went for five days a week. Of the rest, similar numbers went one, two, three and four days a week.
Nearly everyone (96%) who went to a day centre said they liked going to a day centre. Nearly everyone (98%) who went to a day centre said the staff were nice and polite to them.

Because it is often difficult for others to know what people really like, we looked at how happy people were when the answers were only given by people with learning difficulties. They were just as positive. Nearly everyone (96%) who went to a day centre and could tell us about it said they liked going to a day centre. Nearly everyone (98%) who went to a day centre and could tell us about it said the staff were nice and polite to them.

We wanted to know whether some people were more likely than others to go to a day centre. The following list starts with the things that were most important, and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to go to a day centre if they:

- had higher support needs
- were older
- were not poor
- lived in residential care or a Supporting People scheme
- were women
- lived in a less deprived area
- were Asian

Work, Training & Day Centres

Finally, we looked at whether people either had a job or were doing a course or went to a day centre. Just under one in three people (29%) did none of these things. A small number of people (3%) did all three.
We wanted to know whether some people were more likely than others to have a job, go to a day centre or be doing a course. The following list starts with the things that were most important, and ends with the things that were least important. People were more likely to have a job, go to a day centre or be doing a course if they:

- Were not poor
- Lived in a less deprived area
- Did not live in NHS accommodation
- Did not live alone