

**Report on Project for Social Inclusion of
Children with Visual Impairment into
Mainstream Community Activities that are
already running.**

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A B S T R A C T

The report is the result from the first year of a three year project for social inclusions of young people from age 5 to 18 becoming involved in their local community activities. Funded by BBC Children in Need. The project found the best way to meet up with families was to go and see them. The experts on what was needed was found within speaking to the families. The findings were that during transition times children dropped out of activities, mainly because their friends did. The families felt that not many people were aware of visual impairments and felt that activity organisers would benefit from a place for advice. Families often felt that their young person would benefit from meeting somebody else of their child's age group with a visual impairment and also somebody who was a couple of years older and further on in the education system as a family. It was felt that this could be facilitated by a letter being sent out two or three times a year and also by a meeting/group get-together for families two to three times a year. It was felt to try to start a training program for organisers and also to try to introduce or reintroduce three young people into activities over the next year on an individual basis.

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Whilst doing the background “research” into the project, such as reading conference reports, books and papers and discussions with various people from various organisations such as personnel within Fife Sensory Impairment Centre, the Education Sensory Impairment Services in Fife, and the RNIB in London, Wales and Edinburgh, it started to become apparent that making contact with the families and children with visual impairment would be the most effective way to start the project. It was felt that these were the people with the best experience of the community in relation to the visual impairment of a young person in Fife, and in particular their local area. During discussions on how to contact the people and arrange a meeting, the diversity of the project started to become very apparent with regards to the individual differences involved. The types of differences which needed to be considered are: briefly; the type of visual impairment, age, gender, area in which they live, and the individual themselves. This would require different interests, needs, desires and ambitions being taken into account. The differences will be detailed later. Due to the individuality of the young people involved it was therefore decided to not only start with the families themselves but also to meet up with them on an individual basis, with a series of questions. The questions were based on the questions used in “Promoting social inclusion of pupils with visual impairment in mainstream schools in Scotland” by Marianna Buultjens &

Joan Stead with Mary Dallas. The questions were a good example to use because they had been used before, and they were set in such a way that would draw out in a broad manner the individual perspectives of both parents and young people. The discussions with the parents and young people did high light the differences in individual requirements. The interview did not focus on the differences of the individuals' visual impairment. However, further detail on the differences of visual impairment is outlined in the next paragraph to enable a base from which to understand the requirement of speaking to individuals in regard to social inclusion and the type of visual impairment. Fortunately, the small number of people and area involved made this a possible way to start.

Diversity of Visual Impairments

There are huge differences in what a visual impairment means to an individual who is registered blind or visually impaired arises from the different types of visual impairment. For a person to be registered blind they do not have to be totally blind; for example it is rare for a person who is blind to be totally unable to see. Some can 'see' if it is light or dark and can therefore detect where a window is in a room or a light that is on. Some can have their central field of vision whereas others have their peripheral vision. Some can see to read if they are close, others may need a magnifier. Colours can make a difference as well. Therefore, the type of visual impairment is very individualistic. The individuality of a visual impairment means that it is not possible to state that all people registered blind or with a visual impairment need to have a white/bright yellow strip on a step, if the peripheral vision is good then a person may not need this.

However, if the central vision is good and the peripheral vision poor then the individual may need to be made aware of changes to the surroundings.

There are problems with colour blindness; some children just cannot see red on the whiteboard and others have problems with green.

Age/Gender Differences

The age difference for the project ranged from age 5 to 18 years. The gender also adds to the complexity at different ages as there are differences in interests. A five to seven-year-old girl is starting school, making friends and usually playing imaginative role-play games; which are much easier social activities for young people with a visual impairment to engage in than football. Football is what a boy of this age is more likely to be playing when starting school, making friends and developing socialisation. This will continue into the primary-secondary school change over. Girls, however, stand around talking most of the time. Boys play football or “play fighting”. The effect on the boys with certain visual impairments has been noted such as they tend to be less included with their peer group and tend to gravitate towards the girls or members of staff if they can.

Variety in Localities within the Fife Area

The area covers the whole of Fife, with a variety of villages and towns, the sizes of which vary. Therefore the activities offered in the local community vary too. For example some local communities have a park in the area and very little else whereas other areas have an active leisure centre or village hall with activities such as karate, dance classes, and drama groups.

Support and Friendships

The individual young people are varied too, ranging from ones with a visual impairment alone and/or with complex needs and/or learning difficulties, from confident to communication difficulties. Some of the children were able to access various groups with minimal help and indeed a number of the children were accessing different groups activities whereas some would have a friend and part of the project has high-lighted the importance of the friends being their guide and mentor in activities; some friends have given up an activity which resulted in the young person with a visual impairment giving up also. Some young people due to other impairments were unable to access the activities in the same way as others. For example a person unable to walk and in a wheelchair is able to “run” in the race if they push the wheels or if in an electric wheelchair, push the “accelerator” on the wheelchair.

Variety of Activities Available

The number of different community activities available over the whole of Fife was huge and as diverse as the individuality of the young people the project was for. It was felt that, after discussions with young people and families, community activities then needed to be looked at from the individuals perspectives and in that way to become interactive with the community organisers and activities. The few contacts that were made earlier in relation to activities proved very positive and people were eager to do something. However, the interests of the young people were not known

and neither were the young people. Hence, it all seemed to be directed towards first meeting the families and young people.

Method

Young people aged 5 to 18 years old were interviewed and their parents. Usually it was the mother, sometimes both parents and on two occasions the father only. On one occasion it was easier to interview the sibling of one of the children to get a response from the other and also to prevent the sibling feeling 'left out' as became apparent very early into meeting the family. At this first stage the families visited are the people who responded to the mail shot; or by a follow-up call, if their name and address and home line were on the books for Fife Society for the Blind.

The mail shot an example is in appendix 1 went out to 102 people, 87 were sent via the education department and 15 from Fife Society for the Blind. The Project Co-ordinator contacted the people who returned the form by telephone to arrange a convenient time to visit the families at home.

The interview started with me introducing myself and then asking some questions. The questions used were taken from "Promoting social inclusion of pupils with visual impairment in mainstream school in Scotland" – a project that was funded by the Scottish Executive Education Department, Special Educational Needs Innovation Grants Programme (April 2001 – March 2002) by Marianna Buultjens & Joan Stead with Mary Dallas. The questions asked in this project of both young people and parents are attached (see Appendix 2). Initially the interviews were recorded but the

recording could not be heard; some of the children found the equipment distracting and the most helpful information came once the recording stopped. The recording was therefore abandoned. The interviewer who was the same person in each meeting made handwritten notes at the time. The analysis of the interviews, were detailed in the discussion section of this report, and tabulated in the appendix looked at the individual questions in turn for all young people and families. It was then decided to look specifically at the age, area, and activity type: the activity being split into sport, cultural, youth group and then applying the information on an individualistic group point of view.

It was felt that the people who responded to the mail shot would possibly be people who were involved with local community activities and people who were on the lists for Fife Society for the Blind, which is an organisation within the volunteer sector of the community, the argument being that if a person had responded to the mail shot they were organised and interested in activities and social inclusion which is what the mail shot was about and if a person was on the mailing lists for Fife Society for the Blind they had managed to access this and would more than likely be able to access other organisation.

Results

Initial Mail shot sent to 102 with 87 from Education and 15 from Fife Society for the Blind. 36 forms were filled in either by the family returning them in the post or through a follow-up telephone calls asking whether the form had

been received and 26 families were interviewed. One person declined the interview. There were another ten to be interviewed at a later stage.

The results showed the diverse variety in areas and individuals that was expected.

Twenty-six families were visited and twenty-five of the parents were interviewed. There was one 'young person' of 18 whose parents were not interviewed due to his age and the parent was not around at the start of the interview. There is a summary of the result in Appendix 3 for parents' responses and Appendix 4 for children's responses.

Best thing about the Community/Local Area

The first question for parents was "What do you like best about the community in which you live?" The answers were varied and have been divided up to fit under nine headings, under the heading for amenities were answers which corresponded to shop, close to facilities, near most places, central, things close to here, bus stop outside most things in walking distance, easy to get to places etc. A list of these break downs is in Appendix 4.

Parents' Responses on Best thing about Community

Community Feeling

Nine felt there was a community feeling about where they lived and seemed positive with other items such as knowing people; twelve parents

responded about knowing people, as would be expected the feeling of a community seemed to link up very closely with knowing people. Therefore, it appears that a person who feels there is community about where they live they also know people and this makes a feeling of a more positive outlook on life.

Small

Three people responded to where they lived as being small and this linked up with ideas that things were accessible; therefore it does not appear that a person's perception of their area being small is isolating in anyway.

Knowledge of Local Area

Five people implied that the area was known, it is felt that this is a very conservative number as it was not a question asked directly. Of the five one of the comments was "area OK" "I don't bother with anybody", which would really in effect could imply that the area was safe rather than the area is known and therefore easier for the young person to walk around.

Amenities Close by

Six people responded to indicate that a good thing about where they live was that amenities were close by. The table in appendix 5 showed more responses than five this was due to one parent saying three comments which indicated amenities were close by ie "things close to here", "bus stop outside" "all in walking distance". Amenities being close by was taken to indicate that various activities were also available in the vicinity.

School Close by

Nine people indicated that the school being close by was one of the best things about where they live. Often this meant that school friends were in the area too. On most occasions it enabled the children to be able to walk to and from school on their own. Which could suggest that independence was being encouraged, from home.

Walks

Seven parents indicated that one of the best things about where they live is being near to somewhere they could walk and possibly play such as parks, beaches and countryside. The question did not directly ask if there were parks close-by, this is what was volunteered so seven could be a very conservative number of families with access to park areas. It would be interesting to ask about the proximity of parks, country, beaches and walks directly as it would indicate that amenities are being accessed such as parks etc and also to compare with other amenities. The argument for this is that places to walk are usually accessed at no costs. One concern in the project was that one barrier to accessing community activities was the financial costs on the family.

Leisure Centre

Three people mentioned in answer to the “best thing about where they live” indicated a leisure centre was the best thing in their community, such as M12 Centre. This does not necessarily mean that it is only three people who access them as will be more apparent later when asked about

activities that are participated in, ie it becomes apparent that a lot more families are accessing community activities than three.

Nothing in their Area

Six people indicated that there was nothing in their area. As this is part of the project, which is of most interest, it would be worth going into more detail about these six responses here and possibly return to it later. The fact that three of lived in E5 was of interest and worth noting. From one family outside activities had been tried but not very successfully due to needing one to one. Families reported that they felt something where the children and families could get together would be helpful. Another had been accessing dancing and other activities but not very confidently. Another young person from E5 was very keen on football, participating in a number of clubs. Lastly another family from E5 felt their child was happy meeting people and made friends easily but could not go out much due to the visual impairment, but is taken out by siblings sometimes and enjoys a few school run clubs. In other areas where there was considered to be nothing, comments made were that there is no public transport but they have a motability car. The fact that there was no park close by was considered "nice", although it is not clear why this is nice. Another does not really know what is best about where they live and there are extenuating circumstances as to being able to access activities both parent and 'young person' seemed keen to access activities.

Childrens' Response on Best thing about Community

Twenty-six families were interviewed and three children did not answer questions and one child was not able to answer the first two questions.

There is a table of the responses in appendix 6.

Community Feeling

One indicated the community of where they lived and one indicated that where they lived was small, which does not really compare to the parents answers where nine indicated that it felt like a community and three said their area was small. This is possibly because younger children are not concentrating on the level of the wider community but home; indeed one who was under the age of 12 mentioned the best thing was watching tv! Another mentions the trampoline in his garden and a friend across the road. Another mentioned that Friends A and B come over.

Nine of the children mention they know people as compared to twelve parents. However, parents tended to mention “know people who keep an eye on things” or “nice neighbours” whereas the children almost exclusively referred to friends, one said they know “lots of people”.

Knowledge of the Area

One of the children mentioned knowing the area, whereas it has been recorded that five parents mention knowing the area but this category tended to be elicited implicitly from the context of what was said for example “always lived here”.

Amenities Close by

Access to amenities was considered the best thing by six parents as opposed to two of the young people, again this could largely be due to the young people not being consciously aware of the implications of amenities being close by or some distance away because it is not in their interests yet. The two young people who mentioned this were over the age of 12, which is around the age where independence to go shopping is starting and going to activities such as swimming is more feasible.

School Close by

Five young people mention school as compared to nine parents. However, this was often mentioned in the context of how close the school was and, therefore, if the school is close some may 'have' to walk. Some of the young people had made the association that having school close was good as it meant friends were close by to play with.

Walks

Nine of the children mention the best thing about the community is parks or near country, ie walks, which compared to seven of the parents. An area to go and play appears to be important to young people, which was confirmed by the comparison of numbers of children who said leisure activities were the best thing in their local area.

Leisure Activities

Three parents mentioned the leisure activities as being one of the best things about where they live where as six young people mention the leisure

side as being one of the best things about where they live. Why this would be would need further questions; is it expense, does the close proximity put demands on the parent for attending or is it that the parents do not think about the leisure centre as being part of the community? There are many other reasons, which may be possible to elicit.

Nothing in their Area

Six young people and six parents mention that nothing was available locally. However for one parent there was no response possible from the young person but the area did appear isolated and it would appear there was not much in the close proximity of where they live. There was one young person whose parent was not spoken to, given the age of the person, and the parent was not around at the time. One of the children from a parent who said nothing was available and who lived in E5 simply stated the best thing about the area in which she lived was that friends A and B come over, this is two friends came to play. The mother felt there was nothing for children. Another of the young people mentioned a friend along the street and a trampoline in the garden, the young person was talking about one friend and a trampoline and he felt nothing available else was available, his mother did not happy about him going out on his own because of not being able to see. The other family in E5 both the young person and the parent said that there was nothing in E5. Another Young person went into detail about what they use to do, such as used to roller skate, and visit the café at leisure centre. She no longer visits the café which she perceives, as boring because there are no activities to watch such as other people roller skating. But most telling was The Youth Club

because “hard nuts go there” which implied that it was difficult to relax and enjoy the activities because of the tension caused by the other young people who attended the youth club. She mentioned the leisure centre, however, she is in her early teens and more than likely perceives there is nothing, especially if she has done it all. Another early teen said there was nothing but mentioned activities she had been involved in, suggesting activities were in the area but she preferred to be with her friends at her home or theirs.

Support Available

The second question for parents was “What support do you have?” The answers were varied and divided up to fit under nine headings. School, GP, Agency (which referred to organisations other than Fife Society for the Blind) Direct Payments, Relatives, Friends, Fife Society for the Blind, Not needed and no support. A list of the different responses, which fitted under the headings, was attached under Appendix 7.

Parents responses to what support was available.

Twenty-five parents were asked and twenty-five parents responded. The parents’ of an 18 year-old were not asked and was therefore not included in the twenty-five responses. It was suspected that people responded in different ways to other people as they interpreted the question of support being in a different context to others: ie the parent was not thinking about school and support from school only from the perspective of support

available outside of school, and was therefore thinking of support as related to them as a family and community activities and not inclusive of the support to the child in school time. The interpretation of support was not defined any further than that of support, therefore the parent was left with a lot of scope to answer and interpret the question as they felt it was being asked. Some parents said there was more than one source of help and a number of parents mentioned support they had but appear from their answer that the support they mentioned was not the sort of support that possibly the project was about. For example a number of people mentioned support from school and then continued to say they had not got any support really. Another person mentioned grandparents as providing support and then clarified their answer with “no real support” whilst others mention relatives as being a support. The question was left open to an interpretation to help get an understanding of where families felt support was available and there was no right or wrong answer, all the answers were valid and helpful. The other point that must be remembered was that there were a wide variety of Visual Impairments and the effects that the Visual impairment had on an individual. A child who is totally blind was more likely to need more support than a child who has a partial sight loss.

School as a source of Support

Seventeen parents mentioned that school was a source of support, one or two mentioned equipment that was available such as a sloping board to write on. Some mentioned school as a support where their child had one to one in the classroom and another mentioned they had no support and later said their child had one-to-one help at school. Others mentioned support at

school as a once-a-term visit from a VI Teacher. Three parents mentioned that guidance teachers were a source of support. The figure for sources of help as being a guidance teacher as compared to the number of parents spoken to was misleading and should be compared to the total number asked from secondary schools, as guidance teachers are only in secondary schools. There were approximate 13 in secondary schools. The other point is that some parents would not be thinking in terms of the guidance teachers.

Some responses from the same person could put the response under the heading more than once such as VI Teacher, Educational Psychologist, School. No matter how many times the response reflected an answer for school once school was indicated from the person it was not noted again. A couple of answers came up where there had been difficulties with the children having a supply teacher in that the supply teacher was not aware of the visual impairment which led to problems. Talking with Alison Duthie, Head of Sensory Impairment Services in Fife Council Education Department, there is a card, which a young person can hand to the teacher to indicate the young person has a visual impairment. It would be interesting to know how much this is being used as there have been comments from young people and parents about confusions from teachers' awareness of a pupil having a visual impairment, especially when supply teachers are in the classroom.

Source of support as the GP

It was interesting that on looking at the results, only one person mentioned the source of support as being a health worker, and this was a GP. There

was no mention of Opticians, ophthalmologists, or consultants, counsellors, psychotherapists or psychiatrists. A reason for this could have been that people had not recently seen a health professional in connection with the visual impairment or were not thinking in the direction of Health Care but this would have to be investigated further to ascertain the position.

Four parents mentioned different agencies which provided support: these were the Mental Health Services for Young People, the Acorn Trust, Autism Key worker and Respite care. Closely linked to this would be direct payments, which was mentioned by one parent. Direct Payments is a scheme where a person is assessed by a social worker as to the number of hours help they require. The government will provide the care or the individual can elect out of what is provided and use it for the support that they would prefer. They then employ somebody either through an agency or they recruit somebody directly using a separate account and employing the person personally by sorting out PAYE and NI. The one parent who mentioned using the direct payment system was having problems finding a person to support her child, through the agency for support (there was not always somebody available). She mentioned the young helpers are best because her son is young but they tend to go off to university. People do not tend to be reliable. It has meant many changes of people for her child.

Relatives and Friends as a source of Support

Eight people mentioned relatives as being a source of support, often grandparents would have the children a couple of nights a month. Three people mentioned friends providing support; it was evident the relations who were supportive tended to provide ongoing regular support such as

once a week on a particular day, whereas friends provided help on an ad hoc basis. This would have to be questioned deeper to find out figures and details as the interpretation has been made from the conversation which took place and not through direct questions.

Fife Society for the Blind (FSB)

Two people mentioned FSB or Insight Rehabilitation Officers. It was interesting to note that the mention of FSB started in mid to late June as the summer holidays were approaching and it was during the summer holidays when the rehabilitation officers tend to visit. Again asking directly if FSB regularly visits during the holidays would be interesting and of course figures could be compared with what FSB have. **Maybe try this.**

Support not Needed

Two people mentioned that support was not needed. One mentioned a “rehab” officer visits and somebody checks at school, and that support was not really needed this was mentioned in the context of being happy with the support at school and from FSB, however no other support is needed. This confirms the opinion that possibly people did not look on support in the same way and were making different interpretations of the context from which the question was being made, ie It appeared the families were not thinking in terms of having a rehabilitation officer and somebody checking at school and as everything was going well additional help outside of school was not required, which indeed appeared to be the case with most families visited in this initial interviewing process. As mentioned at the start of this report most families visited would possibly be the families who were accessing help and support that they required. It is the families who were

not accessing the help of Fife Society for the Blind who will be contacted for a next interview session.

No Support

Nine parents mentioned they had no support, which also indicated the differences in interpretation of a question, ie out of the twenty-four spoken with, seventeen indicated support at school, nine said they had no support, two were considered they had no support but had support at school. This confirms the wide scope provided for answering the question. Seven of the nine answered in such a way that there was support at school but none at home, which was very interesting due to the fact some of the children had good support at school but when at home there was no support for accessing community activities. One of the people mentioned specifically that she had problems finding somebody to provide one-to-one support at activities outside of school.

Best thing About School

The children were asked what they liked best about school. Three children did not respond out of twenty six visited. A summary of the answers and the numbers are in Appendix 8 (Children best about school). This table shows what the children/young person actually said. A couple of responses which went under two headings such as “Nothing/did not like school” went into the columns “Nothing much” and “Not at school” as the use of the past tense implied no longer at school. Football was placed under clubs as the answer was “Football on Fridays” as well as under sport. There was a bit of a debate as to whether Golf should go under the category of clubs and

sport, the decision was to put it only under clubs because it was not a subject at all schools, and also it is not played in the playground as a general rule. Originally art, sport and golden time went under the heading of “other” but as all were occurring frequently as a response it was decided to put them under their own category.

Maths

Six young people said that they liked maths. They were all at primary school. The ages were 5, 6, 7, 8 and two 9 year olds. They were all from different areas except the two 9 year olds were both from I9. It is not clear if the two nine-year-olds are at the same school or not but it was interesting to note that the only male who responded as maths being the best thing about school was from I9. In addition to the response of maths being the best thing about school was that two males age 12 (one from C3 and one from D4) both indicated that the best thing about school was “The Whole thing” and “everything”. It would be interesting to find out if the question was asked directly “Do you like ‘maths’?” I suggest ‘maths’ as often the primary children will refer to the subject by a different word, ie one young girl enjoyed “Times-Tables” however she meant addition, which for this project has been taken as meaning maths: An interesting comparison of the answers which separated primary, secondary, male, female, area and left-hand, right-hand would be of interest with primary and secondary as different types of presentation, male and female as there are gender differences with left and right handedness as apparently left handedness indicates mathematical ability.

Two said nothing much. One was no longer at school, useful insight was provided in the answer to questions and it was wondered whether he may wish to join the Steering Group. This was discussed at the meeting and it was felt it would be too much responsibility when sorting other areas of learning. The other was going to be changing to secondary school. A number of activities were done in the past but at present none. Both lost their sight about five years ago.

Language

Three children said they liked language best. Two were seven years old and one was nine years old. They lived in different areas. They appeared to have different interests, ie one liked swimming but could not afford it. It was felt that it may be useful to look into some sort of funding for swimming with this young person this needed to be discussed further with the parent. Another was doing various clubs at school as well as a variety of clubs and classes from home. Nine activities are attended. The other was doing approximately three activities outside school. All were female.

Art

Four females said that art was the best thing about school. One was 6 years old, and therefore in primary school. The other three were 13, 14 and 16 years old and in secondary school. One said it was “probably because of my eyes”. The other enjoyed art and that the Art Department was open all day at school and provided a place to go. She said she did not need to use the safe room or the support department as a result. Two seemed to be involved in different ways in activities and mentioned a network of

friends both inside and outside of school. One however appeared interested in doing an activity outside of school and had a variety of interests.

Sport

Three young people responded that sport was the best thing about school. Two were male aged nine and eleven. The other was female and in secondary school. They seemed confident of a large number of friends at school. However, one of the children did not appear to be involved in any activities outside school, and mentioned having three friends which appeared to be the young person them self (which the person stated directly) and the two siblings (which was presumed as there were two siblings in the family).

Golden Time

The option of golden time was only for children in primary school, who total about ten in primary school. The actual number is not known and would have to be checked. There were four, which in some ways was surprisingly low as golden time was intended to be a reward for good behaviour and was on a Friday afternoon. However, it could be that the others were not thinking about golden time. Possibly, because they were seen at the beginning of the week and Friday was not being thought about yet.

Other

These came under a one off type of comment. One young person mentioned playing in the field was the best thing about school. Another

young person mentioned talking to teachers, which although nobody else mentioned this under this heading there were a few others who preferred talking with staff members than their peer group as indicated in other responses and general discussion after the interviews finished.

Clubs

Three mentioned clubs as being the best thing about school. This number could be artificially low because others did not consider the school clubs as being part of the school day. Another reason could be that often there is competition in being able to attend and they do not always get an opportunity. This may occur as they do not hear or more specifically see about the clubs because they are put up on notice boards or they are not in class when the clubs are announced, there could be numerous reasons and this would need to be looked at further.

Homework Club

One person mentioned homework club and she was enjoying a number of activities. Others mentioned that they attended homework club under the sections of other activities.

Friends

Four young people mentioned friends as being their favourite thing about school. The ages were 6, 11, and 15, and one who just mentioned the one friend at school to play with. School friends and friends at home will be discussed in more detail later.

Everything

Two mentioned that everything was their favourite thing about school. Therefore, this suggested that two more could be added to all the items above. They were both 12 year-old males it was a bit difficult to know whether they would be still at primary school or not.

Not Much

There were two that said not much, one as mentioned in the introduction is no longer at school and the other was at primary school and was not wanting to answer questions (it was the end of a school day).

Not At School

One had left school and the other had found the transition from one school to the next difficult and reintegration was being discussed, the most important thing was that the parent felt that a lot of support was there to help.

Children's Responses to the Question if you had a magic wand and could change anything you wanted. What would you change?

This was interesting in the fact a number of parents could not resist answering the question. I am sure the children found it helpful in a couple of cases. I have put the answers to these under seven different headings (see appendix 9) No comment, which was when one child could not think of anything to say; imaginative where the answer implied a magical place;

practical where the answer was a practical concern type answer for example no bullying, world peace; help with career: and under a heading “play” was used for answers where the child was indicating having a play/fun time for example Disneyland outside. Miscellaneous ended up being a magic item; visual was a comment which suggested they wanted to improve their eyesight; and finally ambition was for comments which indicated what they would like to achieve in the future which were not beyond the realms of possibility. It was also decided to analyse these answers in terms of age and sex.

No Comment

Five children could not think of an answer the ages were 5, 7, 10 and 16 year-old females and one 14 year-old male. This was interesting as it is the girls who tend to play the imaginative games, however, they are usually based on role play games once at school such as schools, mothers and fathers, hotels, camping. The boys, however, appear to play fight or play football, which appears practical and a similar activity. The numbers were small so not too much can be read into the answer.

Imaginative, Play and Miscellaneous

“Imaginative”, one boy of 12 answered that he would like a magic school; he would not give any other details. It would be possible to link up “magic school”, with “play”, however, there seemed to be a small enough overlap that they were kept separate in the headings. The other heading that could have been matched was “miscellaneous” which contained a magic item. Two boys answered for this question: one was 6 and the other 11 years-

old. Under the heading of “play” the children were two girls 8 and 9 years old and three boys 9, 11 and 12 years old. Therefore, if the three headings are taken together as a heading of “impractical” as opposed to “practical”. There were six boys who answered and two girls. The boys answers seemed to largely go into their desire to have fun and play and this ran through the ages from 6 to 13 years-old. The girls however were 8 and 9 years-old, who indicated a wish to play more. This contrasts with the practical category of answer.

Practical

There were a total of six responses for this question with the majority being female. The ages of the females were 5, 9, 14, 14, and 15 with one boy who was 13 years-old. The answer which stood out was that the wish to quote one child’s answer “turn everybody into nice people” as this sums up what a number of children said: ie no bullying at school, world peace, “vanish 3rd, 4th and 5th year boys”. There were 4 out of the six who stated a wish for “nice people”. Whether this coincides with topics being discussed at school was not discussed, neither was the topic of whether they were actually being bullied at school. The impression given at the time was more in a context as a concern for others, which suggested that it might have been topics recently discussed at school. Closely linked to this would be the visual heading and ambition, however, it was decided to keep the headings separate.

Visual

Effort has been made to leave gender out of this part of writing up as there were only two people, who answered this way. However, if interested this can be seen in the appendix. There were two people who said their vision was a problem, one young person had recently left education and there appeared to be a genuine desire to have “normal” vision. The other young person was in the middle of secondary school and when asked to explain what was meant by what was said. The answer indicated a desire to have freedom from other people worrying about the ability for that person to get around and do things, like crossing the road.

Ambition

Again it was felt that this could have been joined with practical, however, it was kept separate as it seemed to naturally fit into a different category. This was split between a male 16 and a female 15. One wished to go to Australia and the other to be millionaires. Both of which could be achieved.

Conclusion the girls tended to go towards the practical for an answer and the boys towards the impractical/play, with much more imaginative answers. This could possibly suggest that boys are more adapted into going into the games with the girls. The answers which went into an imaginative category were all boys who were 12 or under. This is prior to moving to secondary school. Again not too much could be read into it due to the low numbers.

Friends

The children were asked two questions in regard to friends. The questions were: what friends do you have at school and what friends do you have at home? The parents were asked the same two questions and they were asked two additional questions: how easily does he/she make friends and does he/she enjoy meeting people? (see Appendices 8, 9, 10 and 11).

With regards to friendships and the wide range of ages, the main fact that must be noted is that at different ages the concept of friendships and the broadness of friendships tends to vary. For example, young children the age group in primary schools will consider their whole class as friends. They will meet somebody of their age group on holiday and speak with them for ten minutes and the next thing they are talking to you about this other young person as their best friend, however, often they have one or two close friends daily. A young person around the age of 11 years will often have just one or maybe two close friends but by the time they reach 14/15 years-old, the twosome or threesome will have developed into a group of friends.

A list of the friendship questions, with the area in which they live and the ages, can be found in the appendix. The question with regard to does he or she make friends easily, was split into three categories: very easily, easy, not easily, difficult. The question with regards to meeting people was split into the categories: reserved, enjoys, does not enjoy, no answer. One was hard to know and one prefers adults. The responses to friends at home and friends at school were categorised as none, 1 or 2, few, other, yes. The

other needed cutting down into: lost in transition, all the class, acquaintance, couple older, child relatives, adult relatives.

Three said that their young person found it difficult. Two of the children had communication difficulties and therefore could not be attributed to the visual impairment. One of the children was reported to enjoy meeting people, however one of the parents qualified her answer with it was hard to know. The third person that found it difficult to make friends was reported as enjoying meeting people, and both parent and young person answered that there were a few friends at home and school.

Four parents felt that it was not easy for their young person to make friends. One parent said that the young person was reserved when meeting people and at the time of asking questions there was no response as to friends at home and school. As a time of change was occurring, it was suggested this had been occurring from the time of moving to secondary school. Another person who said their child was reserved at meeting people reported that their child made friends very easily. One of the not easy to make friends but their child enjoyed meeting people stated that the friends at school were lost in the transition because of moving to a different school to peer group. The parent said there were a few friends at home and the young person said there was his mother and siblings; the young person did not answer the question with regards to friends at school. One young person did not find it easy to make friends and does not enjoy meeting people and had one or two friends at school and a few at home, and the young person said she had one or two at home and relatives at school.

This young person had only just started school and she clearly found it difficult meeting me until I started to communicate with her older sister at which point the young person appeared to have more confidence to speak with me also. The other young person who did not make friends easily had other challenges to overcome, but it was reported that she enjoys meeting people and prefers adults. A small number of other young people during the course of the questions mentioned that adults were preferred to their peer group.

With regards to the friends at school there was one parent who did not answer the question and her young person said that there were 25 friends at school. The parent said that there were no friends at home but the young person mentioned them self plus their two siblings as being friends. Six parents answered under the heading of other. One of the friends stopped in the transition from primary to secondary due to a move to another school to the rest of the peer group. The young person did not reply to the question. The parent reported a few friends at home but these were not on par with the friendships enjoyed by the siblings. The young person said that the friends at home was mother and siblings. Two stated that the children were friends with all the class. One parent mentioned that there were lots of acquaintances but things had been helped following a social skills course. A parent commented that there were a couple of friends but they were older. At home there were adult relatives who were friends and a brother. There was one person who mentioned that there was nobody where they lived there were no problems with school but where they lived the comment was "you get bullied around here there are lots of

teenagers". The young person still had a couple of years left at primary school. It was also mentioned that at the grandparents home there were lots of people to play with. It is interesting to note this person was in E5. The other young person who was on the transition of leaving school had had his closest friends recently leave but in general it was suggested that there were friends around. To sum up this section it was reported that most of the children had no problems with friendships at school and often the young person had relatives who were friends at home and some of the ones who found it difficult with friendships at school had cousins at school who were friends. Four who answered in the category of no friends or other were from the E5 area. Two were from I9 area. Again it must be remembered that the questions were open. The response to the friends at school was encouraging there were only two which indicated no friends in peer group at school: one of them had older friends at school through school clubs and the other it was the transition time of moving to a different secondary school to the peer group.

Transport

There were 26 families answering questions about transport. One of the young people was 18 years old and therefore the parent was not involved in the interview. (see appendix 15).

Out of the 26 families two did not use a car one was the young person of 18. When considering public transport the age is important, especially when there is a car in the family. The reason for this is that when parents drive there is a tendency to use the car and once the young person reaches

about the age of 12 or 13 years of age, they start to catch buses and trains on their own or with friends. Twelve of the young people were under 12 years old. Six parents mentioned that there was in effect no public transport. Out of those 6, one of the young people's the parent said that they catch the train. The people mentioning that there was no public transport available all came from different areas. Five of the young people had a taxi to go to school one of the families had no car. Two of the families used public transport. The young person of 18 had caught public transport but found it difficult, and said he needed assistance to get to know the route and where to go after arriving at the station.

Out of the 12 who were over 12 years-old, one would not be able to use public transport on his own. One who was 16 preferred to walk and found using public transport difficult and did not like to. One 13 year old, one 14 year old and one 15 year old tended to use public transport with friends. There was one 10 year-old who also used public transport with friends.

There were 5 young people over 12 years old who do not appear to use public transport at all. Three of these have a taxi to school. This will be a barrier to social inclusion in the local area. There are three 10/11 year-olds who use the bus and one 10 year-old who does not appear to use public transport at all. If they never have done, it is felt that at this age that something ought to be in place to start its use with an adult so the transition to using public transport can be made easier with friends during the ages of 12 and 13 years-old to build up the confidence to possibly in most cases enable the young people by 16 years-old to be independently able to use public transport.

With the younger age group none use public transport with friends except for the one 10 year-old mentioned earlier. One of the children uses the bus, train, and bicycle but not with friends. Another three use the bus, train and walks. One uses the bus and has a taxi to school. Another three use the bus but not the train and one of them walks and cycle. For some a train may not be accessible because there is not a service near where they live.

Basically, the area of concern for social inclusion and public transport are the 10 year-olds and over who have not used public transport with adults and then the 12 year-olds and over who have not started to use public transport with their friends. Finally, the 16 years and over who are unable to be independent with using public transport.

Other Comments

From the 26 families visited, there were 21 who made comments; which were worth noting for the project and social inclusion see appendix 16.

These were divided into different categories: Finding Activity, VI knowledge, Self-esteem, Social Skills, Integration, Friend, other Visually impaired young people, transition, one-to-one and exclusion. These will be explained under the different headings.

Activities

Finding activities and information about what was on in the local area was three families expressed concern. The ages of the children were 10, 14 and 16 years-old. None of them lived in the same are.

Knowledge about Visual Impairments

Eleven families expressed some sort of concern about the lack of knowledge about visual impairments and they felt that people running courses would find it useful to know where to get training, guidance and information. A couple of parents said that they themselves would like more information and training such as sighted-guide training.

Self-Esteem Training

Ten families expressed, either indirectly (with a comment in which they said their child was shy) or directly, that some sort of self-esteem training would be helpful. Ten was a reasonably large number (almost 50% of the families) considering it was not a question that was asked directly.

Social Skills Training

Four said that some sort of social skills training would be useful for their children. These two items of Self-Esteem and Social Skills link together with the integration and Friends.

Integration

Eight families said they would like more integration for their children into mainstream activities.

Friends

Five families expressed that their young person relied on a friend for activities.

Integration and Friends

Linking together both integration and friends and reflecting back on the discussions, it became apparent that friends are important as a support for each other. However, once in the activity or club, efforts should be made to integrate the pair into the rest of the group, so should one of the pair leave the other does not leave as well.

One-to-One Support

There were three young people who expressed that one-to-one support was required: these did not overlap with the integration and friend category, which was interesting, as this could indicate that the one-to-one support did not hinder integration and friendships. However, all three expressed the one-to-one support as being a hindrance to accessing activities: two parents had trouble finding somebody and went themselves and one of them felt that due to the high level of support that when the numbers increased if they do that they would have to stop going.

Meeting Other Young People with a Visual Impairment

Five families said that they felt it would be beneficial for their child to know somebody else with a visual impairment, which were two out of three 16 year-olds and both the 10 year-olds. This was worth a comment here as both the 10 year-olds and the 16 year-olds are at a transition time.

Transition

Transition times appeared important with seven of the families expressing concern on having help at a transition time, such as more information earlier and meeting others with visual impairments who had made the transition, so they could talk with them. With one or two families when this was discussed during the conversation they realised that for this sort of support to be in place, it would necessitate that they would need to be a person who would be available to others once they had made the transition. This spanned a number of ages, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, and 16. It appeared to be important for most ages. It would be worth considering what can be done to facilitate this.

Exclusion

Three indicated some form of exclusion. One, was that if the Rainbows got busier or they could not find another helper, her daughter may not be able to start and may have to leave once she had started. Another stated that they have been told that to go onto black belt may not be possible. Another said that with PE the young person had to watch.

Activities

The information about activities was taken from comments made about activities from 20 families out of the 26 visited. (See appendix 17). Six families did not make comments. The different activities were split into Cultural groups covering art, drama singing, dancing etc. Youth groups such as Rainbows, Brownies, Scouts etc and Sport such as gymnastics,

karate etc were further divided into past and present. There were two main age groups to consider the eleven years-and under and the 12 years and over. The age range was chosen as this is a transition time of preparing and going on to secondary school from primary school.

Eleven Years and Under

Looking at the ages: the young people who are 11 and under appear to be enjoying various activities on the whole. One ten year old was doing drama and singing, beavers and gymnastics in the past but is not any longer. It appears this stopped due to the problems with the visual impairment. One nine year-old was doing football but due to difficulties with the warm up gave up football. Another eleven year-old used to do golf, swimming and football, however, this had stopped for the holidays and was due to start again. There were no obvious problems with the 12 and under age group from the parents who discussed activities. The younger age group from about five years old to nine years old are just starting in different activities.

Twelve Years and Over

One fourteen year-old was doing various activities such as swimming, scouts, karate but had stopped attending any over the last couple of years. There were two twelve year-olds who were doing various activities such as cubs or beavers and are now doing scouts. A thirteen year-old was doing various activities such as on a committee at school and enjoying swimming and gymnastics. However, a few of the young people (14, 15 and 16 years) all used to do activities but had now stopped. Examples of the activities were dance, drama, and swimming. Two of the teenagers said that they

had stopped because their friends had stopped going. The other teenager said they would be like to attend another activity but they would want a friend to be with them. Of the other teenagers (ages 13, 14 and 15) one was doing drama music and art. Another had done Rainbows, Brownies and guides and was enjoying a youth group but had stopped dance and enjoying being on a committee. The other was doing dancing and enjoyed dance and did not wish to do anything else. Out of six teenagers it appeared that three of them were struggling with continuing activities because friends had given them up, and possibly stresses over the transition from one school to another.

Conclusion

There were a lot of issues to think about and the complexity was added to by the different areas with E5 tending to be an area where people found it difficult to access information about activities and friends for their children to play with. **The best way to address this was to do a letter two or three times a year to the families discussing the project and different activities available.**

Transition times were difficult which were not necessarily noticeable immediately but had an effect that became noticeable about a year or two after the transition. **Felt that some sort of arrangement for a group to meet about two or three times a year.**

The questions were good basic questions for a start but would be better made more concise so as to illicit the precise information that the project

was designed to identify. **Therefore modification of the questionnaire, as more families will be met up with over the coming two years.**

A large majority of the families said they would like to not only know other families with children in the same age group as their children but also with young people who have visual impairments that are a couple of years older and therefore been through various transition time. **As suggested above a meeting two or three times a year for the families to connect and meet each other.**

With training the parents suggested it would be helpful if there was access to more knowledge about visual impairments within the community. A few parents said that they would like to have sighted guide training themselves. It was generally felt that some sort of training, education and advice was required. However, during the course of the project it became apparent that different types of activities would require different considerations to be met, ie the help and support required for dance would be considerably different to the help and support required for chess or art and Youth Groups would probably require a mixture of inputs. **It was felt to design and set up training for activity organisers, perhaps identifying one type of group to concentrate on first.**

Some young people may need more input into mobility training and using public transport at an earlier age so as to be enabled to do so with friends and later gain more independence.

A number of parents felt that social skills and self esteem classes were required in as much as most children require this. However, there was more of a necessity due to having the confidence to explain the differences their child has in accessing visual information and to ensure that their requirements are attended to when necessary.

Working closely with the Insight mobility team would help to address some of the mobility issues.

Social skills training and self-esteem may be addressed at a later time. Perhaps by contacting the education department for all pupils within a school.

See appendix 17 at the end for a summary of the way forward with the project.

Appendix 1 Introductory Letter

Hi

I am working on a project and the aim of the project is to develop friendship networks within and outside of school for children from ages 5 to 18 years for the future.

My name is Deborah Brooks-Mathieson. I work for Fife Society for the Blind, Education and Sensory Support Services (Visual Impairment) on a three-year project, which is funded by BBC Children in Need. The project is looking at Social Inclusion for Children and Young People aged 5 to 18 years with a visual impairment. The aim is to find out the views of children and their families about taking part in local community activities.

You and your family are a very important part of our project as it is your views and ideas that will help to guide the project forward. I would therefore very much like to meet parents of children with a visual impairment and the children themselves, to discuss various topics. Below are examples of what I feel would be useful to discuss:

Topics I would like to discuss with children:

- 1. Best things about the community.**
- 2. Best things about School**
- 3. If they had a magic wand and could change anything what would it be.**
- 4. Friendships at home and school.**

Topics I would like to discuss with parents:

- 1. What the parents like about their community**
- 2. What support is available for both you and your children?**
- 3. How easily does your child make friends?**
- 4. Do your children enjoy meeting other people?**
- 5. Friendships at school and home.**
- 6. Transport.**

I would therefore be very grateful if I could come and meet you in your home. Could you please give me a list of about five of dates and times that would suit you during, February or March for me to come and meet with you? You can do this by sending the enclosed letter, or by telephoning Fife Society for the Blind and leaving a message for me.

If you or your children have any ideas to add to this list I would be very grateful to receive them so I can include them for everybody if they are applicable to the project.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

With all Good Wishes,

Deborah Brooks-Mathieson

Return Address: Mrs DJE Brooks-Mathieson
 ACT Co-Ordinator
 Fife Society for the Blind
 Insight
 Wilson Avenue,
 Kirkcaldy
 Fife
 KY2 5EF

Telephone: 01592 412666 (to leave a message)

Name

Address

.....

.....

Telephone Numbers:

Home:

Mobile:

Others?:

E-Mail:

Dates for meeting up:

1. **Date:** **Month:** **Time:**

2. **Date:** **Month:** **Time:**

3. **Date:** **Month:** **Time:**

4. **Date:** **Month:** **Time:**

5. **Date:** **Month:** **Time:**

Any other topics that you may feel would be useful to include for discussion:(Please continue overleaf if required.)

Appendix 2 (page 1 of 2)

Topics children:

- 5. Best things about the community.**
- 6. Best things about School**
- 7. If they had a magic wand and could change anything what would it be.**
- 8. Friendships at home and school.**

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Topics with parents:

- 7. What the parents like about their community**
- 8. What support is available for both you and your children?**
- 9. How easily does your child make friends?**
- 10. Do your children enjoy meeting other people?**
- 11. Friendships at school and home.**
- 12. Transport.**

Integration into mainstream activities.

Appendix 3 Post Interview Tabulation Parents

	Best Locally	Support	make friends	meeting people	Friends school	Friends home	Transport	Mainstream Inclusion	Age Area	
1	Community ammenitites friends Walks	School GP Agency	Not easy	reserved	no response	no response	Walks Car public transport goes with friends	Self Esteem Social skills	14 A1	m
2	Community friends	FSB School Not needed	Very Easily	reserved	yes	other	car no public transport	Other VI Young People Transition	7 B2	f
3	friends school walks	parents School no support	very easily	enjoys	few	few	no public transport	one to one Exclusion		f
4	Community friends area small	direct payments none no support	not easy	enjoys	other	few	public transport car	one to one	12 C3	m
5	school	school	difficult	enjoys	few	few	car walks	VI Knowledge Self Esteem	12 D4	m
6	school	School	easily	enjoys	Other	1 or 2	car no public transport	Other VI young person One to one	10 F6	f
7	nothing	FSB	not easily	does not enjoy	1 or 2	few	Car	VI Knowledge	5 E5	f

	Agency						walk no public transport	Self Esteem		
8 community friends	School no support	difficult	enjoys	other	1 or 2	car bus train		Finding Activity VI Knowledge Self-Esteem Other VI Young person	16 G7	m
9 friends	relatives no support		enjoys	few	few	car bus		Finding Activity Transition	10 H8	f
10 leisure centre walks school ammenities	School no support agency	easy	enjoys	Other	other	car walk		VI Knowledge Social Skills Other Young Person Transition	13 I9	m
11 school community friends walks small area	relatives friends school	easy	enjoys	yes	yes	buses trains car cycles		VI Knowledge Self-Esteem Integration Friend transition	8 K10	f
12 friends community school	school	easy	enjoys	yes	yes	car walk bus		Self-Esteem Social Skills	9 L11	f
13 school	school	not easy	no answer			taxi to school		VI Knowledge	14 I9	f

	no support						car train bus	Self-esteem Social Skills friends Transition		
14 ammenities leisure centre community	relatives	easy	enjoys	1 or 2	1 or 2	bus walks		VI Knowledge Self-Esteem Friend Transition	15M12	f
15 area nothing	no support school	easy	enjoys	no response	none	bus taxi			11 E5	m
16 xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx		xxx	18N12	m
17 walks friends	relatives	easy	enjoys	other	other	car public transport		Knowledge Self-Esteem Social Skills Exclusion	6 I9	m
18 walks friends community	friends	easy	no answer	yes	few	Car Walk bus		VI Knowledge Self-Esteem Integration	9 I9	f
19 nothing	school no support		enjoys	yes	few	taxi to school car no public transport		Integration Friend Transition	16 O14	f

20 nothing	relatives school	easy	enjoys	few	none	car bus walks cycles		9E5	m
21 communit amenities leisure centre	school	easy	enjoys	yes	yes	car bus train	VI Knowledge Other VI Young People	13P15	f
22 amenities school	support not needed	easy	doesn't enjoy	yes	other	car walk bus	VI Knowledge Self-Esteem Integration Friends	16Q16	m
23 area friends	relatives school	very easily	enjoys	yes	yes	car bus	Finding Activity Integration	14R17	f
24 small amenities	school	not easily	prefers adults	yes	1 or 2	car bus		11S18	m
25 friends knows area	relatives friends school	easy	enjoys	Yes	Yes	car bus trian		15T19	f
26 walk nothing	no support	difficult	enjoys hard to know	other	No response	taxi car		12U20	m

Appendix 4 Young Person Post Interview Tabulation

No.	Best locally	Best School	Magic Wand	Friends home	Friends School	Activities Past	Activities Present	Activities Comment
1	Small friends	Not at school	no comment			Sport Sport Sport Sport		Swimming bowling Youth club Army Cadets Withdrew when moved to next stage
2	walk friends school	Art language Clubs Homework Club	no comment	yes	yes		Sport Cultural Cultural Cultural Sport Sport Sport Cultural Cultural	none really in the local area badminton age 10 plus need more local activities for children 111 6 miles swing park for toddlers 2 busses an hour nobody else with VI included with VI activities more
3		Friends	no comment	other	few	Youth Group Sport	Youth Group	carnegie leisure centre needs one to one water too cold physio pool in blocks not swimming any activities would be of interest would like more useful information
4	ammunities	everything	imaginative	other	no answer	Youth Group	Youth Group	various helpers

9	xxx	xxx	xxx	xx	xxx	xxx	xxxx	xxx
10 school walks	Other	practical	other	a few			Cultural Sport Sport	Social skills group successful in press for equal committee needs adapted materials
11 walks school Leisure Centre friends	Maths other	play	yes	yes			Sport Youth Group Sport Cultural	cycles with friends sister parents to lots of places no problems no worries
12 community friends	clubs language maths golden time	practical	lots	few	Sport		Cultural	could not afford swimming school club success matters
13 walks Leisure centre	other	practical	few	few	Cultural			will do activities if friends there dance drama (collect and take home)
14 Leisure centre	friends	practical	few	yes	Cultural Cultural			stopped dance and drama wants to do more shows Aislie stoped dance careers workshop not geared to VI no help with transition choosing options Work experience

						<p>knowing what going through would like somebody who has taken the step Would like VI and FSB to let them know what choices</p>
15	walk friend	golden time sport	misc	other	yes	
16	nothing nothing	nothing much Not at school	visual	none	none	<p>left school at 15 enjoys meeting people been to three colleges Admin course did not understanding aids Hereford some problems good experience a taster course 5 of 6 months ago Edinburgh RNIB great for learning Blind Craft good told to contact DEA not helpful would like to follow up hereford or Blind Craft transport walks catches train and bus but needs to be met great idea to mix scouts organiseing stuff camps good for building confidence Cadets if they know about VI but had to keep explaining sea cadets problem signals did not understand VI</p>
17	walk	math Art friends golden time	misc	other	no answer	<p>Cultural Sport Sport</p> <p>with school only two terms funding once a term for 8 weeks for sports cool 1st come basis swimming at carnegie finished for the ter,</p>

18 friends walk leisure centre	Maths language other golden time	play	few	yes	Sport	Sport Cultural Cultural	Football stopped as warmup difficult to keep up with. Wears splint on her leg
19 walks Friends	Art	no comment	1 or 2	yes	Sport		get out more basket ball swimming at o14 sports centre possible dancing
20 Nothing	sport clubs	play	1 or 2	yes		Cultural Sport Missed Missed	in May through school Science on Monday
21 Nothing Leisure Centre School	Art sport	visual	1 or 2	yes		Cultural Cultural Cultural Sport	Geography hard and dropped as could not read maps manages to catch bus from friends each visit easier to manage glass doors are a problem stairs without a line marking the edge pavements in new areas seeing the edge is difficult
22 Amenities school	other	ambition	1 or 2	yes			prefers to walk rather than catch the bus
23 nothing	Art clubs	practical	yes	yes	Cultural Youth Group	Youth Group Cultural	Youth club but does not go some friends do Prefers to be outside or at home with friends.

						Youth Group Youth Group Sport		spends time in I9 and Stirling takes bus swimming does not like girl guides each for short time would like to do sewing hand and machine would like to do something creative prefers pictures on machines to words The Vine Church Group is much enjoyed Would like to meet up with others reenactments good but not many go judo classes would be good but not many go
(disability) 24 Leisure Centre	other	play	1 or 2	yes		Sport Sport Sport		Disability golf, swimming, football stopped due to funding person is also sorting special olympics
25 friends leisure centre	friends	ambition	yes	yes			Cultural	no problems does not want to join other groups
26 xxx	Xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx		Xxx	xxx	not at mainstream says car and says no needs lifting in and out of pool

Appendix 5 Parents' Response. Best thing about the Local Area

Community	small	Know people	Know area	amenities	School	walks	Leisure Centre	Nothing
Community Feeling		Friends	Always lived here	Shop pub		Country access	M12 Leisure Centre	Nothing
Close knit community		Relatives	Partner from here	Close to facilities		Park	Drama	Not a lot locally
Safe		Everybody knows you	Husband born and bred here	Near to most places		Countryside	Singing	Only scouts
Community Social Network		Family here		Central		Long walks		No socialising
		Everybody knows him		Things close to here		Fields		Don't both with anybody
		Nice neighbours		Bus stop outside		Beach		Does not really know.
		Help each other out		Things in walking distance		Remote area		Nothing in E5 for children
		Keep an eye on things		Easy to get to places				Live on farm
		Friendly neighbours						
		Partner from here						
		Social network						
		Always lived here						

9	3	12	5	6	9	7	2	6
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Appendix 6 Young Peoples' Response. Best thing about the Local Area

Community	small	Know people	Know area	amenities	School	walks	Leisure Centre	Nothing
Nice and Quiet		Knows lots of people	Knows area	Shopping		Grass outside	Swimming	No answer
		Friends		All walking distance		Park	Activities at school	Nothing much
		Mentions a male or female who comes over		Bus stop outside		Large grassed area	M12 Centre	Don't know nothing
		New friend				Near country	Sport on Saturday	Nothing in E5 for children
		A friend at a house				Beach	Golf	Swimming always closed
		Visits friends				The Glen	Swimming	Not much time spent here
		All friends closeby					Football dancing	Remote area
1	1	9	1	2	5	9	6	6

APPENDIX 7 Support Available

Table: The actual comments from parents, related to the headings they were put under. The figures in last row are total in each category.

School	GP	Agency	Direct Payments	Relatives	Friends	FSB	Not needed	No Support
Educational Psychologist	GP	Agency	Direct Payments	Parents	Neighbours	Rehab Officer Judith	There is support mainly manage on our own	Finding somebody
School		MHS for Young People		Paternal Grandparents	Lots of friends	Quite a bit from FSB	Rehab officer support not really needed somebody checks up at school	None other than school
School Auxiliary		Acorn Trust		Ex-Husband/Father	Friends			Parents no other support one to one in class
Sees someone at school once a term		Autism Key Worker		Gran Sister and Mother-in-law				Good support in class in family no support. A keyworker for autism has visited a few times
Good School		Respite						Shopping centre and trolley a nightmare no support
Good Support in Class								No support at home
Support from school								No support has respite area too rural
Mrs X in school if problems								
People in School help								
Support at school								
VI Teacher								
17	1	3	1	8	3	2	2	9

APPENDIX 8 Best About School

Math	Language	Art	Sport	Golden Time	Other	Clubs	Homework Club	Friends	Everything	Nothing much	Not at school
Times table ie addition	Reading,	Art	Gym	Golden time	Dressing as victorian	Golf	Homework club	Playing with Sam	The whole thing	Nothing much	Nothing did not like school
Maths	Spelling	Art Dept	Pe		In technological subjects	Chess		Meet up with friends	Everything	Nothing did not like school	Not at school
	writing		Football		Projects	Success matters		Friends			
					Playing in the field	clubs		My friends			
					Talking to teachers						
6	3	4	3	4	5	3	1	4	2	2	2

Appendix 9 Magic Wand

No Comment	Imaginative	Practical	play	Miscellaneous	Visual	ambition
Cannot think of anything	Magic School	Put all stray animals into shelters.	Go-cart track outside. Disneyland outside. Favourite swimming pool outside, Burnt Island or Dundee	The cupboard by shaking a wand. Does not know who to change	Said to get eyes normal but when questioned said to stop people fussing about my vision when I am with them.	Make us millionaires.
Nothing much		Turn everybody into nice people	Change school to play all day. Keep two sessions of math. Dress up Victorian.	Change bottle to a rock.	Change my vision back to normal.	Go to Australia.
		World Peace	More friends			
		Turn back the clock on global warming.	To be able to play football all the time.			
		Career and lots of money, Help with career. Person Centred Counselling.	Make school different. Change hours – shorter. More hours of playtime.			
		Change a couple of teachers.				
		Get rid of bullies				
		Vanish boys in 3 rd 4 th and 5 th year				
		No bullying at school				
		World Peace				
		Equality for everybody				
5	1	5	4	2	2	2
4 f & 1m	1m	5 f & 1m	2f & 3m	2m	1f & 1m	1f & 1m
5,7,10,16&14	12	5,9,14,14, 15 & 13	8,9,&9,11,&11	&6,11	13&18	15&16

Appendix 10 Making Friends and Meeting People

2 Did not answer. One appears to have network. other parents not asked.

Making Friends				Meeting People				
Very Easy	Easy	Not Easy	Difficult	Enjoys meeting others		Reserved	Prefers Adults	Cannot tell
				Yes	No			
Very easily	Easily	Not very easily she.	Finds difficult	Yes	Not forthcoming initially	More reserved	Easier with adults	Not able to speak so it is hard to tell
Talker Communicative	Fine with meeting people	Enjoys company unpredictable	Difficult because of learning disability	Enjoys	No	Tries but withdraws	Prefers adults	
	Makes friends easily	Tries but withdraws	Other children need to get used to the young person and help from staff is required	When they do	Not really			
	Makes friends well	Adult company preferred		Fine with people	Tries but withdraws			
	Forces himself to make friends	ADHD no social life						
		Not easily						
3	12	5	3	20	2	3	2	1

Appendix 11 Friends at School

Parents' Responses						Children's Responses					
None	One or Two	Few	Yes	Other	No Response	None	One or Two	Few	Yes	Other	No Response
	One or two friends mainly X	3 or 4 good friends	Own group of friends	Altered in primary secondary transition went to different school to others and the community		None	1 or 2 Big cousin, X, y, z and A	A few but not much chance to meet them	All my class	Friends at school Teacher support person 2 girls one boy cousin	
	X joined at the hip	3 boys and girls	X left recently lots at break	Couple of friends who are older from the homework club and immediate family				X and others Y and Z at school	6 named then lots		
	Play with X	A few at school	Quite a few friends	Royal school not at home enough			X lots of acquaintances		Variety of friends at school		
			Yes friends at school	Only acquaintances					Loads of friends in different groups		
			Good friends at school	At special needs school					25 friends at school		
			Good number of friends 10 at school	All the class					30 friends		

			Mixture quite a lot of friends						Lots at school		
			Lots at school						All the boys in my class		
									Friends in town but a bit of bitchiness at the moment		
									X left recently lots during break		
									Mainly boys good network at school		
									10 friends		
									Mixture large group		
	3	4	10	5	2	1	2	4	13	1	3

Appendix 12 Friends at Home

Parents' Responses						Children's Responses					
None	One or Two	Few	Yes	Other	No Response	None	One or Two	Few	Yes	Other	No Response
Doesn't go out much because of VI. Sister takes him out. He goes out the back. He likes telly too much	One occasionally	One nearby three or four who come to play	Quite a few friends goes out and has friends over	Sister		none	One nearby three or four others	A few	Yes a group	Cousins	
Nobody here	One main friend	A few	Good friends at home	Sibling			Couple	In different towns and X	Yes	Mother and siblings	
	X from primary but different high school	Three friends	Mixture quite a lot	Brother, mum dad, cat. Nobody his age			X and lots of acquaintances	7 at home and 3 boys	Same at home	2 friends girls and 1 boy (me)	
	Two at home	More boys than girls (f)	yes	Immediate family			More friends come from school		X,Y,Z lots	Brother mother father granny	
	Couple of friends	Meets friends at		Acquaintances			A couple at home		X and Y same at		

		park							school		
		Some come by		X just moved			Not many at home		Mixture large group		
		Two or three at home					X just moved				
							Two friends				
2	5	5	5	6	2	1	7	6	4	4	1

Appendix 13 Summary of Friendships

No. make friends	meeting people	Friends school	Friends home	Age	Area	No. Friends home	Friends School
1 Not easy	reserved	no response	no response	14	A1	m 1	
2 Very Easily	reserved	yes	other	7	B2	f 2 yes	yes
3 very easily	enjoys	few	few	5		f 3 other	few
4 not easy	enjoys	other	few	12	C3	m 4 other	no answer
5 difficult	enjoys	few	few	12	D4	m 5 few	few
6 easily	enjoys	Other	1 or 2	10	F6	f 6 yes	few
7 not easily	does not enjoy	1 or 2	few	5	E5	f 7 1 or 2	other
8 difficult	enjoys	other	1 or 2	16	G7	m 8 xxx	xxx
9	enjoys	few	few	10	H8	f 9 xx	xxx
10 easy	enjoys	Other	other	13	I9	m 10 other	a few
11 easy	enjoys	yes	yes	8	K10	f 11 yes	yes

12 easy	enjoys	yes	yes	9L11	f	12 lots	few
13 not easy	no answer			14 I9	f	13 few	few
14 easy	enjoys	1 or 2	1 or 2	15 M12	f	14 few	yes
15 easy	enjoys	no response	none	11 E5	m	15 other	yes
16 xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	18 N12	m	16 none	none
17 easy	enjoys	other	other	6 I9	m	17 other	no answer
18 easy	no answer	yes	few	9 I9	f	18 few	yes
19	enjoys	yes	few	16 O14	f	19 1 or 2	yes
20 easy	enjoys	few	none	9 E5	m	20 1 or 2	yes
21 easy	enjoys	yes	yes	13 P15	f	21 1 or 2	yes
22 easy	doesn't enjoy	yes	other	16 Q16	m	22 1 or 2	yes
23 very easily	enjoys	yes	yes	14 R17	f	23 yes	yes

24 not easily	prefers adults	yes	1 or 2	11 S18	m	24 1 or 2	yes
25 easy	enjoys	Yes	Yes	15 T19	f	25 yes	yes
26 difficult	enjoys hard to know	other	No response	12 U20	m	26 xxx	xxx

Appendix 14 Transport

No.	Car	Walk	Bus	Train	Cycle	No Pub. transport	With friends	Independent	Taxi to school	Age	Area
1	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y			14	A1
2	Y					Y	N			7	B2
3	Y			Y		Y	N			5	I9
4	Y		Y	Y						12	C3
5	Y	Y								12	D4
6	Y					Y	N			10	F6
7	Y	Y				Y	N			5	E5
8	Y					Y				16	G7
9	Y		Y				Y			10	H8
10	Y	Y								13	I9
11	Y		Y	Y	Y		N			8	K10
12	Y	Y	Y	Y						9	L11
13	Y								Y	14	I9
14	Y	Y	Y				N			5	M12
15	N		Y						Y	11	E5
16	N									18	N12
17	Y		Y				N			6	I9
18	Y	Y	Y				N			9	I9
19	Y					Y			Y	16	O14
20	Y	Y	Y		Y				Y	9	E5
21	Y		Y	Y			Y			13	P15
22	Y	Y					N			16	Q16

23	Y		Y	Y			Y			14	R17
24	Y		Y							11	S18
25	Y		Y	Y			Y	Y		15	T19
26	Y								Y	12	U20
	24	9	14	8	2	6	Y=5 N=9	1	5		

Appendix 15 Other comments

No.	Finding Activity(1) VI Knowledge (2)		Self-esteem(1) Social skills(2)		Integration (1) Friend (2)		Other VI Young people	Transition	One to one	Exclusion
	1	2	1	2	1	2				
1			1	2	1					
2							1	1		
3									1	1
4									1	
5		2	1							1
6							1		1	
7		2	1							
8	1	2	1				1			
9	1							1		
10		2		2			1	1		
11		2	1		1	2		1		
12			1	2						
13		2	1	2		2		1		
14		2	1		1			1		
15										
16										
17		2	1	2						
18		2	1		1					
19					1	2		1		
20										
21		2					1			
22		2	1		1	2				
23	1				1					
24										
25										
26										
	3	11	10	4	8	5	5	7	3	2

Appendix 16 Activities

No.	CI Past	C Present	Y Past	Y Present	S Past	S Present	Age	Area	Gender	Comment
1					Gymnastics Tai Kwon do Scouts Swimming		14	Marckinch	m	Withdrew when moved to next stage
2		Ballet Tap Jazz Judo Chess Homework club				Bat and Twiddling Swimming Golf Club	7	B2	f	Nothing locally really Badminton Age 10 Toddler Park
3			Rainbows	Rainbows	Physio Pool		5	Dunblane	f	Water to cool in Carnegie pool blocks for physio poo; moved recently rainbows depends on numbers
4		Sunday School	Beavers Cubs	Scouts		Football Matches	12	C3	m	Mother takes to scouts Direct Payments finding somebody
5	art	keyboard				karate swimming cycling	12	D4	m	Art Clashed with something else

6	drama singing	beavers	Gymnastics	10 F6	f	VI since 2002
7	disco Dancing girls brigade	disco dancing girls brigade	swimming	5 E5	f	3/4 weeks watching withdrew recently
8				16 G7	m	
9				10 H8	f	
10	Equals Committee		Gymnastics Swimming	13 I9	m	
11	Sunday School	Brownies	Swimming Athletics	8 K10	f	
12	Homework Club		swimming	9 L11	f	Could not afford swimming In school club 'success matters'
13	Dance			14 I9	f	Will do activities with friend did dance and drama needs collecting and taking home
14	Dance Drama			15 M12	f	Would like group with more shows friend stopped worrying about transition

15				11 E5	m	
16				18 N12	m	Left school 15 Very Low Wonderful suggestions/advice
17	Homework Club		Sports Cool Swimming	6 I9	m	Does activity through school Only two terms first come first served basis Swimming at Carnegie finished for term
18	Kumone-English Kumone-Maths	Football	Swimming	9 I9	f	Warm-up difficult for football so stopped
19		Swimming		16 O14	f	Wants to get out more Basket ball Swimming at O14 Sports Centre Possible Dancing
20	Guitar		Football	9 E5	m	
21	Drama Music Art		PE	13 P15	f	Dropped Geog could not read maps Catches bus to friends Glass doors problem stairs without line to edge problem pavements in new areas problem

22				16 Kircaldy	m	Prefers to walk than catch the bus Glass doors problem starting college
23	dance school Gala Committee	Rainbows Youth Group Brownies guides	Swimming	14 R17	f	The Vine Youth Group sounds great.
24			golf swimming football	11 S18	m	Disability sports not open at present
25	dancing			15 T19	f	does not want to do anything else
26				12 U20	m	Not mainstream Says "a few words"

Appendix 17: Summary of project at the end of Year 1

Original Objectives

(from application sheet)

1. Establish type and degree of social exclusion.
2. Network with community, social, health and leisure facilities.
3. Identify local resources, existing services and personnel.
4. Leave individuals and groups empowered to maintain accessible and appropriate provision.

Outcomes

(from application sheet)

- 1) Healthy active lifestyle
- 2) Confidence
- 3) Self-esteem
- 4) Social skills
- 5) Engagement in sustained activities

Establish successful activities for individuals

Supported by people with relevant knowledge and skill

Evidence of active and effective participation in target group.

Where we are now.

I do not think any of the objectives have changed, however, some of the methods have changed.

1. Establishing type and degree of social exclusion

The task was to speak with professionals and arrange a meeting with families.

The change came from speaking with professionals and it was agreed that visiting families would be more likely to be productive than arranging a meeting or two. Therefore I visited families.

New Task.

- 1) sent out letters asking to meet up
- 2) Sorted out a questionnaire
- 3) Arranged to visit families
- 4) Asked families questions
- 5) Gained information from families
- 6) Wrote a report.

Generally what families would like

- 1) A lot of families would like to meet others with a VI
- 2) A lot would like to meet families a year or two further on in the system than they are.
- 3) Transition times were important.
- 4) Sighted guide training was an interest for most.

Generally found

- 1) families were participating
- 2) dropping out at transition times
- 3) dropping out when friends left.
- 4) lack of knowledge of where to get support

This stage has been completed and is end of year 1, however it will continue with others being met etc.

2) Network with: Community, Social, Health and Leisure.

Spoken with some groups.

Change: has occurred as families were contacted first.
Therefore the focus now is on individual requirements.

Outcome from the report.

- a) Learnt about facilities that have worked.
- b) Learnt about what has not worked.
- c) Learnt about what there is available.
- d) Identified a need to look at transitions that have worked.

The project has not involved health.

Now the task:

- (i) to speak with organisations
- (ii) Introduce training advice and support.
- (iii) Introduce individuals to activities.

3) Identify Local resources, existing services, and personnel.

This has been slowly occurring. The stage is that now the information needs to be used to effectively bring together the existing services and the families.

Task:

It was felt the best way to do this so that it could become sustaining would be to provide an information sheet/news sheet, that could be produced about three times a year.

During year 2 sort out individual activities.

- 4) Leave individuals and groups empowered to maintain accessible and appropriate provision.

This will develop naturally in time hopefully. However, to facilitate this it was felt setting up a committee/group that meets a couple to three times a year would help to provide this. A group such as this would give families an opportunity to meet up and meet others with a VI some the same age some a couple of years on.

A possibility of two groups:

- 1) for the providers of activities maybe in the form of a training/awareness session?
- 2) For families as a sociable event.

Year 3

Hopefully established group supported by FSB, Education, leisure and possibly health and social work.

To Summarise **Year 2 Tasks**

- 1) Information sheet/news sheet.
Listing activities
Contacts
Report findings.
- 2) Set up a group/committee and be a part of it.
- 3) Engage/re-engage at least 5 young people into activities.
- 4) Write up a report on year 2 completion

This year's focus is on Activity provision. – Possibly a questionnaire for providers???

Year 3 Tasks

- 1) Leave group/committee to run
- 2) Leave newsletter to run
- 3) Engage more young people in activities.
- 4) Establish training sessions if required.
- 5) Visit families to get feedback on social inclusion – another questionnaire?

Write up a report on completion of year 3 and project.

Appendix 18 Active Community Time Projects and Objectives Tasks Table written up by Alan Suttie

Objectives	Tasks	Outcomes	Time line for tasks
Establish type and degree of social exclusion	Sent out letters asking to meet up Sorted out a questionnaire Arranged to visit families Asked families questions Gained information from families Wrote a report.	A lot of families would like to meet others with a VI A lot would like to meet families a year or two further on in the system than they are. Transition times were important. Sighted guide training was an interest for most Generally found <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5) families were participating 6) dropping out at transition times 7) dropping out when friends left. 4) lack of knowledge of where to get support 	This stage has been completed and is end of year 1, however it will continue with others being met etc.
Network with community, social, health and leisure facilities	To speak with organisations Introduce training advice and support. Introduce individuals to activities	Establish successful activities for individuals	To consider tasks to be completed year 2
Identify local resources, existing services and personnel	This has been slowly occurring. The stage is that now the information needs to be used to effectively bring together the	Activities supported by people with relevant knowledge and skill	During year 2 sort out individual activities.

	<p>existing services and the families It was felt the best way to do this so that it could become sustaining would be to provide and information sheet/news sheet, that could be produced about three times a year</p>		
<p>Leave individuals and groups empowered to maintain accessible and appropriate provision</p>	<p>This will develop naturally in time hopefully. However, to facilitate this it was felt setting up a committee/group that meets a couple to three times a year would help to provide this. A group such as this would give families an opportunity to meet up and meet others with a VI some the same age some a couple of years on. A possibility of two groups: 3) for the providers of activities maybe in the form of a training/awareness session? 4) For families as a sociable event.</p>	<p>Healthy active lifestyle Confidence Self-esteem Social skills Engagement in sustained activities Evidence of active and effective participation in target group</p>	