

Potato Game

Everybody in the group picked a potato from a bag, spent a few minutes examining their potato and 'getting to know it'. Potatoes were then returned to the bag and people had to pick out their potato (without looking in the bag).

Purpose of the game was to illustrate sameness and difference : we are **all** human beings but are all individuals with differences at the same time.

Focus on difference between people

Following differences were identified:

- Personality
- Gender
- Attitudes
- Way we look at the world
- Religion
- Accent
- Colour (eyes/skin/hair)
- Other physical differences: height/ weight/shape/width/ missing a finger
- Disabilities - walking
- Feelings
- Styles
- Tastes

Important Stuff Activity

Purpose was to explore global human needs and human rights, to identify these and then to think about what other kinds of rights different people need like rights to development, protection, participation.

The group brainstormed initially on what things are really important to them, things they need every day. This list included:

- Air
- Food
- Water
- Shelter
- Clothes
- Protection
- Help and assistance with toileting etc ? (was it in this list?)
- Washing and hygiene to prevent disease

This list was agreed as being some of the essential things needed by all people for survival. We didn't have time to work through the rest of the list below and to decide whether the needs and wants identified represented rights.

These needs and wants are not listed in any order of importance.

Plenty of money	Crutches
To be treated the same	Childcare
To be able to speak up	Teachers
Not to be hit	Transport
To say what you	Spare time
Want to say	
To be heard	To be able to read
TV	Heating
To have your say	Sleep
Family	Home
School	Hearing
Walking	Strength
Trust and to be able to say things to people	
For people not to wind you up	Smell
Sight	Electricity

We then discussed a number of the needs and rights identified through the initial brainstorming.

Right to a family

The group felt that a family is very important as it provides you with love, support, comfort, attention. However they recognised that in some cases it is not possible to have a family (parents may be dead, separated, ill or for other reasons). In this situation the group felt that it is very important to have guardians/carers:

'someone to talk to '

'someone to stand for you '(like in confirmation)

'you need somebody, I don't care who it is '

'somebody to help you go to the toilet '.

The group felt that possibly the welfare services or the state should fulfil the responsibility of providing the child or young person with such guardians/carers. They felt that it wouldn't be fair to expect neighbours or even family members to look after the young person.

It was agreed that young people need to have parents/guardians until *'you are able to stand on your own two feet'*. It was also felt that reaching this depends on the individual and their level of maturity and that a fixed age shouldn't be set ; *'it kind of depends on the child '.*

Right to be consulted

This was a central theme running through discussions of other issues including family, protection, support, a home, education and young people with disabilities.

The issue of whether there should be any age below which a child shouldn't be consulted was discussed. Initially the focus was on coming up with a specific age e.g. 5,7,9,10,16,18. However in discussing it the group reached a position where they felt that it depended on the maturity of the child. It was felt that it was most important to consult the child on any decisions affecting them and that their views should influence but not totally determine any decision being made. The example was used of a 5 year old stating that they *'wanted to go and live with the candy man '.*

The group felt that if a decision was being made about providing foster care or other care for a young person then that young person has a right to have a say in the decision *'ask the child for their opinion'*.

The group felt strongly that young people with a disability have an equal right to be consulted.

If a young person with a disability is living in residential accommodation to attend school then they have a right to be consulted about decisions in relation to that accommodation e.g. *'right to say what colour your walls are in the hostel'*.

In relation to mainstream versus special needs education the group felt that young people with disabilities should have a choice *'its you that is going to school'*

Right to a home

The group felt that there was a difference between shelter or 'a house' and 'a home'. While it was agreed that 'having a roof over your head' is absolutely essential for everybody it was felt that a home was much more than that and was somewhere *'warm and comfortable'*, *'somewhere where you are brought up'* or *'somewhere where your family are'*.

The group discussed whether boarders in Fleming Fulton would regard the hostel as their home and it was generally agreed that they wouldn't. However it was pointed out that *'it would depend if you live there for a long time as you might get used to it'*.

Rights for young people with disabilities

Issues of access, respect, dignity and equality were discussed. The group pointed to the lack of access to schools, public buildings, public transport and footpaths,

They felt that the authorities should be 'forced to put ramps onto other schools'. They noted that ramps benefit not only people with disabilities but also people with prams *'it won't do a bit of harm having a ramp'*; *'ramps are easier for everybody'*; *even if I didn't*

have anything wrong with me I 'd still want it (ramps) for other people '

The group also felt that public authority housing should all be accessible but that in the case of privately owned homes that it was up to the home owners to decide.

In relation to transport it was noted that City Bus does have access but that at times the bus drivers do not wait for disabled people to board the bus before driving off.

The group felt strongly that the lack of ramps affected their dignity *'people see you getting lifted '*; *'depending on other people doing things for you'*; *'I'm a 15 year old boy, do you think I want to be carried on? (to a bus)*

The group recommended that the right of access for people with disabilities should be included in the Bill of Rights.

Education

There was a long discussion about education, mainstream versus special needs education, resources and the issue of choice.

The group discussed the benefits and drawbacks of both mainstream and special needs education.

In relation to mainstream education it was felt that it can be difficult to access supports required by disabled people including physiotherapy. One of the group who had attended mainstream school reported that while she was able to access physiotherapy she was forced to miss on g-ym as a result. She also noted that she wasn't involved in making this choice. However some of the group felt that it would not be possible to have everything you need or want and that some compromises would have to be made to access support services in mainstream school. Ail agreed however that the student should be involved in making such choices and decisions.

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twice in a month as opposed to twice a week in Fleming Fulton.

The view was also expressed that mainstream schools tend to have lower expectations of disabled students which can be damaging *'they don't give you a chance to show off what you can do in ways'*

Another issue raised was that of perhaps being the only disabled person in the class in mainstream school. People in the group noted that this is also the case outside of school. in their communities. The issue of lack of respect was raised *'some people do make fun of you'*; *'they ask you questions (about your disability) and hassle you'*; *'when people see you out shopping they take pity'*; *'they think they should be your friend'*.

It was felt that there is a need for disability awareness education and it was suggested that this should be included on the school curriculum.

The group concluded that people with disabilities should have the right to choose and the right to change their mind in relation to mainstream school or special needs school. They also felt that both types of schools should be able to cater for disabled students as *'it doesn't help if you have only one choice'*.

Other Issues/Questions

Is there anybody disabled in the British Parliament (as that is where the Bill of Rights gets decided upon) ?

Ms. Ni Bhaoill pointed out that there are disabled MPs including David Blunkett. Sara informed the group that one of the Human Rights Commissioners has a disability but that all Commissioners have a duty to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities.

What is the time frame – when will we have a Bill of Rights?

There was concern expressed when Sara informed the group that a final Bill may not appear for up to another two years 'you'll not be getting it anytime soon so'.

The **issue of access to discos was raised.** One of the group reported that when she has tried to attend a disco in the past the management have refused her entry on the grounds of fire safety.

ACTIONS

- Sara to type up notes from this consultation session and circulate them to the group for additions / changes before they are agreed and submitted to the Human Rights Commission

- Ms. Ni Bhaoill asked the group to think about and write down ten rights each that are most important to them, in order of importance.

Year 10 Fleming Fulton Recommendations

The pupils felt that it was a priority to be able to get out and about without the aid of parents or carers. To this end they wanted to make the following recommendations.

TRANSPORT

Access on and off all footpaths with kerbs/ramps.

Vehicles blocking these kerbs, parking on the footpath and/or parking illegally on disabled car parking spaces should all be severely punished or towed.

The right to a tricycle to get about if you need it.

SOCIAL

A right to be protected from verbal abuse about your disability.

To be treated with respect and dignity,

To be allowed a say or a free decision about your own future.

People to take our thoughts about ourselves into account when having discussions about us.

I want the right not to have presumptions made about my sexuality just because I am disabled.

Equal rights to able bodied people, for example the right to a job.

The right to speak on my own behalf if I am present, ie "not have people talk over your head as if you are simple."

The right to be allowed to try and take the risk of failing (this came out of a discussion about parents/carers being overly protective of disabled young people, when able bodied young people are allowed to climb trees etc. and risk hurting themselves disabled young people are not really allowed to risk take, the young people felt that risk taking and being allowed to find your own limits was an important part of growing up that they missed out on because everyone is afraid of being accused of negligence). This recommendation was articulated by one pupil and then very enthusiastically endorsed by the other pupils as if they had suddenly been given a voice. They were all able to sympathise with carers and the difficult position they were in but wondered if something like a disclaimer could be used to protect their jobs.

The right to have fun.

PRIVACY

The young people had a long discussion on how their privacy should be respected, looking at the sensitive issue of a young person who needs help toileting. They felt your privacy should definitely be respected from puberty onwards but that you should be given your dignity before then if it was possible. To this end they made the following recommendations

Carers/parents should ALWAYS ask if someone wants or needs help to do a certain thing and not just presume they want/need help.

Young people should be allowed any extra time they need in the bathroom to do what they can for themselves and not be forced to hurry or have someone help them just because it might take them too long.

Even if you need help to get in and out of the bath you should still be allowed to be in there on your own if it is safe. Even if you need help washing you should still be allowed to wash your own "down belows" if at all possible.

MEDICAL,

The right to eat what I want. (This recommendation was made by a young person with Prader Willi Syndrome whose diet is very strictly controlled in an attempt to keep him in good health.)

The right to ask questions of Consultants and Medical staff and expect an HONEST answer "not to be fobbed off"...not to hide the truth even when it is a bad truth" "or to think that you are too thick and can't cope with the answers"

The right to refuse assistance and help/treatment.

EDUCATION

The right to the National Curriculum if I can cope with it no matter what school I choose to go to.