



'Our aim is to help all young people achieve their potential'

Brian Wilson-Minister of State for Education and Industry April 1998



2 Inclusiveness

The way to realise potential

2.1 The single, unifying principle at the core of all the Beattie Committee's proposals and recommendations is Inclusiveness. It is central to our vision that all young people on leaving school - whatever their circumstances - should have access to adequate and appropriate learning provision within a learning environment matching their needs, abilities and aspirations. The principle of Inclusiveness is essential for an effective transition from school to further education or training and for later transitions. It should encompass personal development as well as more formal skills and qualifications. Inclusiveness should also underpin the policies and practice of the agencies and institutions which offer guidance, education and training. The Committee believes that Inclusiveness is essential to help young people reach their full potential.

2.2 We wish to acknowledge the influence of Professor John Tomlinson's report "Inclusive Learning" commissioned by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in England. While the Tomlinson report was directed specifically at provision in the FE sector, the Beattie Committee has explored the concept of Inclusiveness to see how it would fit across the whole range of post-school provision in Scotland: guidance, assessment, further education, training, and ultimately entry into employment. The Committee was particularly attracted to the idea of Inclusiveness because we considered that any attempt to offer definitions of needs or problems, however sensitively done, could perpetuate a "deficit" model.

2.3 The key to Inclusiveness is that the learning environment should match the learner's needs, abilities and aspirations. An Inclusiveness approach does not, therefore, remove the option of a separate learning environment where it is offered in response to the needs of the individual. But a separate learning environment is not justified on the grounds that it fits better with the institutional infrastructure or organisational practices. We fully endorse Professor Tomlinson's description of Inclusiveness as an approach which would avoid the "location of the difficulty in the student and focus instead on the capacity of the educational institution to understand and respond to the individual learner's requirements".

What is Inclusiveness?

2.4 First and foremost, Inclusiveness means that the needs, abilities and aspirations of young people should be recognised, understood and met within a supportive environment which encourages them to achieve their goals and to make real, measurable progress.

2.5 The most important factor of all – and the one that will drive forward changes in policy and practice – is the development of a culture of Inclusiveness within organisations. We know that, across Scotland, there are a number of education and training providers who have already adopted the principle of Inclusiveness. We also know, and fully recognise, that changes leading to an overall Inclusiveness approach will take time and a high level of commitment from staff. If changes are to happen, the prime requirement is for strong and active leadership from senior management. They must work closely with both staff and learners to develop and promote a shared vision of Inclusiveness and a common sense of purpose within their organisation.

2.6 The challenge for the Committee has been how to translate the concept of Inclusiveness into action.

2.7 We have also attempted to identify the key characteristics of an Inclusive organisation. It would:

- put the individual at the centre of its policies and practices;
- recognise and support diversity by striving to meet the widest possible range of needs;
- seek to achieve the best "match" between provision and the needs of the individual;
- support staff in implementing an Inclusiveness approach through ongoing training and development;
- help staff to adapt teaching styles to match the learning styles of the individual;
- offer high quality effective assessment of learning and support needs;
- develop positive relationships with the young person and family e.g. by sharing information;
- develop positive working relationships with other agencies e.g. by sharing information with other agencies and organisations, in line with agreed protocols;
- foster an atmosphere in which the young person can thrive and progress.

These should be **core activities** and fully reflected in day to day management.

2.8 The concept of Inclusiveness goes beyond the immediate provider of education or

training. It should also be a guiding principle for the agencies and organisations which have a role to play in offering the young person a rewarding and fulfilling learning experience. These agencies include Government, careers service companies (guidance), local authorities (social work and community education), further education colleges, LECs, training providers, funding bodies, and the voluntary sector. Without a common and shared understanding and belief in the idea of Inclusiveness, the transitions from one provider to another, which for some young people are multiple transitions, may be ineffective and undermine previous achievements. To achieve smooth transition and progression it is necessary for all the agencies and organisations to play their part. This will mean joint working by agencies at national level, strategic level and operational level and, perhaps more important, "**joined up thinking**". We have, therefore, developed a proposal for a multi-agency structure with clear lines of accountability at national level to take forward an Inclusiveness approach to ensuring that young people receive the learning opportunities and support provision that they need .

A Spectrum of Needs and Abilities

2.9 An Inclusiveness approach will, through effective assessment, recognise and acknowledge the distinct and diverse needs and abilities of young people. One of the strengths of our work as a Committee, as well as one of our major challenges, has been that we have looked across the wide range of young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who face barriers to participation in post school learning because of low educational attainment, poor motivation or other social or emotional problems. Our research, including the focus group study, shows clearly that there is a strong parallel between the experiences of young people with learning disabilities and those who are disadvantaged or "disaffected". They are all at risk of exclusion. The profile of young people who are not engaged at all in education or training shows that young people with learning disabilities are over-represented. All the young people in these vulnerable groups experience difficult transitions on leaving school and in subsequent attempts to re-engage in education or training or to enter employment.

Value

2.10 An Inclusiveness approach must build on the idea of **value**. We must value the young person as a whole person, not focus solely, or even primarily, on their problems and difficulties. The idea of value must be integral to the policies and practices of all the agencies which contribute to the post-school experience.

2.11 The agencies involved in assessment of learning and support needs have a major role to play. The assessment must be designed, and carried through, in such a way that young people feel valued for their abilities and potential at the same time as any barriers to learning are being identified. However, this must not lead us to minimise, ignore or gloss over specific needs or problems. Professor Tomlinson made this point very clearly in his report and we fully support it. It was also made very forcibly to us by a number of individuals and groups. Many people who

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have disabilities, whether learning disabilities, physical disabilities or sensory impairment, want their problems and difficulties to be fully recognised and acknowledged. They do not want the disability to be an unnecessary barrier to participation in learning but neither do they want it to be ignored. Even on a practical level, they may need the recognition of the disability before certain kinds of support can be made available, e.g. a scribe, or a technological aid. We must be able to recognise disability without devaluing the person.

2.12 We are also fully aware of concerns among some practitioners that "labelling" perpetuates stigmatisation and creates barriers to participation. Our view is that this problem can be addressed by an effective assessment process which identifies **all** the learning and support needs, and the skills and abilities, of the young person. We believe that an effective assessment procedure, which values the individual and leads to an individual profile and action plan, is the key to providing a high value learning experience.

2.13 An Inclusiveness approach recognises the diversity of need. It does not exclude a separate learning environment if that is the best way of delivering an appropriate and relevant learning experience for an individual. Within a culture of Inclusiveness, this should be a positive, not a negative, development provided that the young person is fully involved in a process of assessment and action planning which is designed to take full account of their needs, abilities and aspirations. In promoting the value of a separate learning environment, if appropriate, within an over-arching culture of Inclusiveness, we are not arguing against the benefits of integration where a young person learns alongside their peers with support from special equipment or a personal carer if required. The fundamental principle remains always that the provision must be the best and most appropriate to meet the assessed needs of the young person.

2.14 In the learning environment, staff in further education, community education and training already have the challenge of designing programmes for groups of people with different learning styles and previous experiences. They have the skills and knowledge to do that. There is an even bigger challenge to extend and adapt those skills, where necessary, to meet the needs of young people whose learning styles are influenced by other factors, arising from disabilities, disadvantage or other social, emotional or behavioural problems.

A Continuum of Provision

2.15 We have already touched on the nature of transition for young people who have additional support needs. Research has shown that young people who are at risk of exclusion – from learning, employment, and ultimately, society – experience a range of different transitions and pathways to exclusion. Young people with learning disabilities, for example, may spend a prolonged period in further education or training but never achieve employment or be unable to sustain employment if an opportunity is identified. Young people who have few or no educational qualifications, low motivation, or other social or emotional problems often experience multiple transitions or "scheme hopping". The characteristics of young people who "drop out" or

reject the system represent a continuum of need. This potential for unstable or unproductive transitions has led us to the view that an Inclusiveness approach requires a continuum of learning opportunities. This means that there should be no single starting point and no single exit route. There should be a continuum of learning opportunities which gives flexible provision when young people most need it.

2.16 The other key element of a continuum of learning opportunities is that there must be clear routes for progression. Many young people have experience of education or training that offers a worthwhile learning experience and a qualification but does not seem to lead on to an appropriate next stage. It is important that the young people have access to well-informed and timely information and guidance when they are approaching another transition. The college or training provider should be able to offer some guidance but should also have close links with other providers and with the Careers Service.

2.17 There is also a clear link to be made with the assessment process. An effective assessment process will include regular monitoring of a young person's progress and a review of their goals. An Inclusiveness approach would require that education and training providers use the outcomes of the assessment process as a valuable source of information about the range and scope of learning opportunities which should be available within their area. There is also an economic argument for ensuring that the resources already devoted to improving a young person's skills and capabilities are not wasted through lack of further appropriate opportunities.

The Role of Staff

2.18 The people who will have the major role in developing a culture of Inclusiveness within an organisation and taking forward the practical implementation are the staff. Their commitment, energy and enthusiasm will be vital. It would be both unfair and impractical to assume that all staff will be able or willing to change practices which may have been in place for a number of years without fully involving them in development work. Most important of all, it will be crucial for the senior management team to take the lead and communicate fully and effectively with staff as they develop their vision of policies and practice.

How can Inclusiveness Work in Practice?

2.19 The principle of Inclusiveness demands that all providers of services to young people should put the needs of young people first when planning the design and delivery of their provision. It will however, take more than agencies working individually to re-focus their services if Inclusiveness is to become a fully accepted principle which informs all aspects of provision. All the agencies and organisations which have a role to play in supporting young people must share a common understanding of what Inclusive provision should actually mean to the young person who is at the centre of the planning process.

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2.20 The development of a continuum of learning and support provision designed to meet individual need and support transitions will demand that agencies and organisations review their current policies and practices. If organisations are to offer fully Inclusive provision, they will almost certainly have to undertake a process of organisational development. They may also have to take a fundamental look at the way in which funding is allocated, within the organisation, and perhaps even more importantly, how organisations can collaborate to use their funding to produce the maximum benefit for the young people.

2.21 The Committee has identified a number of agencies and organisations who are key players in the development of Inclusiveness. We have developed proposals and made a series of recommendations about specific aspects of their provision which are addressed to these organisations. Since we also believe that close collaboration between organisations will be essential, the recommendations include ideas on how collaborative links might operate.

2.22 The key agencies and organisations are:

- Central Government
- Enterprise Networks – SE, HIE, LECs
- Further Education sector, Scottish Further Education Funding Council and Colleges
- Careers Service Companies
- Training Providers
- Local authorities: social work, schools, community education and recreation
- Voluntary Sector
- Employers

2.23 The key areas where the Committee is making specific proposals and recommendations are:

- Agencies working together
- Key workers and volunteer mentors
- Guidance and support
- Assessment and individual action plans
- Aspects of Provision:
 - Further Education and Training
 - Funding
 - Young People in Resource Centres
 - Staff Training and Development
 - Quality Assurance
 - Employability and Employment

Our Vision

2.24 The Committee's vision for an Inclusive approach:

- **A clear lead and direction** at national level from the Scottish Executive;
- **Agencies working together** within their own area to plan and fund provision for young people who require additional support to make a successful transition from school to further education or training or employment. Strategic joint working arrangements should support practitioner teams to take direct responsibility for developing an action plan for an individual young person; monitoring progress; and encouraging and facilitating transition to the next stage;
- **Guidance and support** arrangements which offer timely and well-informed advice and information throughout every stage of transition;
- **An assessment process** which allows time and care to be given to identifying all the learning and support needs of the young person. This would include literacy and numeracy; life skills; social skills; and the need for specific aids. The assessment process should be shared, and contributed to, both by the young person and their parents/carers and by all the agencies who have knowledge and understanding of the individual. It should:
 - identify skills and capabilities and areas for improvement, goals and aspirations;
 - encourage and support the exchange of accurate, up to date information while protecting the confidentiality of the young person;
 - be informed by good quality assessment tools;
 - be regularly reviewed and monitored.
- **The development of an Individual Action Plan.** The Plan should be based on a profile drawn up following the assessment and agreed by a multi-agency team with all the relevant agencies represented. The Action Plan should identify clearly the learning and support needs **as well as** goals and aspirations. The multi-agency team should ensure that support measures are in place and monitor their effectiveness regularly against agreed measures of progress;
- Access to a **key worker** to guide and support the young person through the network of other agencies and/or a **mentor** to offer informed support and encouragement to help build self-esteem and confidence;

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- A **funding regime** which rewards the achievement of the goals and progress indicators agreed in the Action Plan; recognising that some progress may be in "small steps", possibly over an extended period of time;
- **Strong, active leadership and engagement** at senior levels of agencies and organisations to promote an Inclusiveness approach and a shared purpose;
- **Staff training and development** designed to raise awareness of the learning and support needs of young people. This training should be made available to all staff within an organisation or agency if a culture of Inclusiveness is to become embedded. Staff who will have more direct links with young people should have access to accredited training, continuing development and a support system. There should also be joint staff training to improve mutual understanding and co-operation between agencies.

Summary

2.25 Inclusiveness is the single, unifying principle at the core of all the Committee's recommendations. This means that all young people who face problems or barriers in making the transition to post-school learning or employment should have access to fair and accurate assessment; well informed guidance; and learning and support provision to match their needs, abilities and aspirations. Above all **they should have the opportunity to realise their potential.**

2.26 In this chapter, we have set out our vision of Inclusiveness. In subsequent chapters, we set out our proposals and recommendations for putting Inclusiveness into action. The recommendations are designed to drive forward the implementation of Inclusiveness. It is our firm conviction, however, that Inclusiveness will only become a reality when the culture of agencies and organisations fully embraces a belief in the principle of Inclusiveness and a willingness to value each young person. The policies and practices that we recommend offer the tools but implementing Inclusiveness will ultimately depend on the belief, energy and commitment of the staff who are working with, and for young people.

This is our key recommendation:

2.27 **All the agencies and organisations which provide learning opportunities and support for young people should encourage and promote a culture of Inclusiveness which ensures that the needs, abilities and aspirations of young people are recognised, understood and met within a supportive environment; and that they are encouraged to achieve their goals and to make real, measurable progress.**

