

# Issues for Transition from College to University for Students with a Visual Impairment

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# Choosing the Right Course

- Have some students already selected themselves out from STEM subjects due to quality of provision and messages from school?
- Need to get right course, at right university, with right central support.

# Disclosure of their Visual Impairment

- Concern that they will not be given offers because of their VI
- Need to be open on their personal statement about their needs and what the solutions are
- Need for the university to be able to have an open discussion with students about demands of the course, nature of modifications and level of support available at interview
- Need for ongoing discussion once offers are accepted

# Are all courses an option?

- To what extent can you be a blind doctor/midwife/architect/chemist?
- What are the core competencies of a course?
  - What flexibility can there be/should there be?
- Difference between passing a course and getting a job in that area.
- Is there the capacity in the system to make all courses accessible?
- Whose role is it to have these discussions with students?
  - Who owns the application?
  - Balance of high aspirations/realism?
  - All have a responsibility to enable the student to make an informed decision.

# Transition Skills

- Range of ways of working- flexibility.
- Able to negotiate with department about support needs- assertive not aggressive or passive.
- Understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Broader independence skills to make their whole life work.
- If they do not have all these already, where is support coming from?

# Why Placements Fail

- Lack of disclosure and preparation
  - Issue for students going through clearing
- Lack of understanding by the department
- Lack of access to learning
  - Materials on time, in correct format
  - Ability to participate in group activities
  - Issue as more material goes on line
- Erratic nature of support
  - Lack of expertise and induction
  - Lack of stability
- Broader experience of university life

# Building capacity

- Independent mentors/advocates through the course.
- Sharing of modified texts/resources/ approaches across universities.
- Role of voluntary sector.
  - Action for Blind People
- Linking for disability support departments.