

Human Activism: Speakup Self Advocacy Rotherham

Without Speakup it would be a loss because it feels that people might go....I think that people might go back to square one where they've got nowhere to go.

Been working at Speakup since the age of 16. It helps people to speak up for themselves, make their own choices, make decisions. And I would say it helps a lot of people to budget their money and it also helps people to live independently, like myself.

Speakup delivers training to different professionals on how to deal with people with learning difficulties and autism. We have trained well over 2,000 doctors and nurses. A lot of what we do is around communication, so it's stuff like using easy read language and using the different fonts and font size with our letters we get sent. Another key component of our training is we use real life stories, so we show them what's really happening to people in Rotherham.

So if Speakup went I'd have to job search, and I don't know if I'll find a better job than this. This is the best job I've had. I'd just be at home bored and I wouldn't have known the people I know now and I wouldn't have as many friends. So I'm really happy that Speakup's here.

From a grassroots point of view we offer some work placement for college students and for students in their last year of school. Or they come on their own and do work experience, which is great, we've had some youngsters from the school actually managing to travel independently and come along on their own, and that's been fantastic. A lot of it's done through peer advocacy. A lot of the people who are actually working here then peer support other people.

Certainly over the last couple of years the demand for our service has really risen, and that has been against a background of reduced and worrying funding cuts. People want to come here, people want to know about Speakup, but funding that is incredibly difficult given the austerity.

People who work here, they learn you things what you've not learnt before and they give you that confidence and make you feel like 'yeah you can do it', and make you feel like it doesn't matter if you've got a learning disability or not because they make you understand that you can do these things what you might have not....what you didn't think you could do before.