

Human Activism: William's story – Circles of Support

You've got that hour of focused conversation in the Circle that you really start to look at what's there. And also there are no limits, if you can imagine it might be possible then it probably is.

The purpose of William's Circle was to focus on what he was going to do when he'd finished school, so what he wanted to do next, what his skills were, what opportunities were there, and bringing together people in his life to help him to think about that and think around what opportunities there were and how that could work for William.

Through the conversation William identified that he likes being outside, he absolutely loves being outside, walking, fresh air, loves gardening. So for him sitting in college for three days a week just wasn't going to be something that would make him feel happy.

I go to the Hollowford Centre, I polish windows, I do shredding, I tidy up the drawing rooms. In the afternoon I iron pillowcases.

One of the best things about having a Circle of Support is that it's like having a bunch of critical friends, so that when the family and William are making decisions together about his future those friends can offer instructive criticism and positive criticism for the actions that are being taken. So it's a little bit like having your own group of governors.

The Circle of Support can give strength to individual family members, particularly when thinking about the long term care implications for William, and the concern that over a long period of time it may fall to one or other member of the family to look after him. It is particularly reassuring to have a group of individuals with such knowledge and expertise to back the whole family in future preparations for William's care.

Ultimately it means we can plan for the future in the full knowledge that there will always be someone there for William, which if we didn't have that support from the Circle of Care would be a much more worrisome place.