

Item 6: Blaenau Gwent Council Self-Assessment 2022/23

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- In relation to economically inactive disabled residents – what is the Council doing to support those residents.

Adult Services-Community Options (Day Opportunities)

Across Community Options we have a range of work-related opportunities for citizens with disabilities and those with additional support needs.

We also work closely with a number of third sector partners such as the Aneurin Leisure Trust where we have service level agreements to support individuals in training and work-related activities.

One example of these is Vision 21 which is a social enterprise/charity operating across South Wales providing support for people with learning disabilities to develop skills, work experience and gain qualifications in the catering industry. Each week up to ten individuals attend the service where they are supported to develop their skills in a busy kitchen environment.

The students gain confidence and experience as well as the opportunity to undertake qualifications across all aspects of a catering enterprise such as customer service, front of house, food preparation and food hygiene, as well as developing valuable social skills.

We are also developing our own catering enterprise working in conjunction with the Blaenau Gwent Community Meals Service where we prepare tea trays for our Community Meals customers to enjoy a tasty snack and cake in the evening, as well as providing buffets on a commercial basis.

We have students that are trained by a qualified cook learning to prepare and get involved with the preparation and presentation of the tea trays and buffets. In doing so they learn cooking and food preparation skills as well as enhancing knowledge of food safety and legislation.

One of our more recent developments has seen us enter into a partnership arrangement with Blaina Institute, where we have taken over the running of a Café at the Institute, where we have dedicated support workers working with individuals with disabilities who are supported with all aspects of working within a busy commercial Café environment.

The students develop the knowledge and experience to interact with the customers, take orders, help prepare teas, coffees and light meals/sandwiches and provide table service, once again developing crucial social skills and building confidence, whilst helping to integrate people with disabilities into the local community.

It is hoped that in the longer term some those that we support will aspire to move into mainstream or supported employment and becoming more economically active in the process.