

Self advocates from the Bright Sparks Group (young people) and Peoples' Cabinet (adults) really enjoyed and got a lot from the activities provided by Skills Up. The plan is for the 2 groups to start working together and the session was excellent to help them get to know each other and do some team building work.

Amanda and Louise met with us before the day and made sure they knew the outcomes we wanted to achieve through the session. As we have worked with most of the self advocates for a long time, they also asked us for advice on how best to run the session so that it would be accessible for them and would be of maximum benefit for them. Communication with Amanda and Louise was easy. They planned the session carefully and sent us their plan beforehand for any comments.

Amanda and Louise were well prepared and resourced the session very well. It was well structured with a good balance of interesting and fun discussion and practical work. The activities and the way in which they communicated with the participants was well pitched, friendly and professional and we were very impressed how they used the activities not only to encourage team work but to help the groups to work together to produce an end goal that they valued and could then enjoy together (a variety of dishes for lunch). Added benefits were the learning (e.g. concepts of nutrition and food hygiene) and practice/development of skills (practical cookery skills, measurement, organisation etc). On top of this, they also enabled the self advocates to put their own play list together to play whilst they were eating and put a quiz together for after lunch.

One of the adults involved commented that he had got so much out of working with the young people and that we shouldn't assume that it's only young people who learn from adults.

After our experience, we would be happy to recommend Skills Up to others who would benefit from engaging in meaningful, interesting and fun activities that enable them to learn and develop skills at the same time.

**John Hunt**

**Halton Speakout (Bright Sparks/Partnership Board)**

**Sample Day – 8<sup>th</sup> August 2019**