

# Polly's story

**in Control is grateful to Polly for sharing this story**

## **Polly's parents told this story to a member of All of Us.**

Polly is a young person who has a number of difficulties. She is facing the future with the help of people who love her and a group of people who provide support from paid services. At the moment Polly is faced with the challenges of any young person going through the transition from child to young woman. Her family have planned with her because they want her to lead her own life with as much support as she needs. This can come from friends, family and organisations, all of which can help her have a better life.

## **Before in-Control**

Polly's mother explained that life had been very difficult for both Polly and her family. As soon as she had been born, they were constantly confronted with restrictions related to Polly's disability. Professionals would tell them about the poor expectations they would face as a family.

**“All Polly's life, even when she was young, was full of difficulties in trying to explain how life for her and her family could and should be different...”**

**“As we met doctor after doctor, consultant after consultant, lots of comments, diagnosis and totally absurd upsetting and degrading remarks have been made...”**

**“With every remark comment we felt that what little hope we had for Polly at this early stage in her life was being taken away...”**

“Isn’t it a good job we don’t live our lives totally by what the professionals say?”

The family had all but given up hope until they found out that their Local Authority wanted to change how it supported life chances for young people through in-Control. They signed up to the project knowing that it could help Polly bring some new self-determination into her life. As they say:

“I soon realised in-Control wasn’t a new agency or service.

It didn’t have thousands of pounds to give to us. It didn’t have all the answers, as it was a pilot scheme. I did realise it was a tool to help us plan for the future... a way to an independent life style for Polly by accessing Direct payments so Polly could have her own PA’. in-Control is a tool, use it for what it is, as with any tool, it will take some effort on your part for it to work...I mean have you ever seen a saw cut wood without a hand behind it?”

## **Signed up to in-Control**

When Polly and her family signed up to in-Control they found it useful to have someone help develop her plan. The facilitator spent time with Polly, her family and friends, as well as members of their spiritual community, working out how they could all support her. Her parents explained that no one had ever listened to them in this way before. For the first time Polly was being treated as a valued member of her community.

“We were amazed by what the others could see for Polly in the future...we could see how things could happen for the first time. We believe this was because people had worked together.

For example, the Sunday school teacher asked for a copy of Polly’s plan so all the children could learn more about what mattered to her. Polly did not communicate using words – but she was proud to take her plan to Sunday celebration to share in a completely new way.

The plan also assisted others. Polly's teacher and classroom assistant enabled Polly to find work experience with animals. So it was not just a matter of money. Polly's life changed as a whole in a way that touched her community.

Working with Polly to have a better life became less stressful for her parents thanks to the support from in- Control. They received 15 hours of support per week. They were pleased with the allocation and found that they could use it in a way that fitted in with their life-style and beliefs. Polly's father explained:

“ For us it is working. The next steps are to employ a P.A. We will be managing this now but our hope is that in the future, Polly will have a circle of support that will work with her and her family as a Trust... We can now look back and see how successful the programme has been for Polly and her family.”

Early difficulties – like the long wait for the allocation, which caused a few initial doubts for the family – have now been overcome...

“...in Control has helped us realise a future for Polly - a future we could not have dreamed of... So from my wife and myself - and, most importantly, Polly - we wish you all well and hope in-Control works for you”