

'Our club is the biggest social network for people with learning disabilities'

Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

1 Warmer

Read the headline. Which of these do you think the text will be about?

- a social network website for people with learning disabilities
- a mobile phone app for people with learning disabilities
- a sports club that allows people with learning disabilities to meet
- a club night for people with learning disabilities

Read the text quickly and see if your answer was correct.

2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

inclusive

disability

autism

attendee

night out

- An _____ is someone who is present at an event. (para 1)
- An _____ event deliberately avoids things that exclude a particular social group. (para 2)
- If someone has a learning _____, they are unable to learn basic skills or information as quickly as other people. (para 2)
- A _____ is an evening when you go out to a cinema, theatre, party etc. (para 2)
- _____ is a serious mental condition that makes it difficult for someone to react to and communicate with other people. (para 2)

accessible

coordinate

funding

missing

isolated

- If you _____ a job or a plan, you organize the different parts so that the people involved work together effectively. (para 3)
- If something is _____, it is easy for someone with a disability to use. (para 5)
- If someone goes _____, people do not know where they are. (para 6)
- _____ is money that a government or organization gives for a specific purpose. (para 8)
- An _____ person feels alone and unhappy. (para 8)

3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

- Where is the Bubble Club?
- When did the Bubble Club first open?
- Who is the manager of Bubble Club?
- How long has event organizer Samantha been a regular attendee at the Bubble Club?
- By how much has adult social-care funding in the UK reduced since 2010?
- According to a 2016 survey, how many people with learning difficulties say they spend less than one hour a day outside their home?

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Alice McCool

31 August, 2018

- 1 It is the evening of one of the hottest days of the summer in London. Bubble Club has just opened its doors. The first attendees are not waiting for the dance floor to fill up before starting to dance. An American drummer is also dancing. He is in a band that will perform later in the evening. He says: "This is the first time I've seen people dance like this in ten years!"
- 2 Bubble Club describes itself as a "super fun and inclusive club night that is safe and has some of London's most fantastic performers". It started 13 years ago and gives an opportunity for people with a learning disability to enjoy a night out. The club is also inclusive for people with other disabilities, autism and people without a disability.
- 3 Club manager Hugo Fergusson coordinates the event but team members with learning disabilities are "in creative control".
- 4 "Bubble Club team members work with experienced professionals from the entertainment industry and this helps them to develop the skills to create opportunities for themselves," he says. The skills and experience gained by team members with learning disabilities "can then open up opportunities for possible jobs".
- 5 The organizers make sure the night is accessible in every way, from easy-to-read menus to carefully chosen performers. Many attendees said they enjoy the club night for the same reason: friendship. Forty-year-old Samantha helps to organize the event and has been coming to the club for more than ten years. "I've made good friends here, old and new. It's the biggest social network for someone with a learning disability like me," she says. Her friend Kelly, 35, agrees: "I can see my friends who I don't normally see because they live far away."
- 6 Kelly, like many with learning disabilities, does not feel safe going to other clubs. She talks about a time when a friend took her out in central London. "It was a long way from home. He promised that he would bring me back by 10 but he went missing and I was on my own and I had far too much to drink. I was crying; I couldn't find anyone," she remembers.
- 7 Anna, who works at the learning disability charity Mencap, says one of the men she supports was recently attacked on a night out. "It's dangerous for people with learning disabilities to go out," she says. "Some people do not understand that people are different."
- 8 Funding for adult social care in the UK has reduced by £7 billion since 2010 so things like Bubble Club are very important. Many people with learning disabilities now have less support. Mencap research found that, from 2014 to 2016, almost one in three local authorities closed day services. Its survey of people with learning disabilities in 2016 also found that one in four spend less than an hour each day outside their home and one in three say they feel scared about the future, isolated or lonely.
- 9 Samantha and other people with learning disabilities at the event say their support funding has been cut. "It's hurting me because I like to do everything but I can't," she says. She is worried that she might not be able to continue going to her theatre group. "It's very difficult to get funding for these kinds of events because people don't think they are important," says Anna. "But what do you like to do at the weekend? I like to be with my friends; I like to go to the pub. People don't see that as a necessity but it is – of course it is. If we don't have things like that, we get lonely and depressed, and we can't see our friends."

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4 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and endings to make statements about the text.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. The Bubble Club is inclusive and is open to ... | a. ... say they feel scared about the future, isolated or lonely. |
| 2. Working with experienced professionals, team members with learning difficulties ... | b. ... they may feel lonely or depressed. |
| 3. The experience they get at the club might ... | c. ... people with learning disabilities, other disabilities, autism and people without disabilities. |
| 4. Many of the Bubble Club attendees say ... | d. ... help them to find a job. |
| 5. Many people with learning difficulties ... | e. ... that friendship is the main reason they go to the club. |
| 6. If people with learning difficulties can't see their friends, ... | f. ... are in 'creative control' of events at the Bubble Club. |

5 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

- the one the hottest days of summer of
- the time first is this
- for social funding care adult
- ten for years than more
- way home from a long
- than less hour each an day

6 Prepositions

Fill the gaps in the phrases from the text using these prepositions.

with

in

at

with

about

in

- _____ control
- scared _____ the future
- work _____ experienced professionals
- later _____ the evening
- people _____ learning disabilities
- _____ the weekend

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7 Word-building

Complete the table using words from the text.

	verb	noun
1.	attend	(person)
2.	perform	(person)
3.	drum	(person)
4.	manage	(person)
5.	organize	(person)
6.	entertain	

8 Discussion

- Do you think the Bubble Club is a good idea? Why? Why not?

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KEY

1 Warmer

d.

2 Key words

1. attendee
2. inclusive
3. disability
4. night out
5. autism
6. coordinate
7. accessible
8. missing
9. funding
10. isolated

3 Find the information

1. London
2. 13 years ago
3. Hugo Fergusson
4. over ten years
5. £7 billion
6. one in four

4 Comprehension check

1. c
2. f
3. d
4. e
5. a
6. b

5 Chunks

1. one of the hottest days of the summer
2. this is the first time
3. funding for adult social care
4. for more than ten years
5. a long way from home
6. less than an hour each day

6 Prepositions

1. in
2. about
3. with
4. in
5. with
6. at

7 Word-building

1. attendee
2. performer
3. drummer
4. manager
5. organizer
6. entertainment