

This diploma thesis deals with the effective prevention of problems that may arise in people with learning difficulties as they grow older.

The theoretical section of the thesis explores the concept of "learning difficulty", the development of care for sufferers both in the Czech Republic and throughout the world, the process of ageing as it affects the whole population, and looks at effective and appropriate strategies to address the challenges of ageing.

The second section describes the range of support services available to people with learning difficulties especially the provision of "assisted" employment as a means of delivering a fulfilling life to sufferers. Such "assisted" employment is then compared with the "sheltered workshop" concept. This section goes on to explain the terms "institutional care" and "sheltered living" and then to explore the challenges faced by those experiencing learning difficulties when attempting to integrate into society. Brief reference is also made to the new law on social services and its potential to revolutionise the care of those experiencing challenges to their health.

The practical section of the thesis describes the research carried out into the provision of services for adults with learning difficulties; these researches were conducted in and around Pardubice, Prerov, Rychnov nad Kněžnou and Prague.

The aim of the thesis is to map the range of services available to adults with learning difficulties and to discover how aware parents are of these services.

The findings of the research are based on an analysis of replies from respondents; and the research questionnaire focuses on the preferences of parents when selecting the appropriate social services for their child, and how they would like to see care for their child being developed in the future.