

NORTON RADSTOCK COLLEGE CAREERS AND GUIDANCE

STATEMENT OF SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

This document is a comprehensive guide to the *Guidance Service* offered by Norton Radstock College.

Our aim is to help as many local people as possible to access learning from the wider community that we serve and make 'Life Long Learning' an integral part of the *Colleges* activity.

Our service is entirely impartial and the performance of the guidance team is not measured by the number of student places filled as a result of our work.

The *Admissions and Information Centre* is based in the *North Side Building* of the *College* and the *Careers Office* is based in the *West Side Building* of the *College* next to the *Learning Resource Centre*.

We are open to all, providing a free service to the students and to members of the public.

We have a fully qualified and experienced *Connexions Personal Adviser* and a qualified *Guidance Adviser* who can offer you information, advice and guidance to help you make informed choices about work and learning opportunities.

WHAT THE TEAM CAN OFFER YOU

Advice

The Admissions and Information Centre can offer free advice on a range of learning opportunities providing a useful support for both prospective and enrolled students. It aims to provide the necessary support required in order to make the step into learning a positive one. The service can be accessed by telephone, in person or by requesting further information via email. A wide range of written material is also available.

Information is available on the following:-

- Full and part-time prospectuses
- Application forms
- All individual full-time courses
- All individual part-time courses
- Information and assistance to book an appointment with a *Guidance Worker* or *Connexions Personal Adviser*
- Information on who to contact for financial assistance available for students at *College*
- Information on who to contact for students travelling to and from the *College*
- Information on who can advise you if you have a complaint

By interview

You may receive help and advice on a one to one basis given to you by the *Guidance Adviser* eg:-

- You have decided on a career but need help in exploring routes into it
- You want individual help with a university application form, job application form or preparing a *CV*
- You have a job or university selection interview coming up and want to discuss it.

Interviews are by appointment

Drop in sessions

We do not operate a specific 'Drop-in' session. However, you may be seen without an appointment, but only if the Guidance Adviser is free.

Guidance

A service is offered on an individual basis with our professional Advice and Guidance adviser.

The interview usually lasts up to one hour and a short follow-up session can also be offered. Everything discussed during the interview will be kept confidential and any referral will only take place with your permission.

If you are seeking to develop yourself through learning or training, but are not sure which route to take, a guidance interview will enable you to discuss options and opportunities available. You will be encouraged to reflect on your existing skills and qualifications and then build on this to further develop your skills through training, qualifications or a career change. The session will help you to aim for a realistic and achievable plan for you.

We offer an impartial service specialising in further education and training but also offer information on higher education opportunities, other forms of education, training and job search support.

Clients are welcome to make an appointment by telephone or by dropping in at the college. This must be a pre-booked session. We will make every effort not to delay or cancel your interview. However, in the unfortunate event that we have to cancel you will be offered another appointment within 5 working days.

If you are seeking specialist advice we may be able to refer you to an appropriate organisation. We may also be able to obtain the information for you, contacting the appropriate organisation with 5 working days and sending you a letter to collect it within a working day of its arrival.

This service is free of charge to all students and potential students.

Clients can access written records of all their guidance interviews if they so wish.

Group Work

Group work sessions are available to students. It covers topics such as Action Planning, options and CV and interview preparation. Group sessions are organised through your course tutor.

WE PROVIDE

- A careers library with an excellent range of up to date careers information on courses, jobs and training. Besides printed material it includes a range of videos and CD software.
- Details of the range of information held in the careers library is available in the College Library Catalogue.
- Careers information on computer databases. For details of what is available please see Information Leaflet *COMPUTER FACILITIES* 'How to use the computers in the Library'.
- Computer programmes to help you with careers choice, see Information Leaflet '*CAREERS GUIDANCE*' and '*What is on this Computer*'
- Some career information is also available on video. See '*Video Catalogue*' situated by the library desk for a list of videos available.
- Access to careers information is also available via the Internet. Suggested useful websites are in the '*Guide to Internet Sites*' leaflet.

<p>If you wish to use the careers computer, please check with the library staff to ensure it is available for use.</p>
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YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

- An appointment within two weeks of your first request
- An interview lasting up to one hour
- Access to up to date information and advice services
- A professionally qualified and experienced guidance adviser
- For all information will be treated confidentially
- A summary of your interview and actions taken
- To be notified as soon as possible if your appointment needs to be changed.
- Complaints will be taken seriously and acted on in accordance with college procedures.

WE ASK YOU

- To come to your interview at the time arranged
- To let us know as soon as possible if you cannot attend
- That you treat the resources in the careers area with care and consideration
- That you feed back to us things we do well or need to improve.

HOW WE CAN ACT ON YOUR BEHALF

- If we do not have information on the career you are interested in we will endeavour to find it for you or refer you to someone who can
- If you have problems with your university or college application we will, if appropriate, talk to the admissions tutor etc on your behalf
- If you are having problems with your college course relating to your career aims we will help in talking to your course tutor if you wish

THIRD PARTY

If a Third Party is involved in the service we deliver to you, and that link could be perceived to affect the impartiality of that service, we will explain this to you at the earliest opportunity.

THE LIMITATIONS OF OUR SERVICE

- We do not provide a psychometric testing service
- We do not operate a telephone helpline
- We do not provide a job placement service
- We are not able to provide a redundancy counselling service

HOW YOU CAN HELP US TO IMPROVE THE SERVICE

Through letting us know if

- You find outdated information in the library
- You cannot find the information you require
- You are unhappy with any aspect of our provision
- What you think we do well.

The Guidance Service adheres with all Norton Radstock College corporate policies including: Student Charter, Equality of Opportunity, Complaints Procedure and other college policies. You may ask to see each of the policies if you wish. Ask at the Admissions and Information Centre.

A suggestions and complaints box is available if you wish to use it - you may do so anonymously or by name if you wish. You may also complain through the college complaints system. When a formal complaint is raised you will normally, within reason, receive an acknowledgement within five working days and a further reply or action within ten working days.

A series of feedback questionnaires on different aspects of our provision are also available. Copies are kept by the suggestions box and also available on request.

Suggestions will be used in order to improve our service. We will review all customer comments on an annual basis, and publish a summary of the improvements as a result.

CONTACTS

Name: Hilary Walker
Position: Lifelong learning Advisor
Qualifications: BA(Hons) : Post Graduate Diploma in Career Guidance.

Name: John Cousins
Position: Careers Advisor
Qualifications: BA(Hons) : Post Graduate Diploma in Career Guidance

HOURS OF OPENING

Norton Radstock College
South Hill Park
Radstock
BA3 3RW
Tel: 01761 433161
Fax: 01761 436173
Freephone: 0800 318417

Monday - Thursday	8.30am - 5.00pm
Friday	8.30am - 4.30pm

Ellsbridge House
Bath Road
Keynsham
Bristol
BS31 1TL
Tel: 0117 986 3898
Fax: 0117 986 8466

Monday - Thursday	8.30am - 5.00pm
Friday	8.30am - 4.30pm

September 2003

REFERRAL POLICY

The purpose of referral is to provide the student with the best service possible for their needs.

WHEN REFERRING THE FOLLOWING MUST BE BORNE IN MIND

- The student must have clearly explained to them why referral is suggested.
- That what the student perceives as their needs are central-if a student does not want to be referred on, that is their decision - referral against the students wishes would, in any case, be unlikely to achieve an outcome.
- The resources etc. of the organisation being referred to.
- Issues of confidentiality - student agreement must always be sought before information is disclosed. The Rehabilitation of Offenders, Data Protection Acts and other legislation must be complied with.
- Issues of Equality of Opportunity.
- **It must be clear to the student**
 - Why they are being referred.
 - What the person or organisation can provide that the person referring cannot.
 - How, when and where the contact can be made.
 - Whether an appointment, introduction has been made.
 - Whether an appointment, introduction has been made/is being made or whether it is up to the student to make contact.
- We have no third party limitation on client referral, nor do we have to tell third parties about any referral.

REFERRAL WITHIN THE COLLEGE CAREERS AND GUIDANCE SERVICE

- See attached diagram.
- Flexibility needs to be the keynote here - with mature and part-time students, in particular the times they can see an adviser may be limited. The Guidance worker will see anyone at all, and the Connexions Personal Adviser will see the occasional student outside their remit.

- Some students will have met or seen a particular person previously and wish to see them again. Wherever possible we should try to accommodate this.
- Referral to other services provided by Connexions West of England is via the Connexions Adviser who will then refer them as appropriate - e.g. students with learning difficulties, or for placement.

REFERRAL WITHIN THE COLLEGE

- Some students present themselves to us looking for non careers help or it may emerge from the interview they have other issues/requirements
- Common referral needs may involve:
 - College counsellors
 - Welfare officer/Student Services
 - Admissions
 - Examinations office
 - Learning Support
 - Library desk
 - Personal Tutors
- Confidentiality needs and student wishes are vital here: in particular although referral may be suggested students should only be taken to appropriate referral with the students clear permission.
- It may be appropriate to write down suggested referrals on an action plan and record them on student notes.

EXTERNAL REFERRAL

Higher education/Careers general

- Reference may normally be made as appropriate using the standard sources of reference and contacts made.
- Contact should not be made on a students behalf without their permission.

TO JOB PROVIDERS

- It is not our business to act as recruiters for a company. We should never therefore agree to any form of pre-screening/testing of possible candidates.
- Referral should only be made with the student's interests and requirements in mind.
- We can however put details of vacancies on our vacancy boards, and circulate them to appropriate providers.
- Equal opportunities legislation must be complied with. No vacancy information should be taken from organisations specifying sex or race.
- Issues of personal safety of students are also important - where in doubt should not be referred or vacancies advertised.

NON CAREER

- Where possible and appropriate the client should initially be referred to the relevant person within the college. Where this is not possible act as follows:
 - The counselling and welfare resource directory has a wide range of organisations who have given permission for approaches as listed.
 - Otherwise one needs to be sure that the organisation used is a reputable one and we are happy for students to approach them.

NETWORKING POLICY

- The networking links that are appropriate to our clients are as follows:
 - Connexions West of England
 - Reputable employers/employers and training organisations and professional organisations
 - Member of 'SIGN' Information & Guidance Network
 - Links with local HE institutions

- Procedures regarding the IAG network will be as described in the network referral policy and our own referral policy.
- Contact and updates will be maintained through the attendance of college staff at the local network meetings, and through use of the local network database which is to be regularly updated.
- Links with local HE institutions will be maintained and developed through attendance at open days/events
- Links with Mendip Information & Guidance Network (SIGN) will be maintained through regular meetings attended by appropriate college staff.
- Otherwise networking is less formal in that there is no overall co-ordination groups for these contacts. When using these the following must be borne in mind
 - Our referral policy
 - Issues of client confidentiality (referral policy, client record policy)
 - Issues of equal opportunity (College Equal Opportunity Policy)
 - The safety and security of clients

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CLIENT FEEDBACK POLICY

- The advice & Guidance Service will follow the College feedback processes and policies as required.
- We are committed to improve our services to clients in terms of provision and quality on a continuing basis.
- The Guidance Worker together with the Admissions Manager is responsible for developing and maintaining the feedback processes.
- Feedback monitoring and audits are discussed by Guidance staff and the Admissions Manager at their regular meetings to ensure action is taken to change and improve the service as required.

SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

- All students have the opportunity for suggestions, improvements and comments on our services. This is achieved through a complaints and suggestions box system.
- The suggestion box is clearly labelled and are situated in the Careers Room. The procedure is also referred to in the Statement of Service and Statement of Service summary. Students can be anonymous or give names if they wish.
- All complaints are brought to the notice of the Admissions Manager who is responsible for monitoring and implementing the complaints procedures.
- Suggestions are noted and discussed at Guidance meetings and implemented where appropriate and practicable.
- When giving guidance, advice or information, the staff ask the student if he/she is satisfied with what has been given. This gives a valuable informal check both on what has gone well and what needs to be improved.

- All feedback survey questionnaires give an opportunity to make suggestions. These are recorded and discussed.

STUDENT FEEDBACK ON OUR SERVICES

All students have the right to anonymity if they wish. No survey has a name section, but students are told they can write their name if they wish to do so. The students are asked to return their completed survey to the box situated in the careers room.

- We operate a system of questionnaires to receive feedback.
- There are questionnaires on Guidance, Advice, Information and Group Work.
- Guidance, information and advice questionnaires are given to students immediately after the service has been provided. Students are invited to complete them if they wish and put them in the suggestion box, preferable before they leave the area. They are assured anonymity if they wish it.
- Group work questionnaires are given out at the end of the session and filled out at that point. Again, students are given the option of responding or not, and of anonymity.
- In order to sample a range of students for these surveys we have designated weeks when we will give out questionnaires.
- Questionnaires for information and advice will be given out at the end of January and July for two weeks at a time. During the appropriate weeks, the Library staff, Admissions staff and Guidance worker will give the relevant questionnaire to all clients receiving that service. The weeks will be pre-planned and marked in the appropriate diaries. The Guidance questionnaires will be given throughout the year to every client who receives that service.
- With group work the Guidance Worker will give out questionnaires to each group work.

- Copies of the survey sheets will be prominently displayed outside the Careers Room so that other students may fill out the sheets if they wish to do so.
- As survey results are recorded, if it becomes clear that a particular type of student is under-represented, then the Guidance Worker will speak to an appropriate tutor to visit a group to obtain feedback either through the survey sheets or more informally through discussion.

FEEDBACK FROM STAFF

- The staff feedback questionnaire will be completed by staff with direct responsibility for careers and guidance work once a year.
- Appropriate staff will be asked for their views on the service annually.
- Staff suggestions and comments will be considered and implemented as agreed.

OTHER FEEDBACK

- We will take account and act on information from other sources
- Research finding both internal and external
- Client casework
- Employers, the Connexions Service and other organisations

CLIENT RECORDS POLICY

Client's records are to be kept up to date and accurate as possible.

They include as appropriate:

- Current position of client information given to client
- Options/Choices under consideration
- Matter discussed
- Referral if any

It is important that they are understood and easy to read by other careers staff.

Storage and Security

Client records are to be kept in a lockable filing cabinet in the Guidance Workers office. This must be kept locked whenever there is not a member of the careers team working there.

Access to Records

The only members of staff with open access to client records are:

- The College Guidance Worker
- The Career Adviser allocated to the College from Connexions West of England
- The Admissions manager

Filing/Access

Records are to kept files alphabetically in sequence

- Current students
- Past students

Disposal

Records should be kept for three years after the last entry. Records will be checked once a year in order to remove expired records. This should be in the late summer/holiday period. Expired records are to be shredded.

Client Access

All clients are entitled to a copy of all records on request. This should be within five working days if they attend in person or posted within five working days if they are unable or do not wish to attend.

Recording Guidance Interviews

The full guidance interview record sheet should be used.

This record sheet will be completed at the interview - although student details may simply be recorded as appropriate in order not to obstruct the flow of the interview.

Clients should be offered a record of the guidance given/action plan.

Recording advice given

Advice given at one to one interviews should be recorded using either the guidance interview sheet or a file note depending on the depth and detail of advice given.

Advice given at Admissions and Information Centre need not be recorded which tend to be brief and specific advice requirements.

Action plans/records of advice should be offered where advice is complex or involves action/consideration of options by the client.

Recording information given

Information given at one to one interview should be noted on a file note as a matter of course.

Recording of information given at Admissions and Information Centre point of contact is at the discretion of the staff but where comprehensive information is given and/or it is likely to prelude to a guidance interview, it is appropriate to use a file note.

Students can be given a record of information given on request - addresses, websites etc can be noted on action plan sheets if required.

Action Plans

Any student asking for an Action Plan of advice, information and guidance given should be given one.

Copies of Action Plans given should be kept.

Daily log

A daily log of students seen should be kept by the Guidance Adviser - this should include all one to one booked interviews by name. This forms part of the student record - if copies of records are requested by students, any entries on the spreadsheet should be included in information given.

Third Party

If a Third Party (such as the Employment Service) is involved, the Adviser will explain to the client how this may affect:

- The confidentiality of information about the client (e.g. whether a report goes to the Third Party, and if that report is available to you)
- And/or the impartiality of any information, advice or guidance given to you (i.e. must there be particular outcomes as a result of NRC's contract with Third Party)

If a client chooses to use any of our computerised systems, they will be alerted to any security or confidentiality issues before disclosing personal information in this context.

All records are held in line with the Data Protection Acts of 1984 and 1998.

INFORMATION POLICY AND PROCESS

In our information work we are guided by the following:

- Making our information as accessible as possible, in terms of access for people with disabilities or learning difficulties and in terms of ease of use and retrieval.
- Equal Opportunities: Ensuring material is free of stereotypes and discrimination.
- The needs of our target groups.

Our target groups

- Full time further education students at the college
- Part time students at the college
- Potential students of the college
- Our students include students with learning disabilities on entry level courses
- Our students include a considerable number of mature students
- Clients referred by the employment service

Maintenance of Information resources

- Software is updated and our needs reassessed annually
- A schedule of software used with dates for renewal is maintained and used by the Library staff and Guidance worker to re-order
- Printed material is updated annually. Help from Connexions West of England in accordance with the Partnership Agreement is used to do this

- Material is replaced on an annual, biennial or triennial basis according to need, expense and speed at which it becomes redundant.
 - E.g. learning and labour market material that changes rapidly is renewed annually.
 - Higher Education prospectuses and compendia annually.
 - CV writing materials every three years.
- Older publications that need to be retained as they have relevant material have a label indicating this, or is labelled accordingly.
- Material that does not have a published date is date stamped
- Not more than 10% of the stock is more than ten years old

Accessing Information

- Written materials are classified according to the CLCI
- Prospectuses are kept in boxes, classified according to the UCAS Directory code. A list of prospectuses is kept separately nearby.
- All books are accessioned into the library stock and can be called up by a search on the library catalogue
- Leaflets on using the library and finding and using information are on display in the careers library area, as are wall posters with the CLCI.
- A range of self study leaflets are available which help students to access and use information for particular purposes.
- Computer programs available are detailed in a leaflet.
- There is a leaflet suggesting useful websites to consult. This points out the variation in currency and reliability of websites generally.

- Material may be on reference or for loan and is marked accordingly. There is a main library leaflet for students explaining procedures and signs on the wall for information.
- There is a section for free leaflets, which is labelled accordingly.
- Where information that a student needs is not available they are referred as appropriate:
 - To the College Guidance Worker
 - To the Careers Adviser from Connexions West of England if needs are more complex
 - To the Connexions West of England learning Information helpline
 - To Learn Direct helpline
 - To an appropriate website
- As information arrives it is checked by Library staff or a Guidance worker to ensure it is free from bias and conforms to anti-discrimination legislation. This is true of software as well as books and other published materials.
- Where formats and languages are not held and required we will undertake to request information within 3 working days and forward the information within 3 working days of receipt.
- If necessary we may undertake to obtain information contacting the appropriate organisation within 3 working days and sending a letter for collection within 3 working days of the arrival of the information in the College.

POLICY STATEMENT ON CLIENTS AND THIRD PARTY INVOLVEMENT

Whenever a client is seen under contract with a Third Party which may have an influence on the service provided, clients will be advised either verbally or through the Statement of Service.

- Of any performance targets of Norton Radstock College
- Whether a report on the contracts between Norton Radstock College and the client has to go to the Third Party and that they are entitled to their own copy.
- Of any results in the impartiality of information, advice or guidance given.
- Of any eligibility criteria needed to enable them to access that service.
- If any referral is required, the Third Party's agreement must be sought. However, there will be no breaking of confidentiality.

Norton Radstock College aims to negotiate contract terms in a way which will produce impartiality of outcomes for the client, if at all possible.

Externally derived quotas or targets are not imposed.

NORTON RADSTOCK COLLEGE

Policy Statement on Third Party Contracts/Agreements

Norton Radstock College will endeavour to negotiate with all Third Party's with which it deals to ensure that all contracts/service level agreements will:

- Contain an accurate and clear description of the service to be provided to all individual clients.
- State that clients must be given accurate information regarding the terms of the contract/agreement and any required outcomes for them.
- Set down how often the contract/agreement will be reviewed. Also, when, how and by whom the review will be carried out
- State how any conflict of interest between Norton Radstock College and client, client and Third Party, and Norton Radstock College and Third Party will be resolved.
- Specify what Norton Radstock College must achieve to secure it's funding under contract where applicable.
- Specify all the criteria against which Norton Radstock College is to be measured.
- Describe how disagreements between the Third Party and Norton Radstock College will be resolved.
- Specify the circumstances under which the contract/agreement may be negotiated.

ANSWERING SERVICE POLICY

We aim for an answering service that is easy to access, is friendly and prompt.

Messages left on the answerphone by e-mail or passed on by other staff will be answered within two working days of receipt.

Answers to e-mails are to be kept for three months and if forming part of an on going advice, information or guidance with a client a copy should be kept and placed in the client's file.

As we do not operate a telephone help-line we do not usually give information, advice or guidance by phone. The only exception to this would be to registered student with the College who due to illness etc are absent from College and are likely to be for a length of time.

We do not give information about students to any third party on the telephone without the student's prior permission.

Policy re. Delayed and cancelled guidance interviews

In the case of cancelled interviews, every effort will be made to contact the client beforehand by phone, and where possible, to arrange an alternative appointment at that time.

With delayed interviews, clients arriving will have the delay explained and be offered the choice of waiting or arranging another interview date.

In the event of the College not being able to contact the client by phone beforehand, a letter will be sent offering another time convenient to the client will be sent within three working days of the cancellation.

In all cases where there has been a delay or cancellation a full explanation will be given as to why the delay or cancellation occurred.

Rearranged interviews will be given priority. Where at all possible within staffing and diary constraints such interviews should be at a time to suit the client rather than offering the next available appointment slot.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

- The Guidance and Careers department fully supports and implements the college's equal opportunities policy. This policy is referred to in the Colleges Careers Education and Guidance policy.
- As a service in the front line of equal opportunity work it informs everything that we do.
- We are aware of the danger of stereotyping particular jobs or careers by gender, age etc. and ensure that we never do so.
- In particular when discussing options with students we must always remember to include all suitable options available to the student.
- Any remark that is sexist, racist, ageist or otherwise discriminatory must be challenged.
- Any breach of the relevant acts must be reported in line with the College policy.
- It is important that understanding of, and encouragement for, those groups in society who do not aim as highly as they could is evident e.g. in helping and encouraging university applications from under represented groups and encouraging able students to aim for high status universities.
- Students who may face discrimination overt, covert, unconscious or institutional, in their applications should be helped to face and overcome the issues.
This may be particularly required with students when:
 - Preparing for interview
 - Filling in application forms and producing CV's.