

Commercial in Confidence



Assessment Report
For
DERWEN COLLEGE
On behalf of



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1. Key Information

Assessment Type	ACCREDITATION REVIEW
Assessor's Decision	STANDARD MET
Assessor's Name	CAROL PROBYN
Visit Date	MAY 6 TH TO 8 TH 2015
Student ID	C11441
Assessment Reference Number	PN100754

2. Organisation – Information, Introduction and Overview

Having carried out the Accreditation Review in accordance with the guidelines provided, Derwen College (the College hereafter) provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it continues to meet the **matrix quality standard for information advice and guidance services**.

Derwen College is a specialist residential college for young people with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities. The College is located in Oswestry, Shropshire close to the border of North Wales. Since the review in 2012 the College has opened 3 satellite sites providing day facilities for students and which promote further links with local communities.

The close proximity to North Wales means that the College has formed strong relationships with partners and networking organisations from England and Wales and is well placed to attract Welsh students. The Welsh influence is evident through the way in which the College promotes support to Welsh students, for example, through the provision of literature in English and Welsh.

The College's aim is to provide further education in the broadest sense, including employability skills, through the teaching of vocational skills and the development of independent living and social competences. The College is one of the leading specialist colleges in the country and has been recognised as Outstanding by OFSTED and awarded Beacon status.

There are approximately 260 students/trainees all of whom have mild to severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities and some have communication challenges that require professional support. The age range of students is 18-24 years. The specialist nature of provision means that students are drawn from across the UK, complete a 3 year residential programme at College and then return to their local area with the aim of gaining employment, education and/or independent living accommodation.

Since the review in 2012 the College has restructured, reducing 7 vocational areas to 4 each with a Head of Department and resulting in the loss of some staff. Currently, the College employs circa 360 staff, led by the Principal and senior management team and comprised of teaching, care, medical, administration and support staff. At the time of the review the College was in the process of a further restructuring and part way through the consultation with those staff under notice of redundancy.

The College mission is "to provide an outstanding education and to enable students to achieve their aspirations". The vision statement includes reference to an environment "that enables students to transform their lives for the better". Information, advice and guidance is fundamental to the way this is achieved and is embedded in teaching and learning and support processes. The primary focus for information, advice and guidance provision is through the Personal Tutor system albeit that staff in a variety of roles also deliver the service to students on a one to one or group basis. The scope of the accreditation review is the provision of information, advice and guidance to students and prospective students.

The measurable aims and objectives for information advice and guidance include those for achievement of accredited qualifications and progression towards programme aims. Student outcomes include students gaining paid employment, voluntary work or a work placement, those going into further education or training and/or those students that move into a form of independent living accommodation in line with the overall objective to support students to be independent.

The student milestone tracking system provides a mechanism through which to monitor individual student progression against a range of hard and soft outcomes aligned to the individual's long term goal, individual learning goals and objectives and College core curriculum and extra curriculum objectives and outcomes. The A to E rating system is used to monitor individual distance travelled and also provides the means through which the College is able to monitor and evaluation the impact of information, advice and guidance by student cohort.

3. Areas of Particular Strength

A number of strengths were identified during the assessment. These are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- The College embodies the ethos of the **matrix** Standard in that it provides a needs-led, student-focussed service. Information, advice and guidance is seen by staff as fundamental to the way in which students are helped to engage in learning, work experience and social/personal skills development. The needs-led nature of the service is articulated in the Student Charter and was evident not only through talking to staff but also from the positive feedback from students and partners. One partner commented *"it's a real community not just a college – staff are dedicated to the students"*. (3.2)
- Of particular note, is the way in which the student milestone tracking system provides a mechanism through which to monitor individual student progression against a range of hard and soft outcomes aligned to the individual's long term goal, individual learning goals and objectives and College core curriculum and extra curriculum objectives and outcomes. The A to E rating system is used to monitor individual distance travelled and also provides the means through which the College is able to monitor and evaluation the impact of information, advice and guidance on individual students and by student cohort. (1.5, 4.2)
- The ability of the College to identify and meet student needs in a timely way relies on effective working within and across teams. Many staff commented on the positive impact of Student Liaison team, the recently developed system for recording/sharing incidents and co-ordinating responses and the morning meeting at which staff from across College share information and plan actions. (1.2, 3.2)
- There are effective internal processes to support staff and manage their development to ensure they are able to provide information, advice and guidance as well as being sufficiently skilled and flexible to fulfil a variety of roles. Of particular note, is the proportion of staff trained to undertake a multi-faceted role and the extent to which the College actively supports and enables individual's to progress their career. Staff described an open environment where "the door really is open" and where teams and individuals work well together. (2.3, 2.4 and 4.6)
- The College works extensively with partners to achieve its objectives. Feedback from those spoken to during the assessment was overwhelmingly positive and the assessor received many compliments about the high level of service provided by staff. The relationships with a range of other organisations mean that staff have a wealth of knowledge and information about services and agencies to whom to signpost and refer students where appropriate.

When asked to describe the College, partners referred to the College as being proactive, open and professional where the emphasis is on two-way mutually beneficial relationship.(1.8)

- There is a marked difference in the way the College uses technology when compared to the review in 2012. From a situation where the College had purchased its first iPad and was unsure how to use it or how to manage newly emerging e-technologies the College has moved to a position in which it has embraced technology. Staff and students use iPads, smart phones and social media on a daily basis as part of learning, social and leisure activities. The College has invested in a role dedicated to supporting and educating staff and students to use e-technologies safely. (4.7)
- The College is characterised by a commitment to continual review to identify and implement improvements throughout the College and specifically to the information, advice and guidance service. Many examples were provided to demonstrate how staff and stakeholders are involved in identifying, developing and implementing improvements to the service: the development of the student survey approach; the introduction of student observation; the use of social media to support student communication needs and to promote the College; the introduction Industry Champions and the development of employer relationships; the student progress review has been changed following a visit to another specialist provider resulting in reviews taking place in a more informal setting and with greater focus on a student centred approach. (4.8)

4. Areas for Continuous Improvement

A number of areas for continuous improvement were identified during the assessment which could enhance the service delivered. These are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty four months from the date of this assessment.

- The nature of the service is such that information, advice and guidance is woven and integrated into the whole student experience and is not referred to as a service in its own right. There is the potential to promote information, advice and guidance as a discrete service, complementing and running alongside other services and adding value to the whole student experience by supporting informed decision-making about progression and destination pathways and contributing to performance.

There is the opportunity to review how the service is described to make it clear what it is that is offered and to maximise the opportunities to enhance the way in which the service is described to make it more explicit. There is the potential to further develop the overview of employability skills table to cover the whole information, advice and guidance “offer”, from pre-entry and admissions to on-programme provision and exit/next steps. The table might be presented as a visual representation of the student journey that would provide an opportunity to show the variety of types of information, advice and guidance available to individuals throughout the journey and could be used as part of promotional and transition materials. (1.6, 3.1)

- There is potential to strengthen the link between individual, team and College performance objectives and the targets set for the information, advice and guidance service. For example, the appraisal format does not appear to lend itself to requiring the transparent link between College, team and individual performance objectives to be articulated. The format of the documentation has potential to be further developed to encourage the setting of SMART objectives aligned to the relevant team objective, target or key performance indicator and ultimately College strategic objectives and targets. (1.1, 4.6)

- There is an opportunity to further develop the approach to gathering labour market intelligence used to identify work experience and destination opportunities for students. For example, information produced by LEPS may be a useful source of intelligence on labour market trends locally and in students' home areas. (2.2)
- Consider the value of a structured stakeholder analysis and evaluation plan perhaps in the form of a partnership and network matrix. The matrix has the potential to act as a relationship management tool that captures the category and nature of the relationship; direct and indirect objectives for the relationship; the risk associated with the relationship; the impact derived from the relationship and the priorities in terms of how the relationship should be managed.

A traffic light system could be used to indicate where action is required to address any aspect of the relationship and could be updated by staff as part of everyday activity and reviewed at team meetings. The use of such a tool might focus thinking about the purpose and benefits of relationships with external agencies and the appropriateness of the level of resource invested in specific relationships compared to the benefits derived.

The development of a stakeholder matrix might also provide a central repository for information on the wide range of external agencies that staff signpost/refer students to for support and services beyond the remit of the College. (1.8, 2.2, 4.4)

- In order to introduce a greater rigour to the observation of information, advice and guidance consideration might be given to the development of a framework that covers the whole of the student's experience and which includes the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to deliver each part of the process. In essence, the observation framework articulates what outstanding information, advice and guidance "looks like" and supports a consistent, standardised approach to observation by defining the criteria against which delivery is assessed. The use of a grading system could enhance the approach by providing a mechanism to diagnose development needs and to evaluate the impact of development activities. (4.5; 4.6)

5. Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

- Visit to the College near Oswestry
- Interviews with the staff - 7 one to one; 34 in groups or pairs
- Interviews with students - 20 in small groups
- Telephone interviews with partners x 3
- Review of the Strategic Plan, self-assessment report, promotional materials, student feedback, performance data, performance review and appraisal formats; the website.

6. Findings Against the matrix Standard

1. Leadership and Management

The way in which the organisation is led and managed to develop an effective service

The College mission is “to provide an outstanding education and to enable students to achieve their aspirations”. The vision statement includes reference to an environment “that enables students to transform their lives for the better”. Information, advice and guidance is fundamental to the way this is achieved and is embedded in teaching and learning and support processes. The primary focus for information, advice and guidance provision is through the Personal Tutor system albeit that staff in a variety of roles also deliver the service to students on a one to one or group basis.

Information, advice and guidance are provided to potential students and students on a range of topics: career pathways and careers advice, employment and work experience, social and independent living skills and a range of information and advice to assist students to overcome a variety of barriers through working with other agencies and partners.

The College strategy sets out the key objectives and performance indicators which are aligned to the objectives of each of department. The measurable objectives (targets) associated with the information advice and guidance include those for achievement of accredited qualifications and progression towards programme aims.

The student milestone tracking system provides a mechanism through which to monitor individual student progression against a range of hard and soft outcomes aligned to the individual’s long term goal, individual learning goals and objectives and College core curriculum and extra curriculum objectives and outcomes. The A to E rating system is used to monitor individual distance travelled and also provides the means through which the College is able to monitor and evaluate the impact of information, advice and guidance by student cohort

Leadership and direction is provided by Principal together with the senior management team through a series of meetings ranging from Governors meetings, management meetings and team meetings. There is a clear organisation structure and staff described reporting lines. Since the review in 2012, the College has restructured and new roles have been introduced, for example, the Student Liaison team work with teams across the College and with parents and external agencies to ensure student needs are identified and met.

All staff described participation in team meetings, annual appraisal and participation in a variety of committees and groups through which they are provided with direction and support and are able to influence the design and delivery of information, advice and guidance. As part of the Learner Voice strategy, students also participate in various committees and groups and so contribute to every aspect of service development and delivery.

Each department contributes to the overall College plan through the self-assessment review and planning process. The self-assessment report shapes and influences the College Quality Improvement Plan and a series of action/developments plan that set out how departments will contribute to the achievement of aims and objectives including where the provision of information, advice and guidance is instrumental in working towards them.

There is a range of policies which include confidentiality, equality and diversity, impartiality and professional behaviour. Staff explained how students are made aware of these policies and were able to explain them in the context of service provision, for example, staff described how they explain the students that they may be unable to keep a secret and that they may have to share the secret with other members of staff and/or external agencies.

Equal opportunities and confidentiality policies are explained verbally as part of the initial meeting and this was confirmed by students interviewed during the review.

Staff confirmed that they are kept up to date with legislation and described recent updates relating to the Mental Capacity Act, Data Protection Act and legislation relating to safeguarding, health and safety and equality and diversity.

Student outcomes are defined as those that are aligned to the overall aim to support students to become independent, for example, students gaining employment, training or education and/or moving into some form of independent living accommodation as well as soft outcomes relating to improved self-esteem, confidence and motivation. Much of the information, advice and guidance service is embedded in the curriculum and extended curriculum and is integral to student learning and development programmes in the broadest sense. For example, Independent Living Skills deliver a personal presentation programme in which students research the appropriate way to dress for job interviews in different types of settings, interview behaviour and techniques.

Staff at all levels described how student outcomes have been defined by staff through consultation and discussion and all demonstrated a high level of awareness of how student outcomes are aligned to the measurable aims and objectives of the College by virtue of the Individual Learning Goals process through which individual student goals, objective and milestones are linked to curriculum and extended curriculum objectives and outcomes. On a one to one level, student outcomes are discussed and agreed by the Personal Tutor with the student and logged on the Individual Learning Goal action plan and database. The review and updating of the Individual Learning Goal action plan and subsequent logging on the database enables staff to monitor and review progress towards and achievement of student outcomes on a one to one basis and at cohort, department and College level.

Equality of opportunity to access information, advice and guidance is ensured through the use of different types of promotional activity that includes the College website, referral from the NASPEC website, promotion at a range of events such as career fairs and open days and through the provision of information in a range of formats, most notably using Makaton and photographs as well as the provision of information in Welsh in recognition of the proximity of the College to the Welsh border.

The College monitors how students have become aware of the service and have established that the main source of referral is through the close relationships formed with partner, other specialist organisations and professionals as well as via word of mouth recommendation, the latter based on a long-established reputation locally and nationally as leading provider in its area of operation. Since the review in 2012, the College has embraced social media as a way to promote the College and has also been a key partner in organising, promoting and participating in skills competitions.

Staff are able to influence the design and delivery of the service through participation in team meetings, the annual appraisal, staff and team meetings, committees and groups and through ongoing dialogue. Students are invited to input to the design and development of the service through the Student Council, College student feedback surveys, participation in College committees and groups and through regular reviews with their Personal Tutor. The Student Council and Students Union are instrumental in enabling students to contribute to the review and development of all aspect of College service provision. Examples of how feedback has been used to develop the service include: staff and students are currently involved in reviewing and updating the careers library; information boards describing the student "offer" in the AMBS department are the result of staff and student input; the rationalisation of student survey to reduce the number of surveys students are asked to complete.

The College works with many other support agencies to provide a holistic service to students and many examples of joint working, referral and signposting were available. These include other training providers and a variety of agencies able to provide specialist information and advice services. Since the review in 2012, the College has developed effective relationships with local and national employers who provide work experience opportunities for students locally and in their home areas.

Overall responsibility for managing relationships with partners and other agencies lies with the senior management team albeit that all staff are encouraged to form working relationships with partners and networks.

The effectiveness of partnerships and networks is measured through informal and informal processes, for example, the quality of referrals is monitored and feedback provided as appropriate. Feedback from partners on the effectiveness of relationships was positive:

“Liaison with the College is good – I have had an induction to the College which is really important to help me feel comfortable when I am in the College. Staff have been supportive and it is working well so far – the relationship benefits the College, helps with our targets and most of all is helping students”.

“The College is a joy to work with – nothing is too much trouble and we are included in a variety of College events..... it (the relationship) works because we are clear about expectations and what we are heading towards, our values are the same and we are able to work closely together”.

2. Resources

The assets invested and applied in providing an effective service

A review of resources forms part of the strategic and operational planning process, for example, the business is currently aligning human resources to current and future student volumes and associated projected income levels.

Examples of the effective use of resources were described during the visit and staff described how resources are reviewed and planned as part of the SAR process and on an ongoing basis as management and team meetings. For example, the student schedule allocates staff resource in the form of hours per type of support/service within individual learning programmes and so ensures that resources are planned in line with financial limits. The increased use of technology has reduced the consumption of paper and has resulted in a range of efficiency savings. Performance against targets is carried out on a regular basis to ensure that funding contract requirements are delivered and so ensure the financial well-being of the College.

There is a range of appropriate and relevant information resources held in paper and electronic formats. This included information produced using Makaton as well as information available via the Internet. Staff are available to assist individuals to access and use electronic information via computers with internet connection. There is a careers library managed by staff responsible for managing the IT suite in which the library is situated. Staff share and discuss information at team meetings and on an on-going basis. Where students request information on other qualifications or providers/services staff are able to use the wide network of contacts it has developed to support student to access alternative sources of information and advice.

The skills, knowledge and competencies of staff are defined in job descriptions and person specifications. The induction, appraisal and observation processes are used to ensure that staff are clear about the expectations and parameters of the role. Staff described participation in the annual appraisal where objectives are agreed and training and development needed to support performance identified and/or evaluated.

Career progression and future aspirations are part of the appraisal discussion and many examples were provided at the review to demonstrate how staff are encouraged and supported to progress. Since the 2012 review, the College has restructured and introduced new roles, providing staff with opportunities to progress into new/enhanced roles.

All staff have or are working towards an appropriate qualification and are observed as part of these development activities. Examples of appropriate development and qualifications include PTLS and DTLS both of which include the provision of information, advice and guidance, autism and ADHD training, managing challenging behaviour, PVA, professional boundaries, Makaton training at various levels, Personal Tutor training and activities relating to Safeguarding and equal opportunities and diversity training.

There is a comprehensive induction process for new staff and those changing roles. Induction covers information about the College and also all aspects of an individual's role. Staff described how they are provided with the opportunity to shadow experienced colleagues to observe the way in which students are provided with information, advice and guidance. All staff are allocated a buddy to support new staff and to help them settle into the College. New starts participate in a review after a month, 3 months and 6 months to ensure they are making suitable progress in the role and to provide support, training and direction.

"On the first day I had a tour of the College, an overview of the College and completed mandatory training – safeguarding - and we went through the policies and procedures. I was shadowing for a couple of weeks which gave me time to find out about how the College works, different roles and the requirements of my job. I had a review after a month and then 3 and 6 months. It was really good especially the HR reviews".

3. Service Delivery

The way in which the service is delivered effectively

There is a range of literature that describes the service and the information and advice available to potential students and students. Literature is produced specifically to meet the range of communication needs of students with a variety of learning difficulties and disabilities and staff place great emphasis on supporting students to understand information using techniques such as signing and producing information in visual formats and in Makaton symbols.

Prospective students are invited with their parents and/or professionals (social workers, for example) to visit the College either as part of the pre-entry assessment day or separately. Prospective students and their parents are sent a prospectus and information detailing the activities and purpose of the assessment day. The assessment day is used to explain the College offer and to carry out an assessment of individual needs. Prospective students may visit the College as often as needed to help them understand College services and to provide information on options available to students, how support is delivered and on the help available.

All new students have an induction on their first day at the College as well as an induction with their Personal Tutor the purpose of which is to ensure that the student is aware of and understands the Student Charter and how to access information, advice and guidance. The nature of the student population is such that a great emphasis is placed on staff explaining information verbally, using visual prompts and providing information in Makaton format where appropriate. Students also have access to a number of student peer mentors, an additional source of information and advice for those individuals that wish to approach fellow students and/or a member of staff for support.

Staff and students confirmed that information, advice and guidance is delivered effectively and were able to describe examples of students becoming increasingly independent, developing employability and a range of other skills and moving into work placements and/or employment as a consequence of the embedded nature of the service. Examples of how enhancements to the service have an improved student experience include the introduction of Have-a-Go activities where students from local specialist schools joined Derwen students in a number of work related activities and provided a taster for life at the College. The results of the Student Perception of Programme Survey show that 96% of students feel they gain the skills they need to get a job, 91.3% agreed they were gaining skills which will be useful in the future and 97% enjoy their vocational programme.

Staff described how impartial and objective information and advice is provided. This was demonstrated when dealing with students who were given a range of options and helped to take their own decision about the contents of their Individual Learning Programme and their Individual Learning Goals.

Students confirmed that they are not pressurised into a course of action not of their choosing and that staff focus on providing information and advice tailored to the specific needs and preferences of the individual. Students described how they are encouraged to experience each of the College curriculum departments in order to make an informed choice about their learning programme. Similarly, students confirmed that staff had explained the purpose and limits of the information and advice as well as how help and support would be delivered.

Feedback from students interviewed during the assessment was overwhelmingly positive with examples provided to demonstrate how service delivery has helped students achieve qualifications, develop independent living skills, secure work placements and develop employability skills.

Staff support students to use technology, for example, staff described how they encourage students to use the internet to research the requirements of different jobs when preparing for interview and/or to use the JED on line careers tool.

The College works with other organisations to provide a comprehensive service to students and many examples of signposting and working in partnership to support students were available. Examples included signposting to external agencies such as other specialist colleges, signposting internally within the College such as from the Personal Tutor to a Counsellor and working in partnership with Social Workers, local authorities and funding agencies to provide tailored support to students.

4. Continuous Quality Improvement

The way in which the service provided is reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis

There is an inclusive approach to the evaluation of the service against its aims and objectives. All aspects of the service are evaluated through the SAR process in which all staff are involved and which evaluates leadership and management, delivery to students, resources and promotion and engagement. In addition, the file audit, observation and student review processes input to the evaluation of the service.

Targets are set for the achievement of full and unit awards and for progression against programme aims. Performance data in 2013-14 shows achievement at 97% against a target of 93% and 100% progress towards programme aims for year 3 students in both vocational skills, functional skills and personal and social skills.

Student outcomes are monitored and evaluated through the review process and milestone tracking with information/date input to the database that enables staff to monitor and evaluate progress against student outcomes. The student milestone tracking system provides a mechanism through which to monitor individual student progression against a range of hard and soft outcomes aligned to the individual's long term goal, individual learning goals and objectives and College core curriculum and extra curriculum objectives and outcomes. The A to E rating system is used to monitor individual distance travelled and also provides the means through which the College is able to monitor and evaluation the impact of information, advice and guidance by student cohort.

Performance data demonstrates that of the 61% of the respondents to the Social and Progress Destination survey sent to students who left during 2011/12 and 2012/13, on average over 60% of students move into a mix of independent, supported independent and residential living arrangements. 94% of students went into paid employment, voluntary work or college/training programme in 2012/13, an increase on the 80% that progressed into the same destinations in 2011/12.

The College has worked hard to develop an effective Learner Voice strategy the key strands of which are the Student Council, Student Union and a suite of student feedback surveys. Student Council representatives are elected by students annually and represent the student population for the period of one year. Student representatives meet regularly to discuss issues raised by students, to identify where action can be taken and to liaise with staff to implement change. Topics can be raised by individual students with their Student Council representative at any time or at Student Union meetings where students from across the College have the opportunity to meet and feed into the Student Council meetings.

Feedback from students on the work of the Student Council was overwhelmingly positive with students describing how the Student Council takes an active in the College decision making process and providing many examples to illustrate the impact of the Council on new and improved services and facilities. Student Council representatives participate in a range of College groups and committees, providing additional opportunities for students to contribute to College activities, for example, Student Council representatives sit on the staff interview panel and take an active part in the recruitment and selection process.

Of particular note, is the way in which Student Council representatives are able to use the opportunity to gain experience and to develop a range of skills, for example, advocacy, presentation, managing meetings, decision making skills and the positive impact the experience has on individual's confidence and self-esteem.

Student surveys are used to invite perception feedback from students on various aspects of the information, advice and guidance service and have been refined over time. Surveys are designed to meet the needs of students and so are available in text and in Makaton format to enable equality of opportunity to students regardless of their communication needs.

Feedback from staff is encouraged on an ongoing, informal basis as well as through formal processes such as the staff forum, team meetings and appraisals. All staff are involved in the SAR process and could describe how audit and observation processes are used to evaluate the service.

Feedback from external agencies and partners is invited through formal mechanisms such as the stakeholder survey, Peer Review Partnership meetings and ongoing informal discussion. Feedback is evaluated at management and team meetings and inputs to the SAR process.

Staff were able to describe how to handle complaints, comments and compliments and the process for dealing with each type of feedback: the recording, investigation and escalation process for complaints, the suggestions box for any type of feedback and the way in which feedback is circulated to staff.

Staff and partners/networks were able to describe how the effectiveness of partnerships and networks is evaluated through formal and informal process. Examples include the evaluation of work experience placements to ensure they meet the needs of students and the selection of suppliers based on commercial considerations and whether suppliers demonstrate an understanding of the College especially where suppliers are on campus working alongside students.

Quality assurance approaches used to improve the service were described by staff at all levels and include file audit through which staff are provided with feedback on student learning plans, the staff graded observation process through which the face to face delivery of the service is quality assured, the feedback processes (described above), the annual appraisal through which staff performance is reviewed and feedback provided on service provision to students. Since the review in 2012, the approach has been enhanced with the introduction of learning walks and student observation.

Staff competence to deliver the service is monitored via the observation process and support or additional training identified as required. Team meetings, quarterly one to one review and the annual appraisal process provides staff with the opportunity to review performance against objectives and to identify and agree learning and development needs. Since the review in 2012 the appraisal format has been refreshed and produced as a personal development review booklet that incorporates a review against a behavioural competency framework.

Managers described how effective staff performance in relation to service measurable aims and objectives has been demonstrated, for example, Personal Tutor training has enabled staff from across the College to undertake the role in conjunction with other responsibilities. The positive feedback from students on the level of support from Personal Tutors together with the progress of students monitored through the milestone tracking process bears testament to the effectiveness of staff.

Examples of how the College has made effective use of technology to improve the service were described by staff at all levels and include the use of the JED careers software, use of the internet to access web-based information, the use of I-Pads to assist students access to information and the use of software to convert text into Makaton symbols.

Staff at all levels described the evaluation process which incorporates College and team meetings, the Quality Group, SAR and Quality Improvement Plan process and appraisals. There is a consultative approach which characterises the way managers involve staff at all levels in the evaluation and planning process. Many examples were provided to demonstrate how the College has identified improvements as a result of the evaluation and review process which include:

- The development of employer relationships has resulted in new working opportunities for students locally and in their own home areas. Industry Champions provide sector links and help to ensure that College provision remains up-to-date and in line with industry standards.
- The further development of quality assurance processes, for example, the introduction of student observation and the rationalised student perception survey have provided students with additional ways through which to feedback on their experience, including the delivery of information, advice and guidance.

- Feedback from the stakeholder survey has informed the way the College communicates with parents and led to more information being provided during the pre-entry/admissions process.

7. Conclusion

Thanks to everyone involved in the visit for their hospitality and their willingness to participate in the assessment process. Accreditation extends to 3 years during which a continuous improvement check has to be completed at 12 months and 24 months. I will contact you in circa 10 months to initiate the first continuous improvement check in 2016. The purpose of the process is to demonstrate how you have continued to evaluate the information, advice and guidance service to identify and implement appropriate improvements. The starting point is to update me on actions taken in response to the suggestions contained in this report.

8. The matrix Standard Evidence Grid

Criteria	Met	Not Met	Strength	AfCI
The service has clearly defined measurable aims and objectives which link to any wider organisational strategic aims 1.1	√			√
The service is provided with clear leadership and direction 1.2	√		√	
The organisation implements policies to promote equality and diversity, impartiality, confidentiality and professional integrity in all aspects of service delivery 1.3	√			
The organisation complies with existing and new legislation which might impact upon the service 1.4	√			
The organisation defines client outcomes and uses them as a measure of success for the service 1.5	√		√	
The organisation promotes the service in ways which are accessible to all those eligible to use it 1.6	√			√
Clients and staff influence the design and development of the service 1.7	√			
The organisation establishes effective links with other appropriate partnerships and networks to enhance the service 1.8	√		√	√
The organisation uses its resources effectively to deliver the service 2.1	√			
Clients are provided with current, accurate and quality assured information which is inclusive 2.2	√			√
The organisation defines the skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications, in line with current national recognised professional qualifications and frameworks, for individual staff roles, linked to the aims and objectives of the service 2.3	√		√	
Staff are supported in undertaking continuous professional development and provided with opportunities for career progression 2.4	√		√	
Effective induction processes are in place for all staff 2.5	√			
The service is defined so that clients are clear about what they might expect 3.1	√			√
The service is delivered effectively to meet its aims and objectives 3.2	√		√	
The service provided is impartial and objective 3.3	√			
Clients are given appropriate options to explore and understand that they are responsible for making their own decisions 3.4	√			
When exploring options, clients are provided with and supported to use appropriate resources including access to technology 3.5	√			
Clients benefit from signposting and referral to other appropriate agencies or organisations 3.6	√			
The organisation measures and evaluates the service against its stated aims and objectives and identifies improvements 4.1	√			
The organisation monitors and evaluates client outcomes to support and improve service delivery 4.2	√		√	
The organisation evaluates feedback on the service to build upon its strengths and addresses any areas for improvement 4.3	√			
The organisation evaluates the effectiveness of its partnerships and networks to improve the service 4.4	√			√
The organisation defines quality assurance approaches which are used to improve the service 4.5	√			√
Staff performance, linked to their role within the aims and objectives of the service, are reviewed and evaluated to improve the service 4.6	√			√
Effective use is made of technology to improve the service 4.7	√		√	
The organisation continually reviews improvements to help inform the future aims and objectives of the service 4.8	√		√	