

Supporting Young Adults with Intellectual Disability in their Vocational/Professional Development

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KAPITAŁ LUDZKI
NARODOWA STRATEGIA SPÓJNOŚCI

UNIA EUROPEJSKA
EUROPEJSKI
FUNDUSZ SPOŁECZNY



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Overview

The Percy Hedley Foundation is split into two directorates which consists of Adult Services and Children Services. Northern Counties College is part of Adult Services which also includes Able 2, Chipchase and The Percy Hedley Academy for Disability Sports. (See Organisational Chart below.)

The Percy Hedley Foundation

Percy
Hedley
Foundation

Children
Services

Adult
Directorate

Percy
Hedley
School

Northern
Counties
School

Northern
Counties
College

Able 2

Chipchase

The Percy Hedley
Academy for
Disability Sports

Linskill

Orion
Business
Park

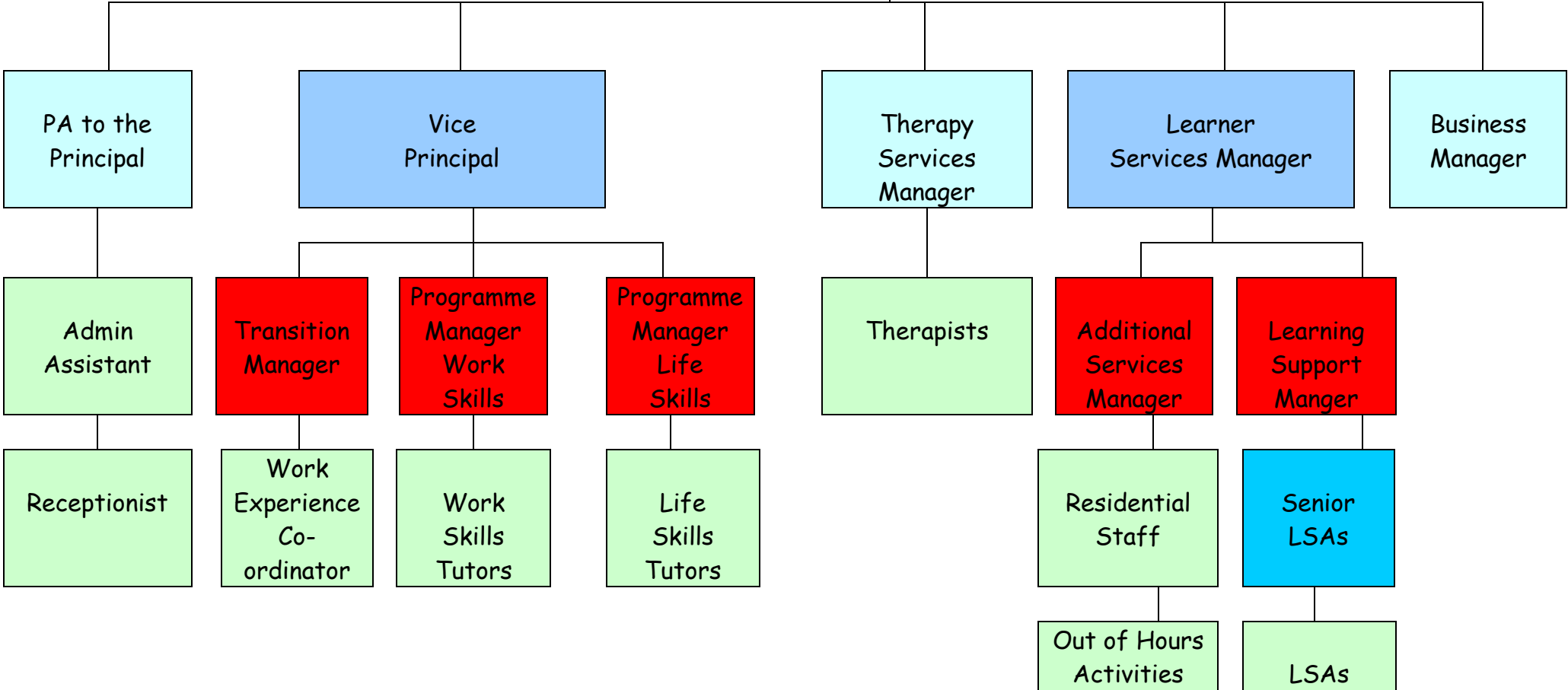
Northern Counties College

Staffing Structure September 2010

Percy Hedley Foundation
Director of Adult Services

Northern Counties College
Board of Governors

Northern Counties College
Principal



Northern Counties College

Northern Counties College opened in January 2006 as a regional provider of specialist education for young people aged 18 - 25 with complex disabilities. The College is part of the Percy Hedley Foundation and is therefore committed to **promoting the rights, needs and aspirations of disabled people through the provision of specialist, high quality services**. Learners are recruited from special and mainstream schools within the region. One of the main aims of the College is to develop a further progression route for learners when they leave the College and plan to move into a supported work environment or other meaningful activity.

Northern Counties College is located very close to the centre of Newcastle and uses the local environment to support the curriculum and provide realistic social and cultural opportunities. The College makes full use of the local Metro, to travel the region. Using the Metro creates opportunities for learners to access learning and leisure facilities across the Tyneside area including museums, art galleries, theatres, cinemas and a variety of shopping outlets. The College is located within easy reach of the Metro station and close to local shops and amenities that can be accessed by learners. The realistic travel opportunities enable learners to develop, consolidate and embed learning in a range of fundamental life skills including mobility, time and money management.

The College is very keen to identify and promote quality work experience placements for all learners. The Employability Manager identifies employers who are willing to be work experience providers for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. All learners will have this opportunity whilst attending the College. (See Appendix 2).

Where necessary, therapy support is provided to enable learners to access the curriculum as effectively as possible. This includes mobility training, physiotherapy, augmentative and alternative communications support, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy.

Northern Counties College aims to provide a curriculum that is learner centred, reflects the individual needs of the learner and prepares them to take their place in their community, academically, socially and emotionally. Each learner's individual needs, priorities and aspirations provides the starting point for the learning programme together with a core curriculum

of essential skills for everyday life and work. Transition is an important part of each learner's programme.

For learners with significant additional needs to access the curriculum appropriately trained and experienced staff are needed to both teach and support learners. Northern Counties College has a team of approx 10 tutors and 40 learning support staff to work with 55 learners.

Transition

The College has recently employed a Transition Manager to aid the process of Transition out of the College environment.

Learners apply for a place at Northern Counties College approx 1.5 years before they wish to start. The school that the learner is attending will be asked to supply information on the learner regarding their levels of skills and their support needs. The learners will then attend Northern Counties College for an assessment period of 2 days, during which they will be assessed by teaching staff, therapists and learning support staff. Their needs will be identified and hours of support from teaching, support and therapy calculated. This is completed on an individual basis and submitted for approval to the Young People's Learning Agency. If approved then a contract will be issued which outlines the programme of study and the hours of tuition and support required. This is then rigorously audited on a weekly basis. It is expected that the amount of support will reduce annually though in some cases this does not happen e.g. when a learner has a degenerative condition. Support may be provided to access the curriculum, for personal care, for behaviour, for therapy etc. For most learners this comes from the Young People's Learning Agency. For some learners, however, part of the funding may come from social services or health. This joint funding is increasing, especially for learners who have significant medical needs etc. Occasionally learners with significant needs may come with support which is provided from another agency and not employed directly from the College (e.g. for health reasons or behaviour support). This may be short term or long term.

The tools used to assess learners' needs are, in the main, devised by experienced College staff. Learners' literacy and numeracy levels will be assessed by the Life Skills team as will independent living skills. Work Skills tutors will assess both vocational and general work skills. Therapists will assess in their different areas (physiotherapy, Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy). The learning support team will assess personal care and medical needs and, with teaching staff, the emotional and

behavioral support needs. A detailed baseline assessment of needs is completed within the first 6 weeks of learners attending College. Tutors will also work with learners to complete an individual destination statement which is worked towards during the learner's time at College. Hours of support are also reviewed and adjusted if needed.

There is an equally lengthy process for learners who are leaving College.

At present Transition meetings are held during the first term of a learners' second year in College. Learners, Parents, Social workers and Connexions advisers are invited to attend to discuss the transition process. This is a learner centred process as all learners are individuals and require different support. Person centred plans will be arranged at this time for those learners who require them as some learners will have already taken part in this process during transition from school. The meetings will discuss all options which are available and relevant to the learner and take into account the wishes of the parents and learners. An action plan is created and this may include visits to Further Education Colleges, day services, supported living environments and other relevant services. It will also discuss applications which need to be made to Further Education Colleges, Day Services or Supported Living arrangements. Some learners will apply to Able 2 day services as part of their transition package. Most learners will have a package that is made up of a variety of services. The transition outcomes are dependent on what is funding available from different agencies but mainly Social Services. A further meeting is arranged to discuss progress and any other actions which need to be followed up. Transition plans and information are integrated as part of the curriculum and followed up during Transition and Tutorial sessions. Visits to Further Education Colleges, day services and supported living programmes will take place during Transition and Tutorial or Life skills sessions.

Data on anticipated destinations is collated by the Learner Services Manager.

Role of the Parents

The role of parents is variable and subject to discussion. When learners come to College they are considered to be adults. However, the transition can be difficult for some parents and learners. Moving on to college represents a significant step towards adulthood. For some of our learners, parents will still perceive them as a child and find it difficult to let the young person make decisions of their own. Parents often find that their son or daughter becomes more confident and independent throughout College and find this difficult to acknowledge. Other parents are extremely

supportive of their son or daughter becoming more confident and independent.

Staff work with parents and ensure the parents are kept informed during the learners' time at college through the College diary system, meetings, e-mails and telephone calls. Parents are invited to attend interim, annual review and transition meetings. Parents are also invited to Coffee Mornings, Open days and the annual Awards ceremony.

The transition from College can be as difficult as the transition into College for parents as they become anxious at the thought of their son or daughter moving on into a more adult environment. Therapy services that parents are used to in College, such as physiotherapy tend not to be available to the same level within Further Education and community provision.

In some cases transition for some learners can prevent them from progressing as anticipated throughout the final year due to anxieties about leaving College. Staff supports parents and learners throughout this important time.

Destination Data

Anticipated destinations July 2009

Activity	Number of learners
FE College	9
Other educational provider	2
Mixed care package	9
Supported employment	1
Independently funded sports package	1

Anticipated destinations July 2010

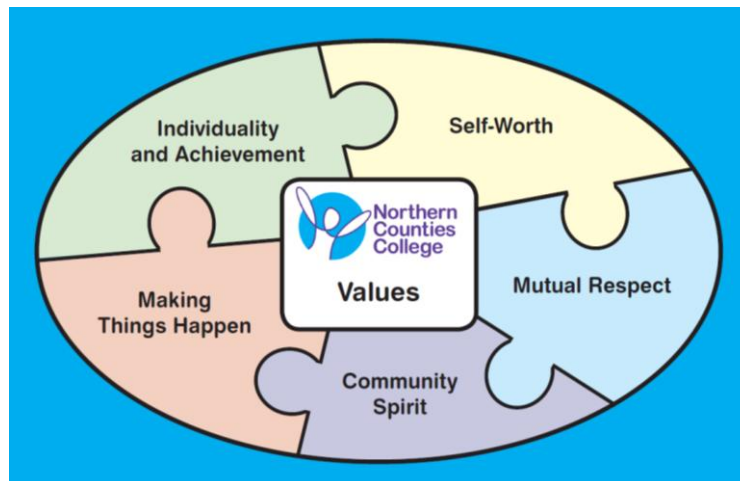
Activity	Number of learners
FE College	4
Mixed care package	10
Supported employment	1
Residential care package	1

Vision, Mission and Values

"A College for a Better Life"

Our mission at Northern Counties College is to enhance the life chances of young disabled people by developing opportunities together.

College Values



After an in depth consultation with staff and learners the College decided on the above values which fit into our Vision and Mission. The staff work with learners together to achieve these values.

The values are divided into further sections (See Appendix 1)

Vocational Curriculum at Northern Counties College

Work Skills Programme at Northern Counties College.
The work skills area is split into four Pathways:-

- Business Administration
- Catering
- Horticulture
- Arts and Media

During induction the new learners complete a 'Taster Day'. The learners complete one day in each of the curriculum areas which assists the learner in making the choice which is relevant to them. During the next six weeks an in depth baseline assessment is carried out with the learners. During this time learners complete a range of practical tasks to assess the starting point in the chosen area.

Existing learners continue with their chosen curriculum pathway unless they express a change in preference. Learners are assessed during the first six weeks of the programme. This is used to monitor progress from the previous year and to identify new skills they have learnt

Work in all areas is carried out in a realistic working environment. The learners complete relevant practical tasks.

Business Administration

Learners work in a realistic working environment and have access to an administration office and conference centre. As part of the Business Administration sessions:-

- Meet and greet clients for conferences.
- Ensure the reception area and conference room are set up in the correct layout.
- Inform clients of Health and Safety requirements at the beginning of the conference.
- Work on the reception desk to gain further experience.
- Complete Business Administration tasks for staff within the college.

The learners also complete administration tasks for external customers such as collating, designing membership forms, laminating, delivering leaflets and newsletters. Learners work towards qualifications in Foundation Learning and Business Administration if relevant to the learner.

Catering

Learners work in a realistic working environment and have access to the Café@the College which was built for this purpose. The café provides lunch 5 days a week for all learners and an evening meal for residence learners 2 evenings a week.

- Produce food for the café and the conferences as part of their work.
- Set up the conferences ready for the buffet and drink requirements.
- Refill drinks during the day ready for the clients.
- Practice skills in food preparation and cooking, serving and cleaning work areas.

Learners also work towards qualifications in Foundation Learning and Catering if relevant.

Horticulture

Learners work in a realistic working environment and have access to the College gardens and Greenhouse. The learners also have access to 'raised beds' in order to make the garden area as accessible as possible. Activities learners involved with are:

- Involved in routine maintenance tasks such as weeding.
- Involved in planting vegetables and flowers.
- Involved in growing vegetables and flowers.
- Involved in selling vegetables to the Café@the College and staff with in the College.

Learners also work towards qualifications in Foundation Learning and Horticulture if relevant.

Arts and Media

Over the past year learners have worked on projects including opening their own art gallery. Learners looked at a range of different artists and produced their own version of the art. The learners then displayed their work in their gallery. The learners also organised their own gallery opening and sold the paintings.



Work Experience at Northern Counties College

The Work Experience programme links closely to the Employability project and the Work Skills programme area. It is an important process within the College environment. Work experience is an excellent opportunity to ensure our learners learn new skills, improve and develop key skills and other life skills that will help achieve towards each learners educational, personal and career goals. Learners transfer skills learnt during Work skills sessions to their work experience placement. The Work Experience programme follows a procedure agreed between Northern Counties College and the Employability project. (See Appendix 2).

All learners have the opportunity to access an internal or external work placement depending on the learners needs.

The learners attend the work placement one day per week for five weeks in most cases. Work Experience is differentiated according to learners and in some cases learners will attend work placements for a prolonged period of time. Support is supplied by the college for the length of the work experience. The level of support is assessed on an individual basis. In some cases support staff will give assistance in order for the learners to complete the tasks. In other cases learners will work in a different area from support staff so the learners can gain the most experience from the placement and to increase the learners' independence.

The Life Skills curriculum links closely to the Work Skills and Work Experience curriculum because skills such as using public transport and improving independence can be transferred.

Newcastle Supported Employment pilot.

Northern Counties College are working in association with Newcastle City Council Supported Employment programme. (See Appendix 3) Two of our learners have been identified to work with the pilot in order to improve the transition from College into supported employment when the learners leave College. During the last couple of months meetings were held with parents and learners to discuss the pilot and its advantages. Parents have agreed to support the pilot. Over the next eight months the learners attend a prolonged work experience placement during which time they will be supported by a member of staff from Newcastle City Council Supported Employment programme as well as College support. The member of staff will be able to assess the learners work capabilities and identify suitable supported employment opportunities when the learners leave College.

People with learning difficulties do work and hold down jobs. However, only a minority achieve this at present. In October 2009, the NHS Information Centre published baseline data that suggests that only 7.5 per cent of people with a learning disability aged between 18 and 64 receiving adult social services in England are in any kind of paid employment.

The Employability Project

Introduction

The Employability Project (EP) was set up in November 2006 with a two year grant from the European Social Fund (ESF), through the Learning & Skills Council (LSC). Based at Northern Counties College (NCC), part of the Percy Hedley Foundation (PHF), the project works to develop employability opportunities for disabled people. The project defines employability as

'the development of skills, knowledge & experience leading to the world of work'.

Working in a unique partnership with the Employers Forum on Disability (EFD), the project arranges visits, work experience, placements, voluntary roles or actual employment for disabled people. The project organises events for employers, supported employment organisations and disabled people to consider topical employability issues.

The report 'Valuing People Now: Real Jobs for People with Learning Disabilities' has as a primary objective: 'Growing the presumption of Employability' - this puts the EP in a strong position to remain at the forefront of employability and disability.

The LSC continued to fund the project until 2010 and the funds were used to develop and expand the project from 1 worker to a team of 4 and to continue the service across the region. In June 2010, new funding was sourced from the Department of Health and the NE Strategic Health Authority Innovation Fund and this will enable a new pilot to form.

Employer engagement

The EP is employer focused and uses active & creative employer engagement methods to develop links across the sectors. It supports and encourages employers to offer opportunities to learners and service users as well as offering training and awareness in return. Employers can engage on their own terms however, evidence has shown that once an employer is involved with the project, involvement tends to increase over time. From a commercial perspective, engaging can help employers meet their social responsibility targets and as learners can benefit from the interaction, this is looked at as real value.

Work placements/voluntary roles/actual employment

The Employability Coordinators work to provide employer links for work placements etc. The EP supports the employer at all times whilst relying on the service providers (eg NCC) to provide the expertise support for learners. The support offered by the EP can be in areas such as disability awareness for staff, identifying potential job roles within organisations etc.

Event management

The project organises a number of employer focused events over the year. The majority of these are short breakfast meetings however, a number are

held on an evening to fit in with what is convenient for the private sector. All event topics are within the remit of disability and equality & diversity.

Achievements across the north east

To date, the EP has achieved the following:

- 230 Employers Engaged (with a majority of small/medium enterprises)
- 20 Training Sessions
- 25 Events
- 170 successful work experiences

Looking ahead

As previously mentioned, the project has received funding to further develop the EP. The new Employability Development Project (EDP) is a pilot and is once again employer focused. The project will develop a bespoke disability awareness package for 20 employers, offering free training and advice along with assisting the development of a customised, totally flexible, recruitment strategy. The employers will be offered a 'programme of opportunity' and this will include the chance to put their learning into practice by hosting work placements, internships and site visits. It will also encourage an understanding of supported employment and create links in this field. This pilot will be officially launched in November 2010.

Added value

Many projects and partnership opportunities are developed through the EP, as well as fundraising and other support links for the whole PHF. For example, the project has worked on a user-led project with NCC to develop a work placement toolkit for employers and this consists of a DVD, guide and workbook. The project also designed and hosted a regional enterprise competition for disabled people involving 7 Colleges linked with 7 mentors from the private sector. This event was held at an employers premises and 80 people attended.

Conclusion

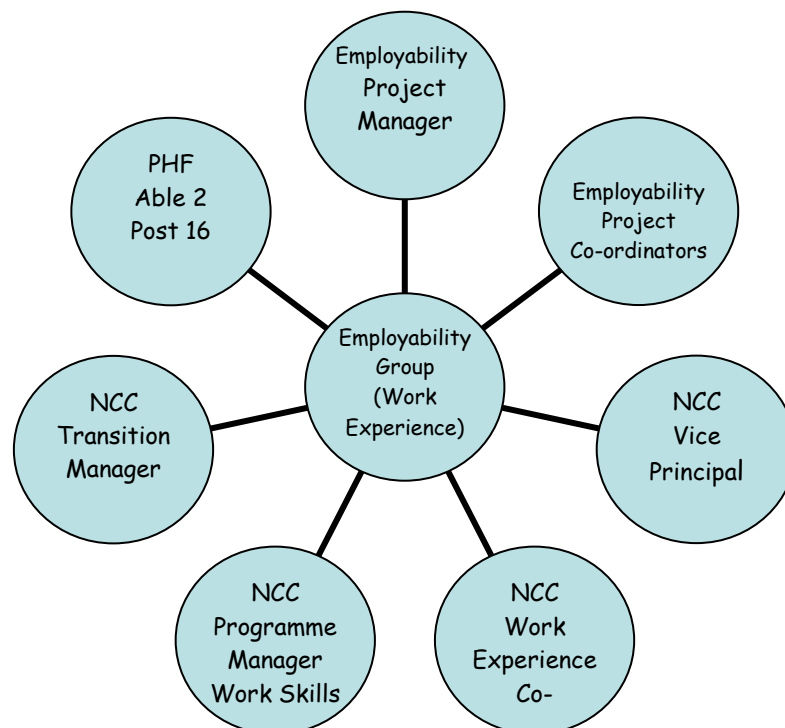
Employers may not initially realise that the EP offers awareness and training in a unique, non confrontational way. Work experiences and project work will make them look at their premises, policies, practices and procedures in a different way and will also put staff in new situations with individuals from diverse backgrounds. In the current economic climate,

giving time can be equally as important as giving money and in many cases, partnership working can help improve staff moral and add value to staff roles.

The EP is an innovative approach to addressing the issues faced by disabled people in the workplace. The project works to ensure that learners and service users gain further knowledge of employability whilst employers increase their knowledge of disability. It truly is a partnership that works.

The EP has a very close working partnership with NCC which benefits from regular meetings on a monthly basis in the form of an Employability group. The group is for key site representatives to meet and share potential opportunities to get involved with or utilise. It is also to learn what activities other sites have being involved in and to help generate ideas for work experience etc.

Diagram of how Northern Counties College works with the Employability.



Percy Hedley Foundation

The Percy Hedley Foundation

The Percy Hedley Foundation has over 500 staff and a turnover of more than 13 million pounds, the Percy Hedley Foundation is one of the largest regional charities supporting disabled people. The size has enabled the Foundation to provide a wide range of services to over one thousand families each year. The paramount aim is to support people through specialist services that are of an outstanding quality. Underpinning the work as a charity are four Strategic Principles, and services and activities are all designed to put these into practice. These principles are that the Percy Hedley Foundation will provide high quality services, will innovate, evaluate their work, and disseminate their knowledge.

The Percy Hedley Foundation was established in 1953 as a small charitable school for children with cerebral palsy. Its purpose is to promote the rights, needs and aspirations of disabled people through specialist, quality services.

The Foundation meets the needs of disabled people with cerebral palsy, communication impairments, sensory impairments and complex learning, social care and therapeutic needs.

Set up originally through the efforts of parents, the Foundation continues to support families both through specific services and as part of our support for disabled people. The Foundation's roots are also with the medical profession as, in 1953, children with cerebral palsy were often seen as a medical 'problem'. Working with a wider range of disabilities, the Foundation continues to value the input from medical professionals, and have over 50 therapists as an integral part of staff teams. The Foundation offers a wide range of children's services and adult services as well as a Sports Academy. Children's services include a Nursery, family support services, a school for parents, Percy Hedley Primary School, Percy Hedley Secondary Department, the Northern Counties School as well as residential and respite care.

Adult services include residential services, adult day care services (Able2), Northern Counties College and the Employability Project, as well as Conductive Education for people with Parkinson's Disease.

Children Services

Percy Hedley school Post 16

Percy Hedley school post 16 provision is built around the 14-19 curriculum with a discreet service for the 16-19 age group which is based mainly at our Killingworth site with part of the group on the Northern Counties Site. It has purpose built accommodation for up to 50 learners; which includes its own teaching areas, kitchen, dining area and residential accommodation which is on the Northern Counties Site. The Post 16 programme offers very flexible courses which are matched to individual learners' needs, abilities and future plans. Education and therapy are a key feature of the teaching with independence skills being taught, particularly via residential programmes which take place for a minimum of 20 nights for each learner each year. Nationally recognised accreditation includes Entry Level, GCSE and A Level as well as lifeskills and communication led units. Learners' access work and adult life experiences and transition into adult services are planned with learners and their families to aid a move into future provision.

Northern Counties school Post 16

Northern Counties School is based in Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne and provides education, therapy and care for children aged 3-19 years.

The school provides education for children who are deaf and have additional needs; children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and children with complex needs and medical difficulties. All children have communication difficulties and staff are highly trained in a wide range of approaches to maximize every child's ability to communicate effectively. It offers a specialised Total Communication approach for all children including both BSL and SSE signing approaches. All staff are trained to sign and also use speech, picture symbols, PECS and Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems including Voice Output Communication Aids.

The school provides specialist teaching, therapy and an individualised curriculum includes work experience, life skills and independence training which complements the national curriculum. For children with the most complex difficulties, there is an individually designed therapy led multi-sensory programme.

Adult Services

Able2 - Day Services

Able2 Day Services offer varied environments, where choice, independence and high standards are central to the opportunities available. By choosing the activities that suit people's aspirations, needs and preferences, they can offer a very individual programme with support. Able2Print and Able2Cook offer a focus on work skills environments which enables learners to progress into the world of work where as other areas focus more on leisure and life skills activities.

The services are currently based within the day centre in Forest Hall, as well as within a community enterprise base on the Orion Business Park in North Shields.

Able2Print

Able2Print is a commercial printing project that enables disabled adults to experience a real work environment. They provide a full printing service for the Percy Hedley Foundation itself and have regular returning external customers.

The print unit comprises a separate office and reception area with fully equipped Desk Top Publishing suite leading to the pre-press, printing, finishing and warehousing areas.

Able2Print aims to provide training and personal development within an active printing works environment.

Able2Print Project Workers have the opportunity to be involved in the entire printing process. This includes reception duties, planning and design, a variety of printing and finishing techniques, quality control, pricing and health and safety awareness.

Able2Cook

Able2Cook is situated on the Orion Business Park, Able2Cook is a purpose built catering unit which provides service users with training, development and work experience in catering. The kitchen caters for service users and staff that attend the Orion activity units. They also organise theme based social evenings that are very popular with service users and guests.

Soundscapes

The main objective of music is participation. The department is equipped with current music technology in the form of keyboard synthesisers, drum machines, sound samplers, sequencing software linked to computers and Sound Beams, which help make music accessible to everyone.

Multi Media

Multi Media is a project which works alongside Soundscapes. Multi media aims are to develop projects initiated by service users, as well as being used by community groups and businesses to enhance the effectiveness of their communication. Projects include such as Able2 magazine, training and induction video, development of e-sales and entry into video arts competitions.

Training and production practice in video, high-end digital photography, digital and stop - frame animation and web design with streaming video is available. There are lots of different roles for people to try out and get involved in, both in front of and behind the camera, including writing, storyboarding, scripting, directing, production services, camera operation, lighting, sound recording, vision mixing, linear and non linear editing, grip operation, set design and building, make up and special effects.

Foundation Radio

Foundation Radio aims to develop projects initiated by service users and there are lots of different roles for people to get involved in, both in front and behind the microphone, including carrying out interviews, editing and producing jingles. Regular podcasts are produced showcasing service users work.

Horticulture

Based at the day centre in Forest Hall, the Horticulture Department invites participants to try gardening as a leisure pursuit, a therapeutic activity or as learning skills to enable them to progress to a vocational qualification. Woodwork is also incorporated into activities within this department to provide variety and encourage people to try new activities.

Ceramics

Within the Pottery Department, it takes full advantage of the flexible nature of clay and makes quality ceramics. Items vary from traditional functional work to sculptural pieces.

Art and Craft

The Art and Craft department provides service users with a range of activities and opportunities aimed at encouraging choice and developing independence. The main aim is to develop projects which are centred on the specific needs and preferences of the individual. No matter what a person's ability or skills are, they are always able to participate in activities.

Activities include: painting, sculpture, printmaking, textile work, woodwork, silk and glass painting, needlecraft, mosaic, making handmade soaps and paper, sensory art projects and jewellery.

Service users are encouraged to take on larger projects such as commissioned pieces, and be involved in and plan group exhibitions.

Sport and Leisure

The Sport and Leisure programme incorporates a wide variety of both indoor and outdoor pursuits. These include fishing, swimming, canoeing, horse riding, carriage riding, Boccia, wheelchair football, attending the local gym. The Department also plays an active role in encouraging participation in major regional and national events, including North East and National Boccia Championships and the Jack Charlton Fishing Competition.

ICT

The Karten CTEC Centre has 16 multimedia PCs which are networked and connected to the Internet, with 2 further stand alone work stations. The centre has a variety of assistive devices and software to enable users to use the computers, including voice recognition, touch screens, enlarged keyboards and tracker balls. Sessions have different themes to enable users to pick out what they are interested in. For example, sessions include digital photography, word processing, an entry level accredited course, games, Internet searches etc.

Linskill

Able2 at Linskill is a community base, offering service users the opportunity to access a variety of activities.

Rebound therapy

This is based around the therapeutic use of trampolines. Linskill's therapy tutors, working in collaboration with the physiotherapy team, develop an individual programme for service users. Rebound therapy helps develop the individual's gross motor skills and increases motivation.

Spa pool

Accessing a warm bubble pool allows service users to experience the freedom that being in water brings. This can also incorporate a passive movement session (assisted stretch) and this helps the individual to relax.

Sensory

Service users can access a comfortable environment based around the use of light. This can help stimulate and increase responses from the individual. Activity coordinators at Linskill work alongside speech and language therapists to develop sessions and programmes which incorporate intensive interaction.

iMuse

This pioneering facility uses sound and light projections. This studio, designed to help people with complex needs, has been set up with the assistance of the iMuse research centre at the University of Sunderland. The iMuse technology uses sensors that can be triggered by movements as small as the blink of an eye. This means even people with profound and complex needs can experience being in control of music and visuals. The technology is also motivating for staff, as it enables them to get instant feedback from the service users they assist.

The Percy Hedley Academy for Disability Sports

The Percy Hedley Academy for Disability Sports was opened in October 2005 and aims to ensure all people have the opportunity to access sport regardless of their level of disability, health or age.

Although the Academy has purpose built facilities in Killingworth, it has a wider community role that means that it will run sporting activities in the community.

All staff at the Academy are qualified to a high standard and capable of deliver high quality coaching at an appropriate level.

Ultimately the Academy aims to provide opportunities to engage in sport at a competitive level by working with local organisations, governing bodies and Local Authorities to increase participation and allow for the construction of leagues, local, regional and even international competitions.

Other Organisations

National Picture

Legislation

Other Organisations.

The Sage (See Appendix 4)

The Work Experience programme has developed with the Sage over the past four years. Northern Counties College was involved from the initial concept of the work experience programme. The programme has been expanded to include other specialist colleges, charities and community projects. Learners can access work experience in Housekeeping and Customer Service. The learners work with a member of staff from the Sage and complete a range of tasks in each of the departments. The Sage also involves learners in their 'Music Sparks' programme. Learners have the opportunity to mentor other disabled learners to produce music or a performance for a concert which is held in March. The programme for the work experience is spread over the academic year.

Azure(See Appendix 4)

Azure has a number of Supported Businesses in Northumberland that provide employment and training opportunities for people with disabilities. It gives opportunities for people with disabilities to develop their skills and experiences and get training and qualifications in a realistic workplace. These Supported Employment Businesses are Azure Garden Centre, Azure Printing, Azure Nurseries, Azure Landscapes and Azure Rolawn. Learners attend the businesses on days which are suitable for them. Some learners may attend one day per week whilst other learners will attend for up to 5 days per week. Referrals are made through the learners care manager or social worker as funding comes from Social Services to enable the learners to attend.

Capability's

Capability's is a coffee shop and print studio in Heaton, Newcastle offering a service to the local community. It gives opportunities for people with disabilities or mental ill health to develop their skills and experiences and get training and qualifications in a realistic workplace. Capability's offers opportunities for anyone with a learning disability, mental ill health or physical disability. Referrals are arranged by the learners care manager or social worker as funding comes from Social Services to enable the learners to attend.

National Picture

There has been a long history of "Special Education" in schools in Britain. Much of this involved separate provision based on a medical model of disability.

According to the medical model the 'problem' of disability is located within the individual, i.e. a person is disabled due to their individual impairments and therefore requires medical interventions to provide the person with the skills to adapt and function in society. The model places individuals into medical categories. Some categories carry a social stigma and disadvantage the person further. This led to a more proactive approach and some people shifted more towards the Social Model of disability.

The Social Model of disability has influenced developments more and more recently and is rooted more in an understanding of human rights for individuals. The social model is a concept which recognises that some individuals have physical or psychological differences which can affect their ability to function in society. However, the social model suggests it is society that causes the individual with these physical or psychological differences to be disabled. This means that individuals with impairments are not disabled by their impairments but by the barriers that exist in society which do not take into account their needs. These barriers are sometimes divided into three categories: environmental, economical and cultural.

Within Further Education two seminal reports produced in the 1990s affected subsequent policy and thinking were:

Inclusive Learning; the report of the Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities Committee of the Further Education Funding Council (HMSO 1996) chaired by Professor John Tomlinson. This report defined inclusive learning as that which provided 'the greatest degree of match or fit between the individual learner's requirements and the provision that is made for them.'

Learning Works: the report of the Further Education Funding Council committee on widening participation in Further Education, (June 1997, FEFC) produced by a committee chaired by Baroness Kennedy. This report recognised that widening participation wasn't just about increasing the "depth" of participation by increasing overall rates of participation, but also the "breadth" by extending participation from under-represented groups.

Through Inclusion to Excellence was published in 2005 and chaired by Peter Little OBE. This report focused on the need for partnership working, improving quality and the needed changes to funding to enable learners "to progress to the maximum possible level of independence and activity in their community and employment."

This was taken forward in the Learning for Living and Work framework. "The vision for the further education (FE) system is unambiguous. Each provider in FE should be absolutely clear about its primary purpose: to improve employability and skills in their local area, and to contribute to economic growth and social inclusion. They must deliver the skills that individuals, businesses and the economy needs that will, in turn, contribute to improving people's prosperity and sense of belonging. Our goal is that young people and adults in England will have the knowledge and skills to match the best in the world and be part of a competitive workforce. Our commitment to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that this goal is just as important for them as it is for all other members of society."

"People with learning difficulties and/or disabilities must not be marginalised and we must strive harder to deliver access to, and experience of, post-16 learning..... that is equal to that experienced by their peers without learning difficulties and/or disabilities."

Legislation

An overview of legislation is included in this section. Further information can be obtained by accessing the website links within the Appendices.

1992 Further and Higher Education Act - This act established a duty to "have regard to the needs of" learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which hindered their learning. A system of additional support funding was established which allowed colleges to claim extra resources for supporting these learners.

2000 Learning and Skills Act continued this duty and added the new duty "to have due regard to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non disabled learners"

2001 - Special Educational Needs and Disability Act - added the duty "to ensure that disabled learners are not treated less favorably on account of their disability"

And to "ensure that they make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners.

This was a significant breakthrough as, for the first time, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have legal rights in regard to their access to education.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 aimed to end the discrimination that many disabled people faced. This Act has been significantly extended in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. It now gives disabled people rights in the areas of:

- employment
- education

The Mental Capacity Act 2005

New legislation was introduced in 2005 - Under the mental capacity act, a person is presumed to make their own decisions "unless all practical steps to help him (or her) to make a decision have been taken without success". Every person should be presumed to be able to make his or her own decisions. You can only take a decision for someone else if all practical steps to help them to make a decision have been taken without success. The law says someone lacking capacity cannot do one or more of the following four things:

- Understand information given to them
- Retain that information long enough to be able to make a decision
- Weigh up the information available to make a decision
- Communicate their decision.

Valuing People Now 2009

Increasing employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities is one of six priorities for 2009-10 of the Department of Health's Valuing People Now delivery plan. The plan, published in January 2009, set out the Government's three-year strategy for services for people with learning disabilities. One of the key policy objectives was to:

'...increase the number of people in employment and who have access to post-16 education.'

There is an emphasis on the importance of effective transition planning for people with learning disabilities if they are to lead fulfilling lives.

The Equality Act 2010

The Act has two main purposes - to harmonise discrimination law, and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

The Act brings together and re-states all the enactments listed in paragraph four and a number of other related provisions. It will harmonise existing provisions to give a single approach where appropriate. Most of the existing legislation will be repealed. The Equality Act 2006 will remain in force (as amended by the Act) so far as it relates to the constitution and operation of the Equality and Human Rights Commission; as will the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Special Educational Needs and Disability green paper

The government launched a Green Paper in September which will look at a wide range of special educational needs and disability issues. This is to support fundamental changes to the SEN and disability system,

Ministers are seeking a wide range of views to help them develop proposals for consultation that are practical to implement, reduce bureaucracy and build on current effective practice as well as make the most of the available funds.

The research will be looking at things like parental choice. This will mean looking at ending the bias towards mainstreaming, but that does not mean limiting mainstream provision for children with SEN and disabilities. It is about recognising that each child is different and individual. It will also look at educational attainment - how to support children and young people with a broad range of needs to raise their levels of achievement. It will also look at the area of transition for young people, where there has been too little work and need to consider how to support better opportunities for young people in this stage of their life

The Association of National Specialist Colleges

The Association of National Specialist Colleges (Natspec) represents 70 Independent Specialist Colleges, meeting the individual education and support needs of learners with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Natspec and its members work in collaboration with a wide range of partner organisations to promote the interests of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in relation to education, independence and work. Members share their specialisms in areas such as

innovative approaches to meeting complex needs, listening to the views of learners and the creative use of enabling technology.

Natspec supports the concept of informed choice for all learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It believes that specialist provision should always be one of the choices available within an inclusive system; specialist colleges can give young people their first real taste of independence and equip them to realise their aspirations.

The Association acts as the national voice for specialist colleges. It lobbies the government to influence policy and raises concerns about provision and entitlement for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

In partnership with others, Natspec works to ensure a wide choice of innovative, high quality, cost-effective education and training to meet the needs of people with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Natspec supports its members in seeking continued improvements in the provision offered to learners. Professional development of staff is a high priority and Natspec offers training events for member colleges.

The Association gives advice to individual learners, their families and supporters. Information is also provided to the Connexions and other guidance services.

Although Natspec does not regulate or inspect colleges, it strongly promotes the very highest standards of education and care.

The Young Persons Learning Agency

In April 2010, responsibility for securing sufficient education and training provision for all young people, including those aged 16-19, and 19-25 year olds being assessed for a learning difficulty and/or disability, passed from the LSC to local authorities.

The Young Persons Learning Agency (YPLA) was established as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) following detailed preparation and development of its values (See Appendix 5) and structures to meet its mission of championing learning for young people in England.

The YPLA's brief is to support local authorities to discharge their planning and commissioning functions and to ensure funding and budgetary control within the Further Education system. However it is still uncertain to the full extent of the role the YPLA will have in advising local authorities.

Appendices

Northern Counties College Values

Northern Counties College will support the promotion of its core values through:-

Individuality and Achievement

- Adopting a 'can do' attitude
- Setting individual challenges
- Celebrating success
- High quality individualised teaching and learning
- Welcoming diversity

Self-Worth

- Recognising and celebrating achievement
- Promoting the development of independence
- Increased opportunities
- Development of self-confidence
- High quality support

Mutual Respect

- Responding positively
- Valuing views, opinions and contributions
- Promoting personal responsibility
- Empathy towards personal and professional needs

Community Spirit

- Promoting a sense of pride and belonging
- Supporting team work
- Fostering a wide range of communication channels
- Professional multi-disciplinary support
- Local community partnerships

Making Things Happen

- Initiating and embracing new ideas
- Partnership working with employers and other organisations
- High quality planning for the future
- Identifying and breaking down barriers
- Challenging stereotypes

Work Experience Procedure
NCC working in partnership with the Employability Project

Our aim is to create a relevant and systematic procedure whereby the Employability Project (EP) works alongside Northern Counties College (NCC) to ensure all placements are safe and secure, and to check all organisations meet with the minimum Health and Safety and insurance standards. This is part of the process where by the Work Experience Coordinator (WEC) will complete a Risk Assessment before every placement commences to ensure each individual learner's safety.

In order for a work placement to commence a pre placement agreement is also completed by the Employer to be signed, dated and photocopied then passed onto the Employability Project team. The paperwork issued by the EP is part of the agreement between the Organisation, the College and the individual.

All Work Experience contacts are available from the EP Team upon request. Once engaged with the Organisation the EP will then pass on the details to the College WEC to contact and arrange placement.

Each learner has their own work experience file that consists of the following:

- Learner details
- Induction checklist
- Learner targets
- Target evidence
- Directions
- Evidence/Photographs
- Learner work placement questionnaire
- Placement Review

Each placement will be supported by one of NCC trained and experienced support staff where necessary to enable each learner to work towards their College targets, independence etc...

We feel work experience is a great opportunity to ensure our learners learn new skills, improve and develop key skills and other life skills that will help achieve towards each learners educational, personal and career goals.

It is essential that a good working relationship is kept consistent between the EP, NCC and the Organisation. Communication is also very important and is the key when it comes to having a Successful placement.

It is also very important that we evaluate the experience at the end of each placement. This achieved by using a debrief form that asks the employer to feedback on how the placement has gone and would the employer be happy to provide placements again in the near future. This systematic approach works very well with NCC, EP and other Organisations and ensures each individual receives a successful outcome.

To enable effective communication, WEC attends the Employability Planning Group Meeting with other representatives from across the Percy Hedley Foundation. This is a monthly meeting, organised by the EP.

The WEC also meets with the EP Officer responsible for NCC on a weekly basis to discuss and update relevant information re work experience.

Actual tasks responsibilities & timescales - refer to Work Experience Paper-trail (attached)

Procedure for combined forms (involving NCC & EP):

Employability Project Application Form (EP/NCC)

- Passed by EP to NCC for learners to complete
- Original is filed in the learner folder and a photocopy is passed to the EP to be filed for reference
- Form may be used to inform employers of potential learner requesting work placement.

Categorical List

- Content/design of this form agreed by NCC & EP in September
- NCC responsible for learners completing this form
- Original may be kept on learner file and photocopy is then passed back to EP to enable officer to initiate contacting potential employers
- EP files this document with the relevant application form.

Pre-placement Agreement

- To be completed for every work placement by NCC WEC (signed by 3 parties: NCC, employer, learner)
- The original may be kept on learner file and photocopy is then passed back to EP
- EP files this document with the relevant application form & categorical list
- Once placement is complete, EP Officer to finalise section: 'office use only'.

Debrief

- To be sent out by EP Officer, at the end of each term.
- Returned copies to be photocopied and filed by EP with other afore-mentioned paperwork, under employer
- Original passed to NCC WEC to be filed on learner file
- EP Officer responsible for chasing employer for this document.

NB - application form & categorical list to be kept on file by the EP, for the duration of learners College experience.

Appendix 3

Newcastle Supported Employment

Newcastle City Council has a contract with the Department for Work and Pensions for up to 54 places on its Workstep programme for people with disability in Newcastle upon Tyne. The programme is managed by the adult services directorate of Newcastle City Council

Workstep participants have a wide range of physical and sensory disabilities, learning difficulties and mental health problems. 24 are employed in a council-owned supported business which manufactures beds and mattresses;

Participants successfully overcome barriers to employment and gain increased confidence to work independently. They communicate well with colleagues and make useful contributions to the work of teams. They are able to transfer skills and cover shortages of staff. They make friends and develop good self confidence. Within the supported business, participants are encouraged to take on new responsibilities. They are actively encouraged and supported to move into new areas of work, through job

rotation. Many participants make good progress within their job roles, extending their responsibilities or using their new skills to gain promotion.

Appendix 4

The Sage

The Sage Gateshead is an international home for music and musical discovery, bringing about a widespread and long-term enrichment of the musical life of the North East of England. Their inclusive approach enables all performance, learning and participation programmes to be constantly inspired and supported by each other.

The Sage Gateshead is both a live music venue and a centre for music education. The local, national and international concert programme runs all year round. It incorporates all kinds of music ranging from acoustic, indie, country, world, folk, jazz, electronic and dance to classical music, including concerts by Northern Sinfonia, orchestra of The Sage Gateshead.

The Sage Gateshead has a pioneering fresh approach to musical discovery that enables everyone to become involved.

Azure

Azure provides a wide range of services to people with disability throughout the North East. Our mission is "Improving the lives of people who are disabled or disadvantaged".

At any one time they provide services to hundreds of people with disability. Since the Charity began those who have benefited from our work is numbered in the thousands.

Azure is committed to providing an environment where individual development is nurtured and in which fulfilling careers may be pursued.

Appendix 5

YPLA - Mission, Vision and Values

Their mission

Championing young people's learning

Their vision

making a difference to all young people's lives by raising their aspirations and helping them get the knowledge and skills they need to prosper in today's economy;

narrowing the gaps in outcomes for different groups and recognising, valuing and celebrating the diversity young people bring to society;

working with our partners to secure seamless learning pathways from pre-16 through to post-19, paying particular attention to the needs of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and other vulnerable groups;

working with our partners to build the performance and reputation of schools, colleges and other learning providers; and

providing a quality funding and strategic analysis service to our partners.

Values

professional - offering expertise to influence the thinking of our partners through timely intelligence about young people, transparent funding systems and empowering knowledge about what is working around the

country;

responsive - listening to young people and to our partners so that we can support them effectively;

impartial - focusing on what is right for all young people and celebrating the contribution providers of all kinds make to realising a wide choice quality learning opportunities and environments;

dynamic - passionate and committed to making the system work in the best interests of young people by forging excellent relationships and continually challenging ourselves to improve; and

efficient - a slimline organisation aiming to simplify and streamline funding and commissioning so that we get as much resource as possible to the front line.

Glossary

BSL	British Sign Language
EP	Employability Project
FE	Further Education
ICT	Information Communication Technology
Learner	Young person attending College
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
Metro	light railway system,
Natspec	The Association of National Specialist Colleges
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NCC	Northern Counties College
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System
PHF	Percy Hedley Foundation
Service User	Adult who attends Day Services
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SSE	Sign Supported English
WEC	Work Experience Coordinator
YPLA	Young Persons Learning Agency

Websites

Northern Counties College

<http://www.percyhedley.org.uk/ncc/index.asp>

Percy Hedley Foundation

<http://www.percyhedley.org.uk/>

The Employability Project

<http://www.employabilityphf.org.uk>

The Sage

<http://www.thesagegateshead.org/>

Azure

<http://www.azure-charitable.co.uk/index.htm>

Capabilities

<http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/capabilityscoffeprint>

NATSPEC

<http://www.natspec.org.uk/directory/interactive-map.html>

YPLA

<http://www.ypla.gov.uk/>

YPLA - Funding

<http://www.ypla.gov.uk/aboutus/ourwork/guidance/funding/>

Employers' Forum on Disability

www.efd.org.uk

Mental Capacity Act 2005

<http://www.publicguardian.gov.uk/mca/mca.htm>

<http://www.publicguardian.gov.uk/docs/mca-code-practice-0509.pdf>

Valuing People Now 2009

www.valuingpeople.gov.uk

Equality Act 2010

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx

Making it Work

Embedding a supported employment approach in vocational education and training for people with learning difficulties

<http://shop.niace.org.uk/makingitwork.html>

http://shop.niace.org.uk/media/catalog/product/f/i/file_3_43.pdf