

Careers Guidance at SGS and the 'In2 Work Guide'

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Summary

This report describes how the Careers Team at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS) set out to ensure young people with learning difficulties and disabilities received positive guidance and support to prepare them for job applications and interviews. The original plan was to offer mock interviews, advice and guidance sessions and a booklet with supporting information. However, students had different views, as you will see from the report!

The final output

Careers at SGS College have produced an employability booklet entitled 'In2Work' (Appendix 1) which is a comprehensive guide to job searching and employability skills. The guide encompasses specific material for disabled job - seekers including rights in the workplace, information on reasonable adjustments, plus research and statistics around how disabled candidates can sell themselves. With reference to the latter point, we strongly felt that there was a sense of disabled job- seekers feeling they were 'lucky' if they got a job. We however felt that with the shift in perception from 'all being equal' to 'celebrating differences', disabled candidates could, in fact, use this point to promote themselves and we have consequently included research and information to this effect.

This publication will be available to all students but will be specifically offered to students who have requested additional support. Along with the booklet, there will be a cover letter (Appendix 2), which will encourage the involvement of family/ carers in the process with the aim of raising aspiration and increasing employability skills for this specific cohort.

Providers involved

The Careers Team at SGS College

We also used a number of reports to gain information and insight (Appendix 4). However, we have met with several departments specialising in additional support and disability for further information (Appendix 5). These contacts provided us with great insight into certain social and

physical impairments and how they affect young people and, often, limit their aspirations; we were able to utilise this information great affect in the process of this project.

Contact information

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What we wanted to achieve

From discussions with colleagues, we noted a gap in provision for high- functioning disabled job-seekers who were previously supported by Connexions (which has recently ceased operations). We feel the booklet covers this gap and can also be made accessible in a number of formats, as well as allowing longer processing time and family involvement.

We primarily wanted to offer our disabled students a resource to help them gain the skills and confidence to undergo the recruitment process. We decided to produce this booklet, as it provides a simple, but effective way to raise aspirations, as well as offering practical, tailored support and information for finding work.

What we did

Initially we planned 1:1 careers sessions, followed by mock interviews with the aim of offering a very personalised and tailored service. We quickly realised that there were several challenges with this plan; many students did not engage with the mock interview stage of the process, and/or did not identify with needing additional support in this way. This was especially the case for learners with social impairments who often do not perceive themselves as having a disability. There were also the additional challenges of time constraints and producing this programme on a larger scale in the long term, as well as excluding family and carers from the process.

We noted that all students interviewed in the pilot were interested in the previous employability booklet we offered, however this did not include any information or advice specifically for our disabled learners.

How it will be used

We will send the booklet and a covering letter to our students who apply for additional support. We will highlight the fact that they can have a 1:1 careers interview if they wish and supply contact details for booking this.

Intended Impact

The aim is to

- Raise aspirations for young people with disabilities seeking employment
- Support the development of interview skills
- Increase the involvement of support networks in this process