

## North Lindsey College The “Diary Room”



### North Lindsey College

North Lindsey College is **outstanding** according to the Ofsted inspection of September 2010.

North Lindsey College is the largest provider of post-16 education and training in North Lincolnshire, offering a huge range of full-time, part-time and apprenticeship courses at a range of levels. Learners benefit from excellent facilities plus friendly and vocationally experienced staff. The college is inclusive in its approach and welcomes all learners.



Whatever the learner needs, there is a course for you. Everyone is welcome.

North Lindsey is also an associate college of the University of Lincoln, and offer a range of Higher National Certificates (HNC), Higher National Diplomas (HND), degrees and an exciting new range of foundation degrees.

North Lindsey College has a wide range of excellent facilities available for use by learners. Many are commercial facilities, serving paying members of the public, and are used as training facilities for our learners. This ensures that learners on many courses gain real life work experience onsite at North Lindsey while they are completing their courses - experience which can be invaluable when applying for jobs afterwards.

### Development of the “Diary Room”

The Diary Room has been developed to assist learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities to feedback their thoughts and evaluate the various aspects of their college experience / individual learning programmes. The idea has been developed to enable learners to give feedback / evaluations without having to dictate their thoughts to another person or answer a tick list - which gives limited valid data.

The Diary Room currently consists of a small room with a comfortable sofa where the learner sits and answers questions from someone from behind a screen. The learner “talks to camera” and has the impression they are in a “Diary Room”. The answers to the questions and the feedback the learner wants to impart are all recorded and correlated after the session. The questions are consistent with the subject being discussed, however the learner is encouraged to make their own statements and to elaborate where they want to make their voice heard. Learner feedback regarding the diary room has been very positive and learners look forward to the “Diary Room” experience.

Focus areas will vary according to the individual learner's stage on their learning journey. Different question sets are asked at prescribed times in the college calendar.

The main focus areas are:

- Start of course
- After initial assessment and induction
- Half term evaluations "How's it going"?
- Safeguarding "Do you feel safe"?
- Learning Support
- Quality of teaching / training
- Progression opportunities
- Enrichment
- Appeals and complaints procedures
- Evaluation of course
- Evaluation of support
- Learner suggested input (other issues learners want to discuss)

The list of questions below is just a sample of the questions from across the various focus areas:

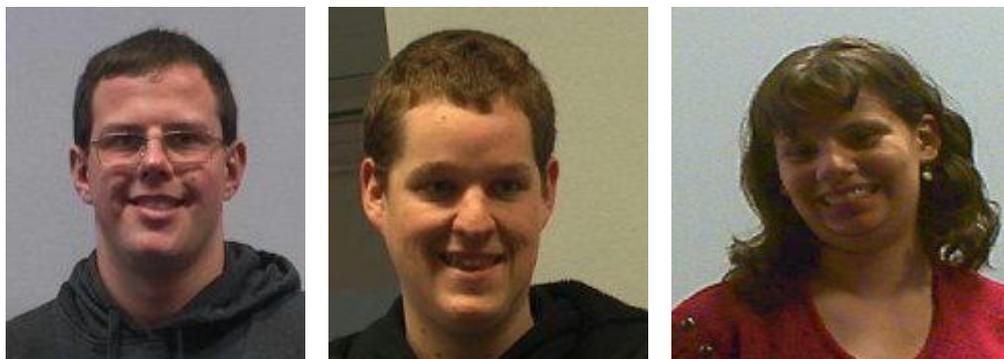
- How did initial assessment and induction go?
- Is your course what you thought it would be?
- Do you feel well supported on your course?
- Do you attend the Success Centre? Was it helpful for you?
- If you are not happy with an assessment decision, how would you make an appeal?
- Have progression routes been discussed with you?
- Do you understand what feeling safe means? (with additional questions)
- Do you feel safe at college? If no, what could be done to improve this?
- Do you feel safe going to and from college?
- Do you have concerns about bullying / harassment/ discrimination?
- Do you have concerns about drug or alcohol use at college?
- Have you been kept informed of your progress on your course?
- Is action taken on issues you raise with your course tutor / course team?
- Are you kept informed of what "next steps" are available to you after this course?
- Do you plan "next steps" with you tutor? Do you have a goal / plan?

The model can be adapted to assist learner self advocacy, evaluation and feedback, progression opportunities and also areas of concern for learners e.g. Safeguarding issues. Several organisations have visited North Lindsey College and have taken away the idea and developed / adapted it for their own specific provision. For example Doncaster Deaf Trust (DDT) visited the college and was so impressed that they asked their Learner Council if they would also like a Diary Room. The Learner Council quickly consulted the wider learner population and came up with a stream of topics that they wanted to air in their diary room. DDT is now investing in a special "Diary Room" chair shaped like the sign for "OK".

At North Lindsey College the Diary Room resource lends itself very well to learners who sign, learners who like to give their feedback in their own way and learners who like to give their feedback verbally rather than written. The uses of the Diary Room will broaden out over time to include feedback on learner experiences, course content etc.

## The Learner Voice

Because the idea of the Diary Room is “cool” and learners like the concept they are more likely to open up and give candid responses to diary room questions (more accurate evaluations / feedback) plus they also have a feeling of ownership over the process.



From left to right - Peter Foster, Lewis Llewellyn and Zoe Morton who are students at North Lindsey College all took part in a video to promote the “Diary Room” concept to other students and staff. They were all relaxed and happy to have their views “listened to”.

### Quotes from learners on using the Diary Room

**Peter:** 'The Diary Room is really good because we can say what we want without anyone watching us - it's like what's on the TV'.

**Lewis:** 'When I have said things such as we haven't anywhere to go at breaks this was put forward to the College Management and we have now got a student common room that we can use at break'

**Zoe:** 'I like this it's like being on Big Brother and I can say what I like without feeling as though I'll get into trouble'