

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

GOING TO COLLEGE IN HERTFORDSHIRE



Education

This leaflet gives you information about college opportunities in Hertfordshire if your son/daughter has a learning difficulty/disability.

What types of courses are available?

There are four colleges in Hertfordshire. Each college offers specific courses for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The courses vary in content but, generally they:

- Build on the skills the students have learnt at school
- Develop life and basic skills
- Develop literacy and numeracy skills
- Increase maturity and independence
- Can include some work experience or an introduction to a wider range of courses within the colleges

The colleges also offer part time courses, which focus on basic skills or leisure interests.

Some young people with a learning difficulty/disability attend mainstream courses and the college will assess and put in place the support they may need. In Hertfordshire each college has a person to make sure young people with disabilities are supported. Recent legislation requires colleges to make courses and facilities accessible to students with disabilities.

As names and details of college courses periodically change, please contact your son/daughter's Connexions Personal Adviser, for details. Please see contact details at the end of this leaflet.

Choosing a college course:

Some things to think about when helping your son/daughter choose a college course:

- What will my son/daughter learn on the course?
- How will this course help my son/daughter move into his/her choices for adult life?
- What qualification will my son/daughter gain?
- What are the entry requirements for the course?
- What do students move onto at the end of the course?
- What arrangements are there for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities to be involved with college life?
- How will the course provide the support my son/daughter needs to learn?
- Are the students supervised at lunch and break times?
- How does the college help students with little or no speech learn and fully participate in the course?
- How will personal care needs be met?
- How do students access specialist support such as physiotherapy or speech and language therapy?

Applying to college:

Arrangements may vary slightly from college to college and year to year, but the process is usually:

- Discussion with your son/daughter's Connexions Personal Adviser
- Visits to the college by you and your son/daughter
- Completion of an Application Form
- Assessment days
- Link courses during the last one or two years from school

- When a young person has been offered a place, a “programme of transition” may be organised by the school. This means that a young person may attend college about once a week whilst they are still at school to become familiar with the college before they go there full time
- The Connexions Service, with permission, will share information with the college to make sure your son/daughter’s needs are met

Young People with more complex needs:

- In the past some young people with more complex needs were not able to be supported at college
- Colleges in Hertfordshire can now access additional money to help young people with more complex needs
- A new assessment process has been introduced for young people with more complex needs
- This assessment process should start 2 to 3 years before a young person leaves school, to allow plenty of time for the right support to be put in place
- The assessment process is started by the school and your Connexions Personal Adviser. Please talk to your Connexions Personal Adviser for more information

Are the times of college days different from those at school?

- The times students attend can vary according to their individual timetable
- Many courses start and end later than schools. For example, some courses may end after 4pm
- Many courses only run 3.5 or 4 days a week
- On average, students at colleges have less directly taught time than students at school

How do students get to college?

- Hertfordshire County Council may pay travel costs to college for young people who had a Statement of Special Educational Needs at school. Young people must live in the county and attend a full-time special needs course. The course must be more than 3 miles from your home
- Young people are expected to travel independently by public transport. Only in exceptional cases is a taxi paid for
- The course must be the nearest and most suitable
- Young people on part-time courses usually have to pay their own transport costs
- Your son/daughter's Connexions Personal Adviser will pass information on to the County Council on his/her transport needs

Money Matters:

- For students under 19 there are usually no tuition fees for full-time courses
- Students may however have to meet other costs, for example, for enrolment or for materials needed for the course. These costs can vary considerably, so check with the college
- A small tuition cost may be payable by students on part-time courses
- **Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)** is an allowance for young people in full time further education
 - Students may receive up to £30 a week (depending on family income)
 - EMAs will only usually be paid for 3 years

i For more information please call the EMA Helpline on **080 810 16219** (Monday–Friday 7am–8pm)

- Entitlement to **Incapacity Benefit** should not be affected for young people attending a college course geared to the needs of students with severe learning difficulties

- For more information on money matters, please look at the Benefits Leaflet

Student Accommodation:

- North Hertfordshire College, in partnership with Springboard Housing Association, has student accommodation at Briar Patch in Letchworth, which offers places for some students with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Students can be supported to develop independence skills, such as budgeting, cooking, laundry etc.
- All students wishing to be considered for Briar Patch will need to undertake an assessment in order to make sure they are suitable
- If your son/daughter wishes to live independently whilst moving onto college please seek advice from a Connexions Personal Adviser or a social worker
- There is also a specialist college in Hertfordshire called St Elizabeth's. For more information on St Elizabeth's talk to your son/daughter's Connexions Personal Adviser. To find out more about funding for specialist colleges, look at leaflet 9

What next after college?

- A full-time college course is likely to last for one to three years. During this time students should plan for what they would like to do next
- Your son/daughter's Connexions Personal Adviser will work with your son/daughter to help plan for what they will do at the end of the course
- You will also be able to talk to college staff and your son/daughter's Connexions Personal Adviser
- Other professionals, such as social workers, can also help with planning for when your son/daughter leaves school

For more information contact:

Colleges in Hertfordshire

- Hertford Regional College **01992 411411**
www.hrc.ac.uk
info@hrc.ac.uk
- North Herts College **01462 424239**
www.nhc.ac.uk
enquiries@nhc.ac.uk
- West Herts College **01923 812345**
www.westherts.ac.uk
To e-mail go via the website
- Oaklands College **01727 737080**
www.oaklands.ac.uk
advice.centre@oaklands.ac.uk

Connexions Access Ability Team:

Tel: 01462 704901

Fax: 01462 705001

Minicom: 01462 704901

Email: accessability@connexions-hertfordshire.co.uk



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