A Specialist Further Education College for young people with learning disabilities
Lifeworks College

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OFSTED inspection 2016 rated Lifeworks College ‘GOOD’.
Welcome to Lifeworks College

The Lifeworks Specialist College of Further Education is a bridge between school and adult life. Lifeworks College is a welcoming and lively specialist college open to young people aged up to 25 years with a range of learning disabilities. We offer an innovative programme of personal, social and vocational education. Our courses support equality of opportunity by building on the foundations of learning that students acquired whilst at school.

We recognise that our young people have a diverse range of needs, abilities and goals. With this in mind we offer a flexible curriculum tailored to each individual’s needs that can lead to nationally accredited qualifications. This is combined with our personalised learning and transition programmes which support students in gaining the necessary skills to enable them to make the most of every opportunity adult life has to offer.

Lifeworks College is staffed by qualified and experienced teachers and learning support staff. The team works closely with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure that every student follows the best course for them and that relevant pastoral guidance is always available.

Based in the attractive South Hams area of Devon the College uses teaching facilities and resources in and around Dartington. We operate a three-term academic year with students attending full-time, five days a week.

Lifeworks College is governed and supported by ‘Lifeworks’, a well-established charity renowned for its work with learning disabled children and young people in the South West.
Philosophy

Lifeworks College works on the principle that all of our students have the ability to become active and valuable members of their adult communities. We support our students in gaining the independence, skills and understanding necessary to enable this to happen.

We also believe that a major factor in our students’ advancement is the support of their families, friends and care workers and with this in mind Lifeworks College maintains frequent contact with the parents and carers of students.

There is the opportunity for all students to gain work placements and it is an aim of the college programme to place a student on to a path leading to paid employment on leaving college.

Students arrive at college with little experience or practice as living as an adult and often with low expectations. Very quickly Lifeworks College challenges these expectations, broadening their horizon and developing the skills necessary to become a successful adult."

OFSTED February 2016
Environment

The location of Lifeworks College at Dartington allows students to become full, active members of the local community. Students regularly participate in activities and events on the nearby Dartington Hall Estate and the local towns of Totnes and Ivybridge. The larger environments of Plymouth, Exeter and Torbay are a short journey away and offer a range of opportunities for our students. Lifeworks College has exclusive use of a building that gives students the space to learn in an inspiring environment. It is a light, spacious and secure setting that encourages students to be independent and to take pride in their work.

Curriculum

Lifeworks College curriculum combines classroom based learning with activities and work placements. Our aim is to build on the students’ previous learning and to help students find and develop interests that can be followed independently in the future. Learning is targeted towards preparing for adulthood and participating in the modern adult world. Each student’s course is learner-centred and evidence-based achievement certificated. The outcomes are primarily a clear and planned route into adult life. Each student will be able to achieve and have the evidence of skills to help them make more informed choices about where and how to live, the sort of work they are able to do, what they are particularly good at and what they enjoy engaging in. They will have a growing confidence in sport, the arts and recreation as well as in themselves and their relationships with others. They will be better equipped to lead safe, happy and fulfilling lives and have the ability to take their rightful place in society.
Study Programmes

Our inclusive study programmes are taught with reference to the student’s everyday life and preparation for adulthood.

Our courses are underpinned by continuing the development of the student’s literacy, communication, numeracy and IT skills.

Each programme has clear, targeted outcomes that are personalised to each student’s ability and are based around the four key Preparing for Adulthood outcomes of Independent Living, Employment, Community Participation and Health.

Independent Living teaches the student skills such as cooking, shopping, caring for themselves and personal safety. Students are encouraged to build on their creative and expressive talents and experiences. They are encouraged to learn new skills, allowing them to develop in confidence, enabling them to grow emotionally and are taught the importance of citizenship.

Employment teaches the student about the world of work, the vocational and social skills needed to be in work and subsequently the skills required for their specific work placements.

Community Participation develops valuable abilities that will help students to be active and participating members of their community in the future.

Health. We challenge students through outdoor activities and sport to work towards targets in personal fitness and to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Every student’s study programme has a different emphasis based on his or her abilities and aspirations.

On leaving College there is a carefully planned transference of their study programme into the relevant areas of their day-to-day lives to ensure their continuing independence, participation and sense of self-worth.

“Emphasis on preparing for adulthood is very strong. As students gain skills and become more independent they gain confidence and become more self-assured.’

OFSTED 2016
Specialist Support

All of our teachers and learning support assistants are highly experienced and have specialist training in teaching students with learning disabilities. Students are taught in small groups with a high staff ratio and often receive 1:1 support. Students are provided with access to specialist services including speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, psychological and medical support.

Our programmes also include the therapeutic use of creative arts and physical activities. Students with specific learning needs will be supported both by our own trained staff and by specialist services. We also provide access to a Careers South West worker, employment services, adult services and voluntary organisations. Lifeworks College is supported by the staff, expertise and activities of the whole of the Lifeworks Charity. Students are able to participate in charity-wide activities as well as giving them access to events run by the Lifeworks Charity such as surfing days and Saturday youth clubs.

"Staff have high aspirations for students."
OFSTED 2016
Students are supported in participating in long-term work placements whilst at the College. They are encouraged from the outset to talk about their areas of interest and any previous experience they have had in a work environment. We discuss students’ aspirations with them, assessing and advising them on realistic options for workplacements. We then actively search for placements local to the student’s home or to the College, working in areas where they are capable of achieving success, recognition and enjoyment. Placements are found to suit the individual student’s needs and can vary in duration. Our specialist staff carry out Health & Safety appraisals prior to students attending an interview and being accepted by an employer. Each student is helped and encouraged with their interview skills, travel arrangements, time keeping, health and safety, dress code and communication. Support at the place of work will depend upon the individual student’s abilities and needs. They are also assisted in keeping a record of new skills they acquire and the tasks they complete whilst on work placements.

Lifeworks College works alongside the host employer, the local authority and a specialist employment charity to give students every chance to succeed in their chosen placement. These placements are supported by nationally recognised Skills for Employment and Health and Safety qualifications with the planned outcome of achieving a permanent, paid position.

**Employment and Supported Internships.**

Students will have the opportunity to progress onto a supported employment pathway. This enables the student to work for an employer with specialist Job Coaching and classroom support.

‘Students develop significant employability skills and become valued members of the workforce.’

**OFSTED 2016**
The college promotes high standards in behaviour and politeness. Students show respect to one another and the staff. Parents notice improvement in behaviour, social skills and in what the young people can achieve.’

OFSTED 2016

Partnerships

Lifeworks College works in partnership with local support services and residential placement care staff to ensure that students are able to develop long-lasting relationships with local employers - further enabling a smooth transition from College to independent living. The College works closely with other local and regional charities and specialist tutors to enable students to complete the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

College Entry Requirements

There is no academic entry requirement. We welcome applications from all students with a learning disability up to the age of 24 years old from special or mainstream school. Students who wish to apply will, however, need to demonstrate the potential to progress and participate in long term work placements with the appropriate support.
Preliminary Visits

We welcome visits by parents/carers/teachers of prospective students who are interested in talking to us about how we can help their future needs. These parental visits will normally take place with the Teacher in Charge outside of College hours.

We kindly request that visits are made by appointment only. To arrange a visit please contact Lifeworks College, on 01803 865075 or by email.

Applying to the College

Parents/carers can show an initial interest in Lifeworks College by completing the application form which is downloadable from the College page on our website: www.lifeworkscollege.org

Parents should discuss their views on Further Education at all school review meetings and with the Careers Advisor who is responsible for completing assessments for future placements. When requested by the Local Authority the College will complete an assessment of the student through a combination of College and home based assessment and a school visit. Parents can contact the College at any time to get support on applying.

Transition

The process of transition from school to College is managed carefully and sensitively to enable students to have a full understanding of where they will be moving to and what they will be doing. Students will be invited to make a series of visits to Lifeworks College during the summer term prior to their September start. We will work closely with parents, careers and school staff to ensure a smooth transition between school and College.

Funding

College placements are funded through your Local County Authority. If you have difficulty in applying, please contact us. Together with your school and Careers Adviser, we can help guide you through this process.
Find out more

If you wish to find out more about Lifeworks College please contact us directly.

**Links**
Lifeworks college homepage:  
www.lifeworkscollege.org  
For advice on applying to a specialist college:  
National Association of Specialist Colleges  
www.natspec.org.uk

**How to find us**
The College is situated at Shinners Bridge, Dartington and is easily accessed either from Totnes or from the main A38 Expressway.

**By Train**
The nearest railway station is Totnes. You will need to take a taxi from the railway station, which is 1.4 miles from the College at Shinners Bridge.

**By car**
Leave the A38 Exeter to Plymouth Express at the Buckfastleigh junction and take the A384 signposted to Totnes and Paignton. After approximately 4 miles on approaching Dartington, go straight on at the first roundabout and at the second roundabout turn right onto the Plymouth road. Pass the Dartington Stores and garage on your left and take the next left into the Lescaze Buildings and keep left into the car park. The College entrance is on the right.

**CONTACT US**
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