



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGE

Royal National College for the Blind

**College Road
Hereford
Herefordshire
HR1 1EB**

Lead Inspector
Dawn Taylor

Announced Inspection
28th November 2006 10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

Reader Information

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Further Education Colleges*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

COLLEGE INFORMATION

Name of college	Royal National College for the Blind
Address	College Road Hereford Herefordshire HR1 1EB
Telephone number	01432 265 725
Fax number	
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the college	Royal National College for the Blind
Name of Principal	Christine Steadman
Name of person responsible for welfare and accommodation of students under 18	Christine Steadman and Mark Fisher
Age range of residential pupils	16 – 65+ years
Date of last welfare inspection	November 2003

Brief Description of the College:

The Royal National College for the Blind provides further education and training for people who are blind or partially sighted. **The College's Mission Statement is 'to enable people who are blind or partially sighted and who may have additional disabilities, to achieve their full potential and integration in society'**. The Learners are aged between 16 - 65+ years of age. Younger learners often come to RNC straight from school. Adults come from a range of different backgrounds. Learners may have been visually impaired from birth or may have lost their sight recently due to illness or accident.

The College provides day and residential places to learners. **Accommodation is provided on site in five Halls of residence, campus housing and houses in the community.** The majority of learners under the age of 18 are accommodated in Armitage or Campbell Halls of residence.

SUMMARY

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was a full inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) covering the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges. It serves as an audit against the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges and demonstrates that the College exceeded the standards in seven areas, met the standards satisfactorily in thirty-five areas and partially met the standards in one area. Four areas were not applicable.

The inspection took place over three days and was undertaken by two CSCI Inspectors. Morning and evening routines were observed and meals were taken with learners. Records and policies were examined and learner groups and key members of the staff team were interviewed.

Letters were sent to parents and professionals asking for feedback on the College. Learners completed student questionnaires prior to the inspection.

What the college does well:

The Principal and her staff promote an enriching residential experience with an emphasis on the personal development of learners. A clear statement of the College's principles and practice, and comprehensive policies and procedures supports this. The organisation of residential accommodation is regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure effective operation and to provide appropriate protection and welfare support to learners.

RNC provides a supportive and happy environment where learners thrive and where they can benefit from opportunities to grow and develop in a range of contexts. Observed relationships between the learners and staff were positive and the overriding atmosphere in the College ensures that the learners are positive and confident.

There are policies and procedures in place that promote the safe welfare of learners, which are implemented successfully in practice.

Health and safety and all matters relating to fire safety are afforded high priority.

Cultural identity and diversity is well promoted and staff demonstrated excellent sensitivity in dealing with a wide range of welfare issues. The College ensures that there are opportunities for learners to express their views and that where appropriate, action is taken in response.

The College continues to use and develop a comprehensive quality improvement cycle, which reflects all aspects of college activity and includes all staff in the process.

The College's Assessment and Admissions Procedure is thorough and is managed by an Assessment Team, which includes staff with a wide range of professional expertise.

The College exceeded the Standards in Medical Treatment and First Aid, Countering Bullying, Staff Support to Students, Discrimination and Equal Opportunities, Management and Development of Residential Provision and Guidance on arrival and leaving the College.

The positive experience of the Inspectors was reinforced by the enthusiasm and praise of both learners and their parents.

Feedback from parents was positive in the majority of responses –

'Rooms are good, everything in them they need. Everything is clean and in good repair'.

'Excellent. No. 54 is an outstanding house. All the students that are housed there love it. It has encouraged independence – My son's social life has improved – He is very happy'.

'The College makes sure students are in on time and have permission to be out. There are locks on all doors and CCTV outside and on stairwells'.

'It is very difficult to get the balance of care and independence right but I think the College manage well, when at home we tend to do everything for our daughter, this is also teaching us to let go and let our daughter become an adult'.

'There is always someone available for the young people'.

'Security in the halls of residence and individual's rooms is of a good standard'.

'My son has joined in far more activities at College than at his previous school'.

'My son has adapted well to college life and is really enjoying his new found freedom, but he also understands that there are still rules to be abided by and living in a college community is similar to being with your family – you can't please everyone all the time! He is learning new skills that are enabling him to take responsibility for his own life'.

'It allows the students to become independent in a safe environment and become responsible adults'.

'I am very satisfied as even though the students are learning to be independent they are supported very well with OTs and other staff the College always encourage students to look out for each other, which also teaches them responsibilities'.

'I can only express praise for the College as they have support my daughter very much as I have always brought her up as independent as possible. The College has carried on and encouraged her in her weaker attributes and encouraged her in her stronger ones to ensure she's doing the best she can always be allowed to progress to her ability. I've always found any staff I have been in contact with always being very supportive and professional'.

'Our daughter is actually leading a normal teenage life – for the first time with wonderful support'.

'Staff were very accommodating to address issues I had in regards to my daughters needs'.

Feedback from student questionnaires was on the whole positive stating

'You can achieve your own level of independence'.

'Staff are brilliant and treat you fairly'.

'Good atmosphere and friendly staff'.

'Being looked after well'.

What has improved since the last inspection?

All the recommendations from the previous inspection report have been met except for one that has been repeated in this report.

The scoring for Standard 14 – Medical Treatment and First Aid has improved from a score of one in the previous inspection report, to a score of four in this report.

The College Governing Body and Management Team continue to monitor, review and develop the provision of residential accommodation at the College.

What they could do better:

RNC are working to an Action Plan to review all staff enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks to ensure staff working with learners under 18 have had the appropriate checks for working with children.

The College Management Team are developing systems to ensure that all new staff have two written references and that direct contact by the College is made with each referee to verify the reference prior to starting their employment at RNC.

The Action Plan to address these matters was implemented by the College Management Team seven days after the inspection.

The College Management Team should further develop practice to ensure that visitors to learners under the age of 18 who live in houses off site are more closely monitored to safeguard the well being of learners.

Please contact the Principal for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Under-age drinking, substance abuse and possession of obscene material by students are appropriately countered.(NMS 6)
- Students receive first aid and health care as necessary.(NMS 14)
- Students are adequately supervised when ill.(NMS 15)
- Students are supported in relation to any health or personal problems.(NMS 16)
- Students receive good quality catering provision.(NMS 22)
- Students have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.(NMS 23)
- Students are suitably accommodated when ill.(NMS 43)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):
6, 14, 15, 16, 22, 23, 43

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Learners health is sensitively and effectively promoted and relevant health and welfare needs of individual learners are supported with access to medical, dental and optical services. An excellent standard of health care facilities and trained staff ensure first aid and minor illness treatment are available to learners at all times and that significant health and personal problems of individual learners are identified and managed appropriately. Policies and procedures demonstrate the thoroughness of the College's approach and the seriousness with which it takes countering risks to learners health.

Learners receive meals that are nutritious and good in quantity and quality. The College continues to promote healthy eating across site with the involvement of learners and caterers.

EVIDENCE:

The College has appropriate policies on countering and responding to incidents of under-age purchase of alcohol; excessive consumption of alcohol; possession, use or sale of illegal drugs and possession of obscene material. These allow for police involvement if illegal activity is discovered.

Written information is made available to all learners, which gives age appropriate guidance on alcohol, smoking and substance use and misuse. **The**

nursing team have recently introduced Health Promotion Days, which are linked to National Health Initiatives.

Learners are able to access the College Counselling Service for additional support. The telephone numbers of external support agencies are made readily available on College notice boards, in information available from the College Counsellors and in information packs provided by the College.

The College indicates that it takes a firm stance regarding illegal behaviours and the use of illegal substances, while remaining supportive of learners whose problems may be of a temporary nature.

There is a College social club on site, which is licensed for over 18s only. Learners are required to show their student identity card before they are able to purchase alcohol. The College rules make it a disciplinary offence for other learners to purchase alcohol for those who are under age.

In interviews staff and learners were able to describe effective systems and practice in place to counter under age drinking at the College bar.

Staff were able to describe how they would manage excessive consumption of alcohol and substance abuse in line with College policy and practice.

The College rules state that obscene posters or objects should not be displayed. Domestic staff stated that pornographic material was not on display. The College has an Internet Policy that addresses accessing obscene material.

The College maintains a close working relationship with the police, especially in respect of policy and practice relating to illegal activity within the learner community. The local Police Liaison Officers have been consulted with regard to the development of College policies. Parents of learners under the age of 18 are informed of any incident concerning their children where there is police intervention.

All under 18 learners attend a Citizenship Programme, which promotes a healthy life style. The RNC curriculum gives learners the opportunity to accept and adjust to sight loss and other disabilities, develop appropriate social skills, relationships, self-esteem, understand and manage personal problems and seek emotional support.

The Registered Nurses employed by the College provide a well-established medical service to the learners, who are all registered with one of seven surgeries in Hereford. The College has a Health Centre, which includes a sick bay and is situated next to the nurses accommodation. The Health Centre is staffed daily, with surgery times well publicised. The Nurses liaise with

Student Services to ensure that all learners are provided with support and transport for all appointments both locally and nationally.

Individual medical records demonstrated that relevant health and welfare information is gathered from parents and learners prior to admission to the College and then regularly up dated, including significant drug reactions, major allergies and notable medical conditions.

Staff described practice in line with the College's detailed policies and procedures that ensure that learners are appropriately supported and individual issues managed sensitively, involving parents where appropriate. Learners confirmed that they would be happy to talk to staff about health matters.

A Consultant Ophthalmologist visits the College regularly to monitor sight issues and other visiting specialists attend the College as required – Diabetic Specialists, Clinical Psychologists, Dieticians.

The counselling team have carried out a self-assessment and identified that mental health provision locally is affecting the potential for emerging mental health difficulties in learners to be treated. RNC is currently establishing links within the West Midlands to enable learners to access a wider range of mental health services.

Nurses have access to regular clinical supervision, as well as line manager supervision.

There are appropriate administration of medication procedures and records in place. Medication is stored securely in locked cupboards in the Health Centre. Learners medical records are stored securely. Learners who have been risk assessed to administer and store their own medication have appropriate lockable storage facilities in their rooms.

There are effective systems in place to ensure that information is passed confidentially between staff to promote consistent practice. Regular communication exists between academic and pastoral staff regarding welfare matters.

RNC provides a valuable in-house Counselling Service. Staff and learners' were well informed of this resource and spoke highly of the staff connected and support provided to those undergoing times of personal stress.

A change to the nursing rota now allows for specific time to be dedicated to the provision of structured health promotion via drop-in clinics. The College Managers Curriculum Group plans themed weeks that also include health promotion.

The College provides facilities in all residential accommodation to prepare and cook meals, as well as a refectory in the main College building.

A Learner's ability to prepare and cook meals is assessed and monitored by staff. The College ensures availability of three meals a day for learners under 18 unless they are able to and want to cater for themselves.

Learners are encouraged to develop budgeting, shopping and cooking skills and progress towards independence. This development forms part of the learner's Individual Learning Plan.

The standard of meals, which were provided to learners, was found to be good. Learners reports were, on the whole, positive. Those that were unhappy about aspects of the catering were able to describe procedures for discussing their concerns. The College asks for feedback on meals through questionnaires and learner discussion groups. Learners and staff were able to describe action that had taken place as a result of feedback. The College continues to develop aspects of their catering facilities and remains committed to consulting learners about how they would like services to develop.

The College restaurant style refectory was clean, airy and inviting. Crockery and cutlery was clean and there were sufficient quantities for the number of learners and staff taking meals.

Learners are provided with a choice of hot meals or a salad bar and a choice of puddings. Meals were found to be nutritious and well-balanced and fresh fruit was freely available. The meals were also found to be well presented and appetising. Staff provide meals, which take into account the preferences and dietary requirements of the learners for whom they are catering and a variety is always available.

One of the main observations of mealtimes at RNC was the pleasant atmosphere, which prevailed at all times. Learners were seen to socialise easily with each other and with staff and the inspection team were made to feel comfortable.

All residential learners have access to kitchen areas in their accommodation to prepare drinks, meals and light snacks. Drinking water is available in all residential accommodation and throughout the College campus.

There are no outstanding issues from the Environmental Health Service inspection.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Students are protected from bullying and harassment.(NMS 2)
- Students are protected from abuse.(NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with students is fair and appropriate.(NMS 4)
- Students' complaints are adequately responded to.(NMS 5)
- Students are protected from the risk of fire.(NMS 24)
- The welfare of any young people accommodated by the college other than its own students is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 26)
- Students' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities.(NMS 27)
- Students' personal privacy is respected.(NMS 33)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with residential students.(NMS 34)
- Students are protected from unsupervised contact with adults who have not been, subject to the college's complete recruitment checking procedures.(NMS 35)
- Students have their own living accommodation, secure from public intrusion.(NMS 37)
- Any security or surveillance measures provide security to protect students without compromising their privacy.(NMS 38)
- Students are given reasonable protection from safety hazards.(NMS 42)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2, 3, 4, 5, 24, 26, 27, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 42

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

There are effective comprehensive policies on ensuring the safety and well being of learners, which are known to learners, parents and staff and, which are implemented successfully in practice.

Residential learners and staff are protected from the risk of fire.

Learners safety and welfare during high-risk activities is protected by effective safety measures, which include procedures for assessing risks.

Staff ensure that learners personal privacy is sensitively promoted.

The staff selection procedure is adequate. The College Management Team have produced a time limited Action Plan to ensure all staff files are reviewed and developed to ensure there is clear evidence that all checks have carried out as required under Standard 34.2.

EVIDENCE:

All key policies and procedures are made available to learners prior to and at the beginning of their academic year.

The College has a written Statement on Bullying and Intimidation and a policy on Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment in its Student Handbook and RSW Handbook. Parents are also given copies of these documents. These documents are up dated annually.

Learners confirmed that they had confidence in the staff to ensure that little or no bullying took place. They were able to identify suitable avenues of reporting should they suspect that bullying was happening or if another learner appeared sad or unhappy. This demonstrated a very positive culture of caring towards other learners.

Initial assessment of all learners ensures that they are specifically asked about experiences they have encountered in previous settings. Parents are also consulted at the New Learners Conference. Staff described how this information is then used to plan the accommodation and grouping of learners. Bullying awareness is addressed in a Citizenship Programme attended by all learners.

The College is proactive in ensuring the safety of the victim of bullying but also provides constructive support to the bully where appropriate.

It was evident from notice boards that the College promotes learner safety and access to adults. Staff described how observation is a crucial part of their role and how tutorials give learners an additional opportunity to discuss any issues and for staff to address them.

The College has a Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, which is consistent with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children and the local Safeguarding Board procedures.

This procedure is made available to all staff in the RSW Handbook. The Learner Charter and Handbook does not refer to the Child Protection Policy specifically, it does, however, refer the reader to Student Services where they have access to all policies in full and to the College Internet where all policies are displayed. Learners were able to describe what would happen if they were to make an

allegation. The Citizenship Programme has been developed to enable Learners to acquire relevant information, skills and attitudes to resist abuse in their own lives and to prepare themselves for the responsibilities of adult life including parenthood.

A senior member of staff is designated to take responsibility for the operation of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and to liaise with local social services. Staff and learners were aware of the designated person and their role.

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy forms part of all staff members induction. Refresher training is also provided to all staff. Mr Mark Fisher and a College Governor (leading on welfare matters) are due to attend Level 2 and 3 Safeguarding Children Training.

The new Principal and new Manager of Residential Support have been proactive in establishing dialogue with the Vulnerable Adult Officer for Herefordshire. RNC also need to be proactive in establishing links with the Herefordshire Children's Duty Team.

Staff training ensures that all staff are informed about the College Lone Worker Policy.

Policies and procedures relating to any learner who might be 'missing' are in place.

The College has a clear Student Disciplinary Policy that is available to all staff in the RSW Handbook.

Prior to joining the College all learners are sent (in an appropriate medium) an introductory pack of joining particulars, which includes a copy of Learner Regulations and a form they must sign to say they have read the regulations and agree to abide by them.

During induction the Tutor works through and discusses with the learner a list of College policies and procedures, which includes the Disciplinary Code and Complaints Procedure.

In interviews staff were able to describe appropriate action they might take in a difficult situation that was in line with the policy. **An emergency manager on call system is available to all staff to provide back up in resolving difficult situations and ensure the safe welfare of learners.**

Learners have no powers to administer sanctions to other students.

The College endeavours to work with learners to achieve an acceptable standard of behaviour and only considers imposing sanctions of any sort when

other proactive means of managing or controlling behaviour have failed. Learners are able to access support for issues such as anger management, assertiveness and bereavement.

A detailed central record was maintained of serious incidents and all disciplinary matters whether they have been dealt with at an informal or formal level. Serious allegations are reported to the Principal who may suspend a learner against whom an allegation has been made to allow for a full investigation.

The College has a restraint policy and all residential staff have received Team Teach training. Only staff who have received appropriate training would be authorised by the Principal to use reasonable force to control or restraint learners.

All learners have access to behavioural support through tutorials, key working and counselling. This framework is set out in the RNC policy on Managing Challenging and Inappropriate Behaviour.

The Complaints Procedure is available to learners in the Learner Charter and Handbook and to staff in the RSW Handbook. Learners are made aware of their rights to complain through induction, discussions with Tutors and key workers, and information available in a range of formats.

The aim of the procedure is to ensure all complaints are dealt with within an agreed time frame and learners are assisted in the development of skills for problem solving and the resolution of conflict.

Inspectors saw evidence of more informal avenues for complaints and of the use of meetings to discuss minor matters. Learners felt that complaints were listened to and taken seriously by staff. They were able to describe individuals within the College and independent of the College who they would contact if they had a concern.

The College promotes contact with parents and welcomes constructive comments, which parents are encouraged to discuss with appropriate senior staff or the Principal. A comprehensive record of complaints, investigations and outcomes are maintained.

The recording system has recently be reviewed and developed in response to feedback from a recent learner survey.

Records and current investigations demonstrated the College Management Team's resolve to investigate matters fully, acknowledge shortfalls and implement change where practice might be improved.

The College has an external complaints procedure that is followed when a complaint is received from an organisation or member of the public.

The College has in place comprehensive documentation regarding fire safety and fire checks. The College has a designated College Risk Manager who is professionally qualified in this area. The role is fully integrated with the estate management of the College site. There was evidence of regular meetings with the residential provision and education centres on site. The College takes very seriously their role, duty and responsibility related to managing all health and safety matters or concerns. Clear procedures and processes exist for checking domestic installations, water, gas and electrics.

The process of risk management is well established, particularly procedures relating to activities on and off site. There are comprehensive policies and procedures for planning College trips. Risk assessments are carried out and recorded in writing in relation to identifiably high risk activities for learners and reasonable measures are taken to minimise unnecessary high risks. Staffing levels are risk assessed before all trips and holidays to ensure appropriate qualifications, levels and genders of staff.

Learners and staff described and the Inspectors observed practice that promoted learners privacy in line with College policy.

There is a procedure relating to room checks and/or searches. These are only carried out if there is a suspicion of illegal or illicit activity and in the presence of the student or students concerned.

Records of the recruitment process for ancillary and support staff for the College indicate that a systematic procedure has evolved. The requirement that all staff having contact with learners have clear Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks is well established.

Eight staff vetting files were sampled. All had enhanced CRB checks but only one had checks against POCA and List 99, specific checks for working with children. All had references but three only had one reference.

The College Management Team took immediate action to address the Inspectors findings. Within seven days of the inspection an Action Plan had been agreed and implemented. This Action Plan will ensure that all enhanced CRB checks for staff working with learners under the age of 18 have specific checks for working with children and that all staff and volunteers will have two references that are verified with each referee prior to employment..

All GAP students were recruited through agencies who interviewed them as part of the recruitment process. Staff vetting checks for GAP students did not include evidence of an interview between the College and the candidate. It

would be good practice for the College to undertake telephone interviews and record outcomes.

Measures to ensure the security of the College from access by the public are in place. A record of visitor to the Halls is maintained. The College Management Team should develop practice to ensure that there is an awareness of visitors to learners under the age of 18 who live in houses off site.

Risk assessments are undertaken to ensure that indoor and outdoor areas used by, or accessible to, learners are free from reasonably avoidable hazards. Assessments of risk are undertaken and reviewed on an agreed basis.

All residential accommodation is reserved for the use of those learners designated to use it and is protected from access by the public.

A good example of progressive practice is that RNC have provided Newsletter about 'Staying Safe'. The current edition discusses how to protect your mobile phone and emails.

Learners bedrooms are exclusively for their use, however they can invite other learners and friends into their study rooms.

There is an effective 'sign-in' system for visitors. Visitors Badges indicate the name of the visitor and the date of their visit.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Students have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Students receive personal support from staff.(NMS 13)
- Students do not experience inappropriate discrimination.(NMS 17)
- Student welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.(NMS 25)
- Students have access to a range of recreational areas.(NMS 41)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):
11, 13, 17, 25, 41

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

There is a good range and choice of imaginative activities for learners to participate in, and learners have access to a range of safe recreational areas, both indoors and outdoors.

The College promotes an environment that takes into account the care of all learners and is sensitive to individual needs.

EVIDENCE:

Learners and staff described a range of activities and facilities available to learners in the evenings and at weekends. Staff co-ordinate particular programmes at weekends and in the evenings and make sure that learners know what is happening through good publicity material and effective lines of communication. Activities are organised on and off site. The Inspectors observed evening activities that enable learners to participate if they wanted to in a structured activity or spend time on their own or in a group entertaining themselves.

All activities are posted on the Internet and notice boards for all learners and learners are encouraged to participate by tutors and keyworkers.

Information is gathered from learners at assessment weekends prior to starting College. This information is collated and shared with other learners

before the start of the academic year to identify areas of interest. Activities are then set up where strong interest is identified. Evening activities on College campus include – Christian Union, football, line dancing, creative writing, art, bowling, choir, yoga, Spanish, Chinese business, acoustic shooting. Activities also run off campus these currently include boxing and judo. There are also set weekend activities that include a number of set shopping trips, acoustic shooting and walks. In addition to these set activities additional trips are organised. This academic year these have included ice skating, football matches, Cadbury World, shopping outside Hereford, and Technquest.

The Co-ordinator of these activities at the end of the winter term collates all the information regarding numbers attending each activity and how many activities each learner has attended. He uses this information to contact the learner directly or through tutors to establish whether the learner is either not wanting to join in with College activities or that some different activities need to be set up.

Staff are sensitive to the need to treat each learner as an individual, and recognise and meet any individual learning or care need.

A Primary Learning Team supports all learners. This team consists of a tutor and key worker, who provide individual and regular support. RNC have invested in the development of the role of tutors and have employed staff who now specifically undertake this role. The College now plan to develop the key worker role by providing additional supervisory input to ensure a standardised approach to key working.

The College has two qualified Counsellors and all learners have access to a confidential service. The College has a Counselling Suite with a separate and discrete entrance. The Counsellors have specialist experience of supporting people with visual impairment.

The College also employs a Student Liaison Officer who is based in Student Services. A team of Student Support Workers, operating out of Student Services, are available to support learners to access activities and attend appointments.

Telephone numbers of appropriate help lines are displayed throughout the College and residential accommodation and in written information given to all new learners.

Learners demonstrated an understanding and awareness of supporting and befriending peers with disabilities, from a different cultural background or with different abilities. Staff described how they would meet individual learner's dietary, religious, dress, learning and environmental needs.

The College have developed a range of written policies, procedures and guidance including an Equal Opportunities Policy and the RNC Disability Statement.

The Equal Opportunity Policy states that the RNC has an Equal Opportunities Officer and a Disability Officer. The Disability Officer supports the Management Team by offering advice on individual cases, policy and procedures and advising on staff development needs.

The Equal Opportunities Policy contains the College's Harassment Policy – this addresses sexual harassment, disability harassment, harassment of Lesbian and Gay men and bullying.

Part of the College's Quality Assurance System is 'committed to developing, monitoring and reviewing positive practices to widen access to learners' with disabilities and/or learning difficulties and to develop staff to ensure that policies are integrated into practice'.

A learner's religious, cultural, racial and linguistic needs are identified at assessment and support to meet any needs is provided by the College.

The College has a multi-faith room and learners who speak English as a second language are provided with ESOL.

In interviews and discussions learners informed the Inspectors that information regarding local religious groups and support for learners wanting to attend, would be available from Student Services.

Staff informed the Inspectors that learners are enabled by staff to observe religious festivals and that the refectory provides culturally appropriate foods. The Inspectors heard how preparations for Ramadan were guided by the expressed wishes of the learners. The Manager of Residential Support wrote to students observing Ramadan to ask for guidance on how learners wished to be supported.

All learners have access to common areas in their house or Hall, as well as over in the main College building. Kitchen and dining room facilities are based alongside or are part of the Halls common rooms.

Access to recreational areas is appropriate to the purpose of the facility and level of supervision required.

All common rooms have comfortable seating and a television.

Learners confirmed that they have access to their bedrooms at all times.

There are a range of safe outdoor areas within the College grounds accessible to learners at appropriate times.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Students are enabled to contribute to the operation of residential provision in the college.(NMS 12)
- Students can maintain private contact with their parents and families(NMS 18)
- Students receive guidance, both on arrival at the college and in preparing to leave the college.(NMS 20)
- There are sound relationships between staff and students.(NMS 32)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

12, 18, 20, 32

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Learners are enabled to effectively contribute to the operation and development of the College and they have access to information and people to whom they can turn for personal guidance or with a personal problem. There are positive relationships between staff and learners that promote mutual respect and trust.

Learners are supported to maintain contact with their parents.

Induction and guidance for new learners ensures they are able to settle in to College life and feel welcomed.

EVIDENCE:

In interviews learners felt that they are given the opportunity to express views on relevant aspects of their accommodation both formally and informally as individuals and as a group.

During the inspection the Inspectors observed handover between residential staff and time was taken to explore accommodation concerns and discuss individual learners accommodation moves.

Learners felt that any accommodation concerns or feedback given to the College Management Team is taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Staff informed Inspectors that there are Hall Committees, a Catering Committee and the Student Union. Learner's views are also listened to in tutorials and key working sessions.

The Principal and staff are proactive in inviting comments and feedback from learners. Learners described a range of forums open to them to express concerns and views, and were able to give examples of recent changes influenced by them.

The College undertakes an annual survey of learner's views and has responded to issues raised in responses to the questionnaire.

The College has an extensive support system to which learners can turn for advice and guidance over personal matters. Information regarding help lines and internal/external contact numbers are available to learners'. Learners are able to identify a range of people available to them to talk to. These included people outside College as well as those inside the College.

Learners are encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends through writing letters, sending e-mails and using the telephone or mobiles.

All learners have access to pay phones located around the College.

In interviews the Inspectors found that most learners have mobile telephones.

Parents are invited to Parent's Weekends and are encouraged to form contacts with key staff. Parents of learners under 18 years old are invited to reviews and receive copies of reports.

Learners are given free unlimited access to email.

The College provides accommodation that learners can book for guests to stay.

Inspectors heard that all new learners are forwarded information about the College prior to their arrival. Learners are given a range of information, which includes the Student Handbook. This information is available in a range of mediums including large print, Braille and on the College Network.

All learners go through a six-week assessment/induction period. If necessary this period is extended.

The process of induction into the College is well established. After each years induction, learners are asked to give feedback. As a result of last years

feedback a revise timetable this year ensured that there were no periods of inactivity and an Activity Weekend was introduced to help new learners settle in.

All learners have a tutor and key worker, who provide individual regular support based on a initial assessment of need, induction review and Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Learners described effective and established procedures for introducing students into the College. New learners felt the process had been informative and had helped them settle and become aware of rules and routines.

In interviews, discussions and questionnaires the majority of learners confirmed that staff were supportive and helpful. They felt that staff made them feel welcome when they first arrived and would make themselves available to help them settle in, work towards becoming independent, listen to an individual's needs or address a concern.

All learners in questionnaires, interviews and discussions were able to identify members of the College staff team who they would feel comfortable talking to or to whom they could complain.

Staff described the delicate balance between supporting a learner and ensuring their safe welfare and working towards an individual becoming independent. Staff demonstrated through discussion their skills and resources available to them in resolving potentially difficult situations whilst promoting individual learner independence.

The Independence Team supports **learners** throughout their education. They ensure that learners are enabled to become as independent as possible in mobility, orientation and daily living skills.

The College Employment Team is available to all learners to help them prepare for employment, self-employment or moving onto Higher or Further Education when they leave the College.

If a learner is interested in self-employment they can meet with a specialist advisor from Action for Blind People Self-Employment Team who will help develop a Business Plan and advise on all aspects of self-employment.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The college's organisation of residential provision safeguards students' welfare.(NMS 10)
- Students' personal possessions and money are protected.(NMS 19)
- Students are provided with satisfactory living accommodation.(NMS 36)
- Students have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.(NMS 39)
- Students have adequate and adequately private toilet and washing facilities.(NMS 40)
- There are arrangements to ensure that students' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.(NMS 44)
- Students can buy food and personal requisites while accommodated at college.(NMS 45)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

10, 19, 36, 39, 40, 44, 45

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Learner's possessions are protected.

Learner's accommodation continues to be developed to meet with National Minimum Standards.

EVIDENCE:

Accommodation at the College has been developed and is continuing to be developed to a high standard.

All learners under the age of 18, male and female had individual bedrooms, with en suite facilities.

Learners are risk assessed upon admission and throughout their education to ensure their accommodation is appropriate to their developing independence skills and at the same time their safety.

The College has clear written guidance that is known to staff and learners, which ensures protection for learner's possessions. Learners are provided with secure facilities in their bedrooms for their personal possessions.

All building and development work undertaken at the College is driven by a Development Plan, which is reviewed and up dated on a regular basis with the input of staff and College Governors.

The College Management Team and Maintenance Team maintain all residential accommodation to a high standard.

In interviews and questionnaires learners stated that the accommodation was comfortable and well furnished, lit, heated and ventilated.

All learners under the age of 18 are allocated a room in Armitage or Campbell Halls of residence, unless it is felt that their needs could be better met in alternative accommodation. Rooms are allocated depending upon the needs of individual learners identified at the pre-entry assessment.

The accommodation has been adapted and is chosen being mindful of the learner's ability and needs. Some learners have additional disabilities and the College accommodation has been adapted to meet those needs. Rooms have fire safety precautions in place. Rooms for learners with hearing impairment have been adapted to sensory fire alarm calls. The College is accessible to wheelchair users and specific residential accommodation has been adapted to ensure wheel chair access. Lifts and ramps have been installed throughout the College. Accommodation for guide dog owners is available.

Armitage and Campbell Halls are divided into flats accommodating 4 – 7 learners. Each learner has a single study bedroom and en-suite with shared facilities, including a kitchen and dining room. All rooms are linked to a central communal lounge.

Beds are of sufficient size and are in good condition. In addition to a bed all bedrooms contain a desk, chair, bedside cabinet, wardrobe and adequate electrical sockets and heating.

All bedrooms had windows providing natural light and ventilation and were fitted with suitable curtains.

All learners in Halls of Residence are able to lock their bedrooms.

During the accommodation inspection the Inspectors were shown a number of learners rooms and it was evident that learners are able to personalise their rooms.

There is clear written guidance that is available to all learners and staff that details the procedures for room allocation, requesting a room move, staff, learners and visitors access to rooms and security and surveillance.

All learners have access to laundry facilities and are required to wash their own clothes. The College as part of their Independence Programme provides support and training to enable learners to achieve this where necessary.

The College provides and launders bed linen and towels.

All houses and Halls have fully equipped laundry facilities. In addition to this there is an additional central laundry.

The College also provides facilities to cater for guide dogs; these include baths and a dedicated washing machine for bedding and runs.

The College is currently working towards a major investment in College facilities. The first stage of this project will be the development of a new Accommodation Village for learners and a Centre of Excellence for Sport and Complementary Therapies.

The Accommodation Village will mean the building of additional self-contained on-campus accommodation.

The College is situated on the outskirts of Hereford centre. There are also smaller shops located in the local vicinity. Learners are able to purchase basic foods and minor necessary personal and stationary items at the College. If learners require support to go to the shops they can go to Student Services who organise staff support or transport.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A clear statement of the principles of residential provision and student support at the college is available to those needing this information.(NMS 1)
- The safeguarding and promotion of students' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records.(NMS 7)
- There is clear leadership of residential provision in the college.(NMS 8)
- Crises affecting students' welfare are effectively managed.(NMS 9)
- Risk assessment and college record keeping contribute to students' welfare.(NMS 21)
- Students are appropriately supervised during free time.(NMS 28)
- Students are adequately supervised by staff.(NMS 29)
- Staff responsible for residential students have specific residential and welfare duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 30)
- Students are looked after by staff following clear residential and welfare policies and practice.(NMS 31)
- The welfare of students placed by the college in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 46)
- The welfare of students is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the college site on a short-stay basis.(NMS 47)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

1, 7, 8, 9, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 46, 47

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Detailed written guidance is given to all parents, learners and staff.

There is clear and effective management and leadership of the practice and development of residential accommodation and welfare in the College.

There are detailed effective risk assessments and procedures in place and known to staff to ensure the safety and welfare of learners.

The organisation of the residential accommodation operates effectively and promotes the well-being and safety of all learners.

Learners are supervised appropriately at all times.

EVIDENCE:

The College has a range of materials produced in a number of mediums that include all the information required to meet Standard 1. This information includes the Mission Statement and Core Values, RSW Handbook, Learner Charter and Handbook, RNC Prospectus.

All information is reviewed and amended annually.

In addition to the audio, visual and written material the College promotes the Mission Statement and Core Values with parents and learners during Pre-Assessment visits, Initial Assessment and Parents Weekend.

The Learner Charter and Handbook sets out a brief summary of all policies and procedures, which are then discussed with all learners during their induction. Full copies of all policies and procedures are held in Student Services and in the residential accommodation.

All learners and staff have access to the College intranet open drive. Accessing and using this site, forms part of the induction process for all staff and learners. All key policies and procedures are available on this site in full.

The College's team of nursing staff maintain all health records. These records included any known drug reactions, major allergies and notable medical conditions, identification of those with parental responsibility, contact details for parents and other emergency contact details.

The College operates a comprehensive computer system that holds all key information and records for learners. The Nurses feed all relevant information to the appropriate staff to ensure that learners well being is promoted. All personal medical information is confidential.

The College has a management structure, with clear lines of accountability for the day-to-day management of the accommodation and welfare of learners under 18.

RNC works to a Quality Improvement Plan, which is produced by the College Management Team in line with the revised Common Inspection Framework (Ofsted) and includes reference to the responsibilities of the College Governing Body and Management under Section 175 of the 2002 Education Act with regard to Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children receiving education and training at RNC.

The Quality Improvement Plan sets out how the College intends to address the development needs identified in the RNC Self Assessment Report.

RNC College is committed to the development and use of Quality Assurance systems to monitor and reflect on all aspects of College activity and learner experience in order to promote excellence and continuous quality improvement.

Monitoring of QA takes place through CMT, the Quality Development Committee of the Curriculum Quality Assurance Board and the Curriculum Quality Committee of the Governors.

The College is committed to continuing to develop the campus this includes plans to build new residential accommodation, a sport centre and refurbish Gardener Hall to provide an Initial Assessment and Access Centre.

The College has recently reviewed and developed the residential management structure. The new structure ensures there is a senior residential manager available at all times, whilst continuing to support the development of the residential service.

There is a staff disciplinary procedure in place.

There are comprehensive plans for the management of a range of foreseeable crisis. Risk assessments are used to review and develop action that should be taken in relation to certain situations or in related to certain individuals. In interviews staff were able to describe that action they would take to safeguard the learners' welfare.

All serious complaints, incidents and accidents are recorded and monitored by the Management Team.

In interviews and discussions the Management Team demonstrated their awareness of events and issues. These are monitored during daily handover and within a structure of regular meetings. The Manager of Residential Support meets fortnightly with the Director of Curriculum and Learner Achievement and fortnightly with the Principal.

The College has a Health and Safety Policy and a Health and Safety Committee, which monitors fire precautions, drills and accident records. The College Risk Manager is a member of the Institution of Safety and Health. The Committee has Governor, staff and learner representation.

Staff and learners were able to describe adequate staffing arrangements across the College site throughout the day and night, during the week and at weekends. Learners stated that staff are always available and were aware of

the procedures to follow to contact staff in an emergency. Systems of communication and accountability are well understood and contact with senior members of staff is available over twenty-four hours a day.

The College Management Team and Governors monitor staffing levels to ensure sufficient staff are available to support learners taking into account the age and nature of the student population.

Staff and learners described the job descriptions, roles and responsibilities of staff who worked across a twenty-four hour period. The role and function of each post was specific to the needs of the learners throughout the day and night.

Staff teams included staff of both genders.

In addition to the team of Nurses based on site key staff had undertaken first aid training.

Staff responsible for the supervision of residential learners have a range of experience, training and qualifications.

The College has procedures in place for staff induction, supervision, appraisal and training. The RNC Staff Development Officer monitors and develops all staff training.

Induction for residential staff includes Manual Handling, Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Awareness, Disability Discrimination, Diversity, Lone Working, Data Protection, Anti Bullying, Mental Health Awareness and Emergency Fire Training.

All Independence Workers are currently undertaking NVQ level 2 Health and Social Care.

In addition to an internal training programme, RNC encourages staff to develop professionally. Over the past twelve months staff have attended a range of external training including Braille level 1, Impact Training, Diabetes Management, Sexual Health, Teaching Support, Aspergers, Level 2 Fishing Coaching, Introduction to IT.

Residential staff have daily handovers and a range of meetings that take place on a regular basis. Residential Managers meet for group supervision every Friday. Each Deputy Manager meets individually with the Residential Manager once a month. The Deputy Managers meet with each RSW shift once a week for group supervision and with each Night RSW shift each Saturday.

Independence Workers and Student Support Workers also meet weekly with their line managers.

All staff receive a Staff Handbook that includes College policies and procedures including those that relate to child protection, anti-bullying and complaints. Specific guidance is given to all residential staff with regard to their role.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Further Education Colleges have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
6	3
14	4
15	3
16	3
22	3
23	3
43	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	4
3	3
4	3
5	3
24	3
26	N/A
27	3
33	3
34	2
35	3
37	3
38	3
42	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
11	3
13	4
17	4
25	N/A
41	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3
18	3
20	4
32	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
10	3
19	3
36	3
39	3
40	3
44	3
45	3

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

Continued

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	4
7	3
8	4
9	3
21	3
28	3
29	3
30	3
31	3
46	N/A
47	N/A

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

YES

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	FE34	RNC are working to an Action Plan to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review all existing staff and ensure all future staff have enhanced CRB checks for working with children and adults. • Ensure all staff have two written references, that are verified with the referee, prior to employment. 	21/03/07
2	FE34	The College Management Team should review and develop the College process for recruiting GAP students to include an interview, with a written record of the outcome.	
3	FE37	The College Management Team should develop practice and procedure to monitor visitors to learners under the age of 18 who live in houses off site.	
4	FE3	The new Principal and new Manager of Residential Support have been proactive in establishing dialogue with the Vulnerable Adult Officer for Herefordshire. RNC also need to be proactive in establishing links with the Herefordshire Children’s Duty Team.	

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