

Introduction to the college



The National Star College

The National Star College was established in 1967 as an independent specialist college managed by a registered charity and serving young people from across the UK.

The College

The National Star College is a leading independent specialist college, and registered charity (National Star Centre for Disabled Youth).

The College currently has 145 full time residential student places and 22 day students. Students can come from all over the UK with many different conditions including cerebral palsy, spina bifida, hydrocephalus, muscular dystrophy, chronic arthritis, brain injuries, learning and communication difficulties, emotional and behavioural challenges as well as sensory impairments.

Established 40 years ago, the College has transformed the lives and future prospects of thousands of young disabled people and their families and its £15.4M major development plans will ensure this life changing work continues for generations to come.

The Business - Key Achievements and Development Since 2000

- Student numbers growth (residential) from 126 to 145
- Student numbers growth (full time day students) from 6 to 22

- Establishment of part time programmes for 200 “local adult learners”
- Staff growth from 258 to over 600
- Ground breaking 50% pledge secured from Learning and Skills Council in 2006

Educational Achievements

- 90% full award pass rate on students’ main qualifications
- 97% student retention rates
- 81% progress to further FE/HE education, training or employment
- 54% of student leavers progressed to independent living in 2007
- Work experience placement growth from 43 (July 2006) to 125 (July 2008).

The College has a strong vision and inspirational leadership and now enjoys a national reputation for excellence, regional recognition for strategic engagement and is playing a leading role locally in re-shaping provision to improve the lives and work outcomes for disabled young people and adults.

Focus on innovation and development has led to new flexible and collaborative programmes, specialist services and leading edge enabling and mobile technology.

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The College’s work is recognised through a number of awards, most recently:

- LSC / BECTA National Technology Exemplar Status 2007
- Gloucestershire Ambassadors’ Furniss Cup 2007
- Finalist for Gloucestershire Business of the Year 2008
- AoC Edexcel Beacon Award for Lifelong Learning 2008

Individual and Social Benefits

Many of our students come to us dependent on care whether from family or care assistants, often unable to make decisions about everyday activities, with nearly half having a significant enough communication difficulty to require speech and language therapy, and one in five using a communication aid. Most have few life skills and many have low self confidence and self esteem.

From day one our students are encouraged and supported to think and act for themselves through a highly personalised approach to learning, tailored to the needs of the individual student. Time at the College allows students to grow and develop into young adults in greater control of their lives benefiting both the individual and the community around them.

Individual Benefits	Social Benefits
Increased confidence	Active and involved citizenship
Communication skills	Integration into local community
Ability to choose Enhanced expression	Expressive members of society
Mobility and travel skills Independence	Decreased dependence on specialist care
Ability to direct own care	Tangible reduction in dependence on state benefits

“Students with the most profound disability are coming through the schools with nowhere to go at 16 or 19”

Helen Sexton, Chief Executive and Principal, National Star College

Meeting Students Needs

- Personalised learning tailored to the needs of individual students
- Focused residential education developing life skills and independence
- Intensive programmes of academic education, pastoral support, innovative therapy, independence training and personal care.
- Support for social development and integration
- Confidence building through achievement
- Highly skilled and dedicated specialist staff provide integrated and focused programmes
- Integrated specialist provision
- Centralised service provision ensures knowledge, expertise and skills directly available to learners.

Whilst we are able to provide excellent specialist education for severely disabled young people we do not have appropriate facilities to provide this across the board. This means that many potential students are on waiting lists with little or no alternatives.

It will only be through our £15.4M development plan that we will be able to put in place the right facilities to ensure that those young people can transform their lives at the National Star College.

Give a young disabled person the care they need and they will still need it tomorrow. Give that person the skills and confidence to care for themselves, or to direct their own care and they become independent and in control of their lives.