

Autism Accreditation Assessment

Portland College

Reference No.	27610
Assessment dates	20 th -22 nd May
Lead Assessor	Stephanie de Vries
External Moderator	Suzanne Farrell /Emma Braisby
Status prior to the assessment	Accredited
Advanced status applied for	Yes

Section 1: Context

About the Provision

Brief description of the provision made for autistic people:

Portland College is a charitable Post-16 Specialist Provider Institution (SPI), providing non-residential and residential education and training for learners aged 16 and over with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. The College is also a registered care home and has an onsite Day Service.

The College is committed to providing the best learning experience, developing employability, independence and communication skills for disabled people, whilst working to become the leader of further education and training for disabled people regionally and nationally. The organisational aspiration is to develop, deliver and sustain outstanding education, care and therapy for disabled people, creating partnerships, which increase opportunities for disabled people in employment and social inclusion. The College aims to develop our centre of excellence for fully inclusive sport. Establishing the organisation as the premier place for disabled people to learn, grow, live and work.

The learners enter on a Route to Learning based on ability, Route One – Life skills learning, communication and sensory programme, Route Two- Independent living focussing on improving their skills including work experience, Route Three – Skills for employment. All learners have courses at the appropriate level in Maths and English. Whilst working within a Route the learners are able to undertake a range of different options making their own pathway, accessing sessions from other Routes where this is appropriate, creating a person centred programme. The learners are supported to undertake appropriate qualifications in Maths and English and in vocational subjects, ranging from single unit credits to full qualifications, from Level 1 through to Level 3 and GCSE.

Number of autistic people supported by the provision:

The college supports a total 179 young people of which 97 (54%) are autistic.

Range of autistic people supported by the provision:

Age range - 16-24years

Academic level – pre-entry to Level 3

Learning disability – mild to severe

Associated conditions – Downs Syndrome, Prada Willi, ADHD, Mental health, severe communication difficulties, challenging behaviours, ABI and physical disabilities.

Learners both verbal and non-verbal identified within their Communication Plans.

Some use AAC technology.

Outcome of last statutory assessment (Body; date, outcome):

Following the short inspection on 17 and 18 October 2017, the College was rated Good. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in March 2014.

About the Assessment

- The assessment took place over 3 days.
- The provision's adviser acted as assessor with support from a moderator.
- A discussion was held on how provision is made for autistic pupils.
- 18 sessions were observed by the assessment team. These included enterprise/engagement, preparation for adulthood, work experience in the coffee shop, physio, sensory session, person centred review, maths, mindfulness and lunch time observations.
- Discussions were held with staff members and 9 autistic learners.
- Personal files were sampled across each Route.
- The results of surveys carried out with autistic people, their families and external professionals were also considered.

Section 2: Key Findings

What the provision does particularly well

What stood out as particular strengths:

The person centred support provided by the college is an area of strength. The college supports over 170 learners with a wide variety of differing needs ranging from non-verbal learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties to more academically able learners requiring emotional and well-being support. Each learner is provided with a personalised and holistic learning and therapy programme based around their aspirations and outcomes.

Good and positive relationships were observed between staff and pupils in all sessions. There was lots of positive praise and encouragement. Throughout all observations pupils presented as calm, happy and engaged in their learning. Signs of anxiety and distress were uncommon or were addressed in ways which prevent them escalating.

The ECLIPSE ME Framework ensures that each learner has a personalised learning programme that supports their aspirations based on employability, independence and communication. The curriculum framework covers Employment/Enterprise, Citizenship, Language/Communication, Intellectual/Cognitive, Physical, Social, Emotional, Maths, English providing learners with a programme that encourages learners to achieve their goals and promotes independence.

Weekly Quality Assurance Walks led by the quality team includes staff from, OT, SaLT and Positive Behaviour Support, ensures that staff are well supported in their teaching, helping to identify themes, training requirements and supporting consistency in autism practice across the college.

The multi-disciplinary teams from across the College work closely with each other to provide learners with support and practical advice. Therapy team include; IAGT (Information, Advice, Guidance and Transition) Speech and Language Therapy and Communication Support, Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Nursing. The wide range of therapies available to learners ensures that they are provided with a bespoke therapy programme which supports their individual needs.

The 6 stage Employment and Works Skills Process ensures learners are supported to participate in work experience placements to further develop their knowledge and employment skills. The College works with over 50 companies providing work placements. There are also many live work experience opportunities at Portland College itself which include Reception areas, the Woodland Cafe and other environments across the campus. Learners are supported to have aspirations which take them outside their comfort zone resulting in improved confidence and independence.

A wide variety of differentiated communication approaches were observed to be used across the college enabling learners to express their needs. Approaches included, photographs or symbols, Now and Next boards, pictorial sequencing cards and timetables. These were used not only to aid understanding but to promote learning and independent skills. British Sign language was also used by staff to support deaf learners to fully participate in college life.

The Positive Behaviour Support Strategy embraced by the College has led to a significant fall in behavioural incidents over the last 5 years (Evidenced by PBS Manager). At the heart of the strategy is the core value that the framework 'seeks to understand the context and meaning of behaviour in order to inform the development of supportive environments and skills that can enhance a learner's quality of life'.

What the provision could develop further

Priorities for the provision:

Portland college is continually reflecting on its practice and pro-actively looking at ways in which it can develop the support it offers its learners. The following suggested areas of developments have been identified through discussions with staff as part of the assessment and it is hoped that these suggestions will support the college's overall development plan.

- The ICT and AAC team should consider developing case studies to demonstrate the variety of uses of assistive technologies and celebrate the success students have experienced through using such devices.
- The assessment team endorses the college's ambitions to offer on-going external support to parents/carers over holiday periods
- The assessment team also supports the linking of learner's sensory experiences and understanding with the Positive Behaviour Support Strategy to further support learners in their development and provide staff with integrated strategies to support classroom learning.

Section 3: Professional Development

Main approaches or methods employed by the provision in supporting autistic people

- Positive Behaviour Support
- 5 Communication Standards
- Winnie Dunn sensory profile
- Person Centred ECLIPSE ME Framework
- Holistic approach with a multi-disciplinary wrap around support

In addition to the above the assessment team observed, BSL, Makaton, Social scripts, visual aids and symbols and personalised sensory regulation tools being used.

Training staff receive in these approaches and in understanding autism as part of their induction

The college induction training programme is mandatory for all staff. The programme includes, autism awareness, communication needs, literal language, different methods of communication Makaton, physio, sensory, positive behaviour support training. Autistic learners have also helped deliver autism awareness training to staff to give a staff a more personalised understanding. Training is refreshed every 2 years.

On-going support and professional development available to staff in working with autistic individuals

Quality Assurance walks ensure that training needs are quickly identified and training is delivered according to needs identified. Recent training includes; sensory, PBS and positive risk taking, target setting and contextualising targets.

Some staff have completed a level 2 and 3 of an accredited autism awareness course delivered by an outside organisation.

During interviews one member of staff said 'We are well supported with training, there are a lot of CPD opportunities'.

Section 4: Person Centred Support

Brief description of how individual support is planned, implemented and evaluated:

- On application to the college each Learner completes an 'Initial Assessment Application' which includes information on; communication needs, Social and

emotional well-being, sensory needs 'likes and dislikes' and 'What do you want to study at college'

- Learners are invited to an Assessment day by the college to discuss the learner's specific education goals and aspirations – includes assessment by the multi-disciplinary team, consisting of Education, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Nursing and Care to establish if the college is able to meet the specific needs of the learner.
- EHCP Plans are reviewed
- An Assessment Report is compiled; aspirations are recorded and any behaviour, sensory, physio or communication needs are identified.
- A personalised learning programme is devised for each learner based on outcomes and identified needs.
- All learners have a personalised induction programme
- Person centred reviews are carried out termly and individual programmes are altered if necessary.
- The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) process is used by the college to plan and track learner's progress through their study programme.
- At the end of the year a 'Record of Progress' report is compiled and shared with parents/carers and the Local Authority

Differences in Social Communication

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The preferences and challenges of each autistic student in how they communicate and socially interact are recorded in their communication plans.

The communication plans provide information on learners understanding and expressive language skills and provide strategies devised by the Speech and Language therapist which staff can employ in supporting autistic people in their communication.

The college has a dedicated on-site Speech and Language Therapy team who assess learners on transition into the college and provide personalised communication programmes. The team also delivers staff training around communication.

The SaLT provides learners with 'transition packs' when they leave college which include information on a learners preferred method of communication and a summary report.

The SaLT reviews policies such as the Student Charter and British values and questionnaires to create more autism friendly versions using simpler language and visuals/symbols.

The college actively supports and promotes the development of digital engagement across the college by both learners and staff. Learners were observed using a variety AAC devices which supported learners with their communication and independence.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

A wide range of communication methods were observed to be used including British Sign Language, Makaton, symbols, AAC devices, scripts, visuals and prompts supporting learners to understand instructions and enabling themselves to be understood.

In all observations staff made themselves understood by simplifying verbal language and providing visual cues. Communication was differentiated to the needs of the learner for example in one observation minimal language, signing, visual prompts and 'now and next' were used while in another observation were learners were independent communication and language were altered appropriately.

Specialist staff were utilised to enable staff to carry out proactive behaviour management and support. An example of this was observing a session ran by the SALT who used sign, social stories and visuals to explain college rules and enforce a specific situation.

During interviews with the learners one student was supported by her LSA using British Sign Language. The learner was able to fully participate in the interview as other students and her views were translated by the LSA.

Self-Reliance and Problem Solving

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Each autistic person is set personal goals relevant to develop independent life skills.

Learners can choose to follow one of three study programmes, Land Based and Trade Industries, Design, Technology and Retail Industries and Service and Leisure Industries. All options within each pathway provide learners with the opportunity to work in and experience roles, responsibilities and expectations within each industry. As well as learning new skills and gaining experiences, learners can also work towards an accredited qualification with a recognised

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Two learners escorted the assessment team around the college. The learners had social stories with photos of the assessment team, staff and classrooms alongside simple written instructions enabling the students to independently direct the assessment team from classroom to classroom.

Targets for sessions are shared with the learner so that they understand expectations and can contribute to evaluating their own learning.

Different coloured sand timers were observed to be used in one session, one learner had a 3-minute yellow sand timer for 'relax time' and a 15-minute purple timer for 'work time'

In all observations autistic people could work out what they must do now and what they were expected to do next. Classroom resources were well organised and labelled, learners had personalised 'now and next' packs, whole class timetable were observed being used and referred to, where appropriate choices were kept choices to a minimum offering students a choice out of 2 activities.

Sensory Experiences

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

A Sensory Profile is carried out by the Occupational Therapist on autistic student highlighting challenges they may experience in the classroom environment.

The college has an Occupational Therapy team providing one-to-one treatment, specialist equipment, a sensory modulation service and transition planning as well as delivering a range of workshops to develop learner's skills in preparation for adult living. The team also delivers in-house training.

The college has a 'Therapy Activity Zone' a well-equipped Occupational Therapy room which is used solely by the OTs to carry out timetabled sessions with learners

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Sensory equipment was well embedded into routines and classrooms where the pupils needed it. Personal sensory boxes and a very well- equipped sensory room were observed being used.

Autistic learners access a range of sensory experiences which they find enjoyable or relaxing. Learners were observed to be using a range of sensory support approaches including; 'tactile tentacle wrist bands', squeeze hand stress balls, one student enjoyed ripping up paper and there was a scrap paper box in the classroom for her use, many students were observed wearing ear defenders, one student carried a back pack with a range of sensory tools inside to support regulation.

An OT session was observed focused on supporting a student in developing her proprioceptive skills. A range of different exercises were set out, including stepping stones, trampoline, a wobbly board, a swing etc. The learner was keen to participate in the session, explaining that she had difficulties with walking and the exercises in this session had helped to improve her co-ordination.

The environment in some classrooms was very cluttered and untidy. This distracted learners from some great resources that were available. Time could be taken to make the classrooms a cleared and clutter free environment to help embedded an Autism friendly learning environment.

Emotional Well-being

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

One-page pen profiles identify preferred activities and interests of each autistic person.

Behaviour support plans focus on proactive strategies to avoid an autistic person becoming anxious or stressed.

Every learner has a Progression Tutor who helps the learner throughout their journey through the college. The progression tutor supports learners with their preparation for adulthood, independence, and all aspects of their time at College.

The 'Information, Advice, Guidance and Transition' (IAGT) team support learner's transition both 'into' and 'out of' the college, whilst also provide information, advice and guidance around wellbeing and carers during a learner's time at the college.

Every learner has an individual timetable that is tailored to meet their individual needs and chosen study programme. This includes any additional specialist support which is provided by the on-site speech and language, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, care and nursing teams who work both in and out of the classroom to support learners.

During interviews, one progression tutor explained that one of her students takes a 'social script' home with her every Friday that explains what is going to happen on Monday morning. This has helped the student to manage her anxieties about college over the weekends

The college provides a wide range of opportunities that build on learner's skills and supports learners in 'positive risk taking' and overcoming barriers to learning. Opportunities include internal and external work placements, supported internships, sports leadership programme and the Duke of Edinburgh programme. One member of said 'we are always raising the aspirations of young people'. These opportunities enable learners to develop work related skills and experiences and supports them to become more confident and independent learners.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Relationships between staff and learners are positive and nurturing. There is a relaxed but focused atmosphere in lessons. Staff address signs of anxiety e.g. reducing demand or giving learner a break or change of environment.

The college coffee shop provides students experience in a real work environment. One of the staff employed by the café used to be a student at the college.

In all observations autistic learners presented as happy, relaxed and content.

Autistic learners experience a sense of completion and achievement for example, in one observation of a route 1 class visual targets were reviewed at the end of the session and stickers were given as rewards. Learners were observed smiling and responding positively when rewarded with the stickers.

In another observation of Route 3 learners, students were observed completing physical activity journals independently. The learners were taking part in a trial to promote physical activity and encourage learners to be more active.

Section 5: Person Centred Support

With Autistic People

- Progression tutors provide student with a single point of contact throughout their time at Portland College.
- Every half term the learner also has a Tutorial Learning Conversation with their Progression Tutor which are audited to ensure that it demonstrates value.
- A Learner survey is carried out 3 times per year in which student's views are captured.
- Portland Council meet every month

Interviews were held with 9 learners, comments included;

'I have progressed managing my own behaviours'
'Staff support is good.'
'If I am upset staff support me.'
'I find it hard to go out with friends, staff support me to do this.'
'It's hard for me to understand my emotions but staff help me.'
'I like working on the farm'.
'It's good because I can make friends and staff are friendly.'
'I have a work placement at Costa Coffee as a Barista.'
'I love the café and leisure centre'.

With families of Autistic People

- Progression Tutors provide parents with a single point of contact. Tutors regularly call parents to up-date them on learner's progress and parents are encouraged to contact progression tutors with any issues.
- Half termly Parent Forums are held to discuss set topics as well as learner progress.

18 family members provided feedback to the assessment team by returning completed questionnaires. The full results are shown as an appendix to this report. 10 families stated that the support their family member receives is 'always good' and 6 stated that it was 'mostly good', only 2 stated that it was 'okay, but could be better.'

One family member stated: *'Well done to all of the staff at Portland College. I am very impressed with the support you have given our son & us as a family'.*

With the wider community




In addition to the information provided in the advanced status application form, the assessors wish to highlight some of the training and consultation opportunities which the college is involved in.

- Portland College is part of a Peer Review and Development group, in which the college leads on comparison of data to monitor progress.

- The college delivers a range of training to other schools and colleges and the Local Authority, training included; Positive Behaviour Support training, autism awareness training to drivers and themed events on therapy support strategies.
- The college also delivers training to employers and parents.
- The college is running an event at the college looking at developing a best practice supported internship model.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEYS

Families of Autistic People

The support my relative is given is...							Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor						0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better						11.11%	2
3	mostly good						33.33%	6
4	always good						55.56%	10
Analysis	Mean:	3.44	Std. Deviation:	0.68	Satisfaction Rate:	81.48	answered	18
	Variance:	0.47	Std. Error:	0.16			skipped	0




The understanding that staff have for my relative's autistic needs is...							Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor						0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better						11.11%	2
3	mostly good						38.89%	7
4	always good						50.00%	9
							answered	18




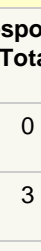
The understanding that staff have for my relative's autistic needs is...

						Response Percent	Response Total	
Analysis	Mean:	3.39	Std. Deviation:	0.68	Satisfaction Rate:	79.63	skipped	0
	Variance:	0.46	Std. Error:	0.16				

The way I am kept informed and asked my views about how my relative is supported is...

						Response Percent	Response Total	
1	poor					0.00%	0	
2	ok, but could be better					16.67%	3	
3	mostly good					33.33%	6	
4	always good					50.00%	9	
Analysis	Mean:	3.33	Std. Deviation:	0.75	Satisfaction Rate:	77.78	answered	18
	Variance:	0.56	Std. Error:	0.18			skipped	0



The advice I get from the service on how to help my relative is...




						Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor					0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better					16.67%	3
3	mostly good					38.89%	7

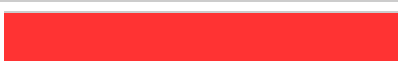





The advice I get from the service on how to help my relative is...								Response Percent	Response Total
4	always good							44.44%	8
Analysis	Mean:	3.28	Std. Deviation:	0.73	Satisfaction Rate:	75.93		answered	18
	Variance:	0.53	Std. Error:	0.17				skipped	0
<p>Comments: Please note you are not required to comment below, if you do so they may be quoted in the final report. Our questionnaires are anonymous and Autism Accreditation cannot be held responsible for comments which identify any individual. (4)</p>									
1	08/04/2019 12:54 PM ID: 113566439	Help and support is always available to anyone who asks. I have always found staff to be very approachable and ready to listen.							
2	08/04/2019 14:32 PM ID: 113576235	If changes occur the student to be told ASAP, they don't like sudden change in routine or going to new places unless told well in advance social situations are difficult for them. They can be anxious and have display behaviour problems demand on the situation updating ehcp regular is recommended and frequent options to talk to staff is good if student requires it etc etc							
3	08/04/2019 19:00 PM ID: 113602547	Well done to all of the staff at Portland College. I am very impressed with the support you have given our son & us as a family.							
4	13/04/2019 17:52 PM ID: 114018096	i think staff are brilliant but they look at it from a teaching perspective and sometimes forget that the parents know their child better and they can sometimes think they are doing right when sometimes they are making it difficult							

Autistic Person

The support I am given is good?							Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes						91.30%	21
2	No						0.00%	0
3	Sometimes						8.70%	2
Analysis	Mean:	1.17	Std. Deviation:	0.56	Satisfaction Rate:	8.7	answered	23
	Variance:	0.32	Std. Error:	0.12			skipped	0

Staff understand me and my needs							Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes						78.26%	18
2	No						4.35%	1
3	Sometimes						17.39%	4
Analysis	Mean:	1.39	Std. Deviation:	0.77	Satisfaction Rate:	19.57	answered	23
	Variance:	0.59	Std. Error:	0.16			skipped	0

The staff listen to me on how I want to be helped							Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Yes						86.96%	20	
2	No						0.00%	0	
3	Sometimes						13.04%	3	
Analysis	Mean:	1.26	Std. Deviation:	0.67	Satisfaction Rate:	13.04	answered	23	
	Variance:	0.45	Std. Error:	0.14			skipped	0	
Comments: Please note you are not required to comment below, if you do so they may be quoted in the final report. Our questionnaires are anonymous and Autism Accreditation cannot be held responsible for comments which identify any individual. (3)									
1	24/04/2019 15:06 PM ID: 114767708	Not sure if Callum understood the questions							
2	24/04/2019 15:07 PM ID: 114767979	Not sure if Callum understood the questions							
3	29/04/2019 10:34 AM ID: 115100801	if i could find a member of staff that can help me with my anger problems.							

Who just completed the questions above?							Response Percent	Response Total
1	The autistic person by themselves						56.52%	13
2	The autistic person with support						43.48%	10
3	A staff member who represented their views						0.00%	0

Who just completed the questions above?							Response Percent	Response Total
4	A family member or friend who represented their views						0.00%	0
Analysis	Mean:	1.43	Std. Deviation:	0.5	Satisfaction Rate:	14.49	answered	23
	Variance:	0.25	Std. Error:	0.1				





APPENDIX 2: COMMENTS FROM THE PROVISION



APPENDIX 3: ADVANCED APPLICATION FORM

Name of registration:	Portland College
Date when provision was last accredited;	10/11 th May 2016
Contact person:	Mark Morton
Adviser:	Stephanie De Vries

Comments made by the provision should be factual and if necessary can be evidenced.

Criteria 1: Does assessment of the provision confirm that there are many considerable areas of strength within the service in relationship to the Autism Accreditation Standards with no or minor actions for development? *This will be addressed within the assessment report and does not require further comment.*

Criteria 2: Is the service considered to have outstanding features in meeting statutory requirements related to outcomes for autistic people?

Plases provide a website link to the relevant reports and any additional comments that might be helpful in interpreting the reports. If the service is not accessed by a statutory body please write n/a

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/39/131959>

https://www.portland.ac.uk/downloads/Portland_Accounts_2016-17_final.pdf

https://www.portland.ac.uk/downloads/Portland_College_Accreditation_report_2016_FINAL.PDF

Criteria 3: Is a high-quality programme of continuous Professional Development in place. Does it ensure that staff have a robust specialist knowledge of autism specific best practice methods and approaches?

Please provide a description of the professional development programme specific to autism (max 250 words)

The strong investment which senior leaders make in staff development is increasing the capacity of teachers and LSAs to meet the needs of learners.

All staff receive autism awareness training on induction. We have a rolling delivery programme with an external provider for staff to receive Level 2 qualifications in autism awareness.

All staff receive communication training from our onsite qualified SLT team which includes effective communication to those learners with autism.

Occupational Therapy team deliver sensory integration training to relevant staff.

Non Abusive Physical and Psychological Intervention training is mandatory for Levels 1 & 2. Level 3 provided for relevant staff.

Mandatory Safeguarding training is also provided for all staff.

Delivery staff receive specific training on positive behaviour support.

Our Support staff receive levels 2 & 3 qualifications in Learning Support Practitioners which has a unit dedicated to specialist support.

Experience Coach Mentors for both delivery and support staff.

Criteria 4: Is feedback from autistic people and their circle of support excellent showing that the service is held in very high esteem and its work is greatly valued? *This will be primarily based on surveys carried out by Autism Accreditation as part of the assessment process.*

Please provide any further evidence of feedback from autistic people or their families e.g. results of surveys etc. (max 250 words)

We carry out 3 surveys per year for our learners to capture their views and experiences (at Induction, On-programme and Exit) as well as 2 surveys per year for Parents/Carers which feeds into a termly report where we follow through any highlighted issues.

Portland Council meet every month which encourages learners to have their voices heard on topics within College life. All feedback from the Council meetings is actioned in a timely way and members of the Council are kept informed of developments. We hold Parent Forums half termly to discuss set topics as well as learner progress. Every half term the learner also has a Tutorial Learning Conversation with their Progression Tutor which are audited to ensure that it demonstrates value.

Personal tutors provided learners, parent/carers and where appropriate, employers, on individual learner progress using a range of methods including TLCs, MoPs, RoPs, verbal and written formative and summative feedback on assessment booklets, work experience logs and through Person Centered Reviews (which are carried out annually for learners, parents/carers, Social Workers and another relevant people to the learner). In addition to this learners have access to using a communication diary to share communications between home and college. The college offers parent/carers opportunities to be involved in planning from the initial ILP stage through all aspects of the learners study programme, including work experience opportunities, developing independence.

Employers and parent/carers are also invited to award ceremonies to celebrate learner achievements.

Criteria 5: Is the service established as a centre of excellence in the field of autism, sharing its expertise through quality consultation and training as well as actively contributing to research into autism and innovations in practice?

Please provide any further evidence of feedback from autistic people or their families e.g. results of surveys etc. (max 500 words)

We provide autism and positive behaviour support training to transport companies, external work placement employers, parents/carers and other Specialist College providers.

We are part of a peer review and development group of 5 other specialist providers.

We monitor and track any compliments and comments which feeds into a data report which is actioned by the Quality Manager.

Criteria 6: Are assessments informed by specialist expertise and grounded in a robust understanding of the nature of autism?

Is assessment data collated and presented in a range of formats so that it is accessible and of practical value to staff who have different levels of contact with the autistic person, as well as the autistic person and their circle of support?

Please provide any further evidence (max 500 words)

All learners had a robust initial assessment prior to starting college and then a further 6 week baseline period. The initial assessment stage included a full MDT approach to learner assessment against EHCPs and learner goals and aspirations. The extended and rigorous baseline stage included assessment of all aspects of the learner in a holistic fashion linked closely to the ECLIPSE ME framework and proposed qualifications. The information gathered at both stages was shared effectively through the baseline assessment document which in turn lead to the development of a bespoke individual learning plan. Support needs were identified at both stages and reviewed/adjusted accordingly to ensure learners have the best chance of achieving their learning goals. This planning continued throughout the academic year, with personal tutors meeting with learners each half term as a minimum to ensure they were making good progress and that their learning programmes were tailored to meet their needs, including methods of assessment, reasonable adjustments and adequate support. Reasonable adjustments may have included additional time and/or therapy input for specific resources and strategies.

From the Initial Assessment Report further documents are produced for different levels of staff including Positive Behaviour Support Plans, Communication Plans, Sensory Reports, Safeguarding Risk Assessments which all identify the resources and equipment needed and how best to support the individual in a person centered approach.

Criteria 7: Does the service provide highly creative and very personalised support based on a thorough and up-to-date understanding of how each autistic person communicates and socially interacts; their independent living skills and the impact of external factors including sensory input on their emotions and well-being? *This will be primarily based on observations of practice carried out by Autism Accreditation as part of the assessment process.*

Please provide any further evidence (max 250 words)

All of our specialist onsite therapists have specific remits, an outline of them follows:

Occupational Therapy:

Sensory needs – many learners and citizens at Portland College have sensory processing needs, which can affect the way they take in and process information around them and ultimately their engagement. The Occupational Therapy team can assess these and suggest strategies and resources to help individuals, and those working with them, to manage these needs.

Personal activities of daily living – as well as providing adapted equipment we can work with people to develop their independence through strategies and resources.

Domestic activities of daily living – as well as providing adapted equipment for activities such as cooking, we provide resources and support to staff to encourage independence.

Travel training and community access – we work with learners to develop independence and skills around accessing the community on public transport.

Occupational Therapy can also provide a support plan, providing strategies that include: orientation, money, planning and sequencing, safety and risk awareness.

Speech & Language Therapy:

Interactive approaches – based on the intensive interaction model which aims to develop non-verbal communication skills such as an awareness of others, turn taking and eye contact. ROUTE 1 ONLY.

Objects of reference – these are applicable for students are not at the cognitive level to understand photos, pictures or symbols. A consistent set of key relevant objects are required for all sessions to represent familiar activities for students, for example, a bowl or wooden spoon to represent cooking, a pair of trainers to represent walking. ROUTE 1 ONLY.

Signing – this should be used by all staff when working with route 1 students. Signing has been shown to encourage expressive language and support understanding of spoken language.

Visual support – for route 1 this is most likely to be photos or pictures. Some students may have understanding of symbols but this is less likely. The consistent set of symbols produced by SLT may be appropriate and learned if used consistently in sessions.

Visual timetables – some students will benefit from visual timetables containing either photos, pictures or symbols to help them understand their day and reduce anxiety.

Criteria 8: Has the service collated an impressive range of qualitative and quantitative data which provides compelling evidence of the considerable positive impact it has had (both in the short-term and in the long-term) on the lives of autistic people? Can it demonstrate that it is truly inspirational in what it is able to achieve?

Please provide any further evidence (max 1000 words)

The College has a robust quality assurance process which includes the use of various data reports – we have attached our annual Quality Calendar.

We collate a Self-Assessment Data Report annually which identifies individual's support needs and areas that are identified as either best practice or an area for development. Can be seen during assessment if required.

Some examples of our data and how it has an impact are:

Cohort data including: staff/ student ratios, disability, age, gender etc to be able to inform the learners individual timetable utilising staff expertise.

Quality data: observation of delivery and support staff which informs staff training/CPD, strengths and areas for development, specific targeted Quality Walks, Coach Mentors.

Attendance and Punctuality data: this supports us to identify any trends and issues that may arise to hinder learner progress.

Accreditation: qualifications and RARPA, this allows us to ensure that the learner is progressing and ensuring that the learner is on track to reach their outcomes in line with their EHCP.

Work Experience: placements are monitored and audited for their suitability against the learner's potential destination.

Destination: we are aspiring learners to achieve their maximum potential and informs improvements to the learner journey.

All survey data is also used to ensure that the learners voice is being heard.

Positive Behaviour Support: explains a narrative around actions needed for each academic year and captures trends/patterns of behaviour/strengths and areas for development.

Therapy Impact: to identify where the targeted support is needed for each learner and route.

LASARES: to monitor the impact our support staff have towards the learners outcomes.

Safeguarding & Impact: to enable learners to feel safe and heard whilst at College.

Attendance by parent/carers to specific events such as forums.

All of the data we collate is shared with our peer colleges within the PRD group previously mentioned to ensure exceed the local and national benchmark for specialist providers.

ADVISOR COMMENTS (These are optional and should only include additional information not already included in the assessment report)

Further areas to work upon: (Accreditation use only)

Adviser comments: