

How Careers Advisers can be particularly effective when working at each point of referral in a Further Education College

Brad* - Brad Student Case Study in Stoke on Trent College *name changed.

The Careers Adviser (CA) from Stoke Careers Service worked with Brad initially for 2 guidance appointments and then strategically when required in planning next steps and at transition. All appointments took place in the FE college premises where referral processes to the local Stoke Careers team are in place.

Guidance Appointment 1

Background

Brad first met the CA after having been referred to careers via the Apprenticeships Team within the FE College. Referrals take place when a student is **unsure about their potential careers area** when choosing to apply for apprenticeships.

Experience in the apprenticeships team has shown that in having a careers guidance appointment at the start of applying for apprenticeships, can **establish a clear focus** during apprenticeship interview processes for the college, saving time and effort of inappropriate referrals.

At that time Brad had applied for apprenticeship opportunities but was tentative about what area of apprenticeship he wanted to consider and **wanted to discuss this in more depth**.

Brad had been doing an apprenticeship in engineering over the previous 2 year period on a local company in house scheme, when the company who he worked for went into administration, but he said **'his heart was not in it'** and he wanted to have a think about his alternatives, and possibly even consider a full time college course for September, as he thought he would like studying full time.

Discussions

At the time of the first guidance appointment, Brad was 18 and had spent 2 years in training and employed as an apprentice in an engineering firm.

His personal experiences of the engineering industry were tainted by the attitudes of the industry to their trainees and the closed nature of recruitment opportunities.

He discussed with the CA whether in fact, if he had his time again and knowing what he did now, whether he would consider it as the right environment for him at all. Brad was willing to consider apprenticeships, but also felt he was more mature now and would like to study full time as well.

Using scaling questions for both specific course areas and also for potential careers areas, the CA was able to establish that Brad was more interested in careers working with people and he also stated that he had a great interest in psychology and spent a lot of his spare time reading up on different psychological theories.

He had never had the opportunity to study psychology on a course but stated that if he could that **would be really fascinating for him**. He also stated that would prefer a more nurturing environment to work in, developing individualism which would develop his own skills, including interpersonal skills and working with people.

His ideas were checked and clarified by the CA, would an apprenticeship in an office, health & social care or a full time health & social care course, fit the bill? Or was it more appropriate to get back into education and gain the qualifications for university progression?

Barriers

At this point it was important to establish Brad's current level of education and what would be required if he were to look at other options within the college or elsewhere.

Brad had several GCSE level qualifications, including a C grade in maths and a D grade in English. He said he struggled with English and that this was a factor in making him choose an apprenticeship over a full time course.

He was diagnosed mildly dyslexic and this had always dented his confidence to achieve academically.

He said he had no specific support on his apprenticeship and had achieved his level 1 functional skills in English and was working towards level 2.

2nd Guidance appointment

Review

For the 2nd guidance appointment, the careers adviser suggested previously that Brad could research some careers which he established were of particular interest to him on the National Careers Service website.

He was also shown the skills health check tool to help establish the kind of careers that may be appropriate for him based on what his interests were and what he could offer.

Brad returned for the second appointment convinced that he wanted to study psychology at a higher level and to consider jobs longer term that would involve working with people. He knew this would involve academic study and wanted to know more about the routes involved in studying an Access course and going to university.

During this session Brad also chose to complete the "Adult Directions" careers choice programme which **confirmed to him** careers working with people at a professional level, psychologists, social workers, counsellors, mental health workers were all considered good matches based on his likes and dislikes.

The CA discussed with Brad his grade D in English during this session and having done functional skills and been successful, Brad wanted a way to retake his English as soon as possible to ensure it did not become a barrier to his future career choice.

Brad was referred to a full time Prince's Trust course starting shortly in the college, after having discussed what would be of benefit for him short term.

His decision was influenced by a 2 week work experience placement included on the scheme and an opportunity to develop team work skills.

He was also given information on the local university summer school which enabled a level 2 English over a 6 week period in July and August and was given the application form for the college Access to HE course, studying psychology, sociology and biology.

Update (May 2014)

Brad visited the CA whilst on Prince's Trust activity in the college. He confirmed he had applied for the Access to HE for September, had a 2 week work placement set up with a local mental health charity and had a place on the university summer school course in July.

He was in contact with the additional support team in college for September and felt that his plans were progressing.

Towards the end of the Prince's Trust course he would have a further career guidance appointment with the same CA to review progress to date/further action required.

Brad was looking forward to reviewing his progress and being able to access the same careers service to provide support and advice for his next steps.

Update (February 2015)

Brad is doing well on the Access to HE course and has a place for September at Bangor University to study psychology. He visited Bangor last week and says he *"loved the place and cannot wait to start in September."*

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