

## Prepare for Work

Developing the employability skills of further education college students across the UK



**Principal**  
Professor  
Terri  
**Scott**

### Top character qualities developed

- Citizenship
- Problem-solving
- Pride
- Selflessness
- Critical thinking, reason and judgement



# Northern Regional College

**REGION** Northern Ireland  
**TYPE** FE/HE College  
**STUDENTS** 1670 pupils aged 14-16

As one of six regional colleges in Northern Ireland, with a large number of students, our aim is to help our young people become the very best they can be, to strengthen their place in the local community and give them solid, practical experience of the world of work.

We run a 'job shop' that sends notifications to students and staff when local jobs and volunteering opportunities arise. **We have found that social action works best when linked to a college programme, such as Sport, where students can go out and coach local youth groups.** All levels of academic ability are encouraged to participate in youth social action; we have students with particular special needs who have recently helped with a beach clean. Our animal care students regularly volunteer at the local horse sanctuary and have done a substantial amount of fundraising for them. Students volunteer with the Samaritans and at local nursing homes and, subsequently, the college is more integrated into the community. Our demographic catchment area is large but volunteering reinforces our commitment to the area.

When we set up a sexual health clinic our students really pushed

for it to become available to the whole area, demonstrating awareness of local need. **Because of the work they did in setting it up our student council won a silver participation award from the Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner.** Our Media Studies students created a DVD promoting the Clinic which has, to date, attracted some 700 new referrals per year.

**One fantastic entrepreneurial student went on to set up her own company with an advice line and drop-in service supporting vulnerable young people.** With the support of local businesses and the college, she recently located to her own premises and has encouraged others to volunteer in her organisation. We could not be more impressed with her work.

It's our role to gently push forward the students that need more encouragement. It's noticeable that those from less privileged backgrounds are often the most driven to change their lives and those around them. We're keen to set up a group in Northern Ireland to share best practice and do so much more.



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Those who take part in volunteering and social action initiatives always develop necessary life skills including independence, confidence, social skills and become better team players. Employers and universities take note of volunteering because it demonstrates a student's dedication and they know that they will have already developed many of the skills required for work and further study

**Una O'Kane, Careers Adviser**