

# Connexions Nottinghamshire's Approved Websites Criteria

Third party websites used by and linked to by Connexions Nottinghamshire (like SortItOnline and Fetch!) are approved using the following criteria:

## 1. Main Criteria – Content, appearance and audience considerations

- (a) **Appearance:** The website is **eye-catching, attractive** and **easy on the eye**. **Interactive sections** and **good division of text** is considered ideal.

*Possible problems:*

A site may not be approved if: (i) it has **reams of text** to wade through that makes it unsuitable for our readers (many of whom have low literacy); (ii) there is too much **'Flash'** and too much **clutter** could be a turn-off and, depending on the degree of this and other factors, could mean non-approval.

- (b) **Young People-focus:** The site content is either (i) **aimed at young people** (ii) has a section that is **easily accessible to young people** or (iii) has some **relevant information** for young people.

*Possible problems:*

Adult orientated sites or **sites that predominantly contain adult information** that is likely to put off a young person will not be included

- (c) **Language/jargon/reading age:** The site uses language that is relatively free of jargon and the reading age is suitable for young people
- (d) **Background/text readability:** The site's use of background colour/s provide good contrast and make the text easy to read (for all users, including, as far as possible, those with reading/sight difficulties).
- (e) **Races and cultures:** The site includes (i) a good **balance of images** of people of different races and cultures and (ii) **language and content** that **positively reflects different races and cultures**
- (f) **Reputable Source:** (i) The site will be from a **reputable** source and this source must be obvious; (ii) **Contact details** for the organisation should be clearly marked on the site; (iii) **Personal websites** are not included, although, very occasionally, those with endorsements from well-known organisations may be considered if there are no other similar sites.
- (g) **Ease of use:** The site is (i) **user friendly** and (ii) **easy to navigate around and find sections** (for example, the careers area on job-related sites). Features like a search engine, easy-to-use index or a site map are considered useful aids to user-friendliness if these work well.

- (h) **Facts v opinion:** Where the site is being assessed as an information source, the site presents clear, well argued facts rather than opinion and these facts are backed up where necessary.
- (i) **Currency:** The site appears to be well maintained and looks to include regularly updated content (clear indications that updates are made are available and features like 'last updated' dates are present).
- (j) **Third Party Links:** The site's links to other websites are: (i) appropriate and suitable for young people; (ii) largely well maintained and working
- (k) **Information origins and context:** The origin and context of the site's information is correct for the audience. For example, sites we probably wouldn't use might include: (i) Scottish qualifications site; (ii) American or Australian websites, where the support and information could easily confuse local young people and parents.
- (l) **Impartiality and bias:** Information presented appears to be unbiased, presenting, where this is a reasonable expectation, impartial, balanced, well considered information.

*Possible problems:*

- We might not approve **commercial websites** that make claims for their own products and services, particularly where this can't be balanced with all of the other options.
- We will aim to be **impartial, not favouring some organisations or companies over others** - for example, by highlighting one **training organisation** over another.
- We will take special care in assessing websites for recruitment agencies and Gap Year websites, as these vary a great deal and will consider each on its merit.

## 2. Special types of site:

(a) **Jobs and careers websites:** Sites will not be included if they are professional sites that only consider CPD. Sites will be included if they: (i) include how to get into a career from a **lower level** (ii) have **descriptions of what specific jobs are like** or (iii) have **useful qualifications information**.

## 3. *Top Dog* Criteria – the 'best of the best' sites for young people:

A sites will be approved as 'top dog' website where it meets the criteria above, is aimed at young people and is very young person friendly (for example: not too much text, use of suitable branding, language and ease of use).