

**back on track >**

changing lives through learning



**Back on Track Education Centre  
Information Booklet Spring 2012**

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Back on Track has a  
'termly' timetable, not a  
yearly one!

Some courses last for a  
whole term, others half a  
term.

Ask for the latest timetable  
at reception

**Interested?**

**Ring  
0161 832 4488 to  
make  
an appointment!**

## **Name change**

We used to be called **MERC** (or you may have known us as **NEARIS**). From December 2009, we became known as '**Back on Track**'. However, we still offer the same friendly services.

# Welcome to Back on Track

This booklet provides information about the Back on Track Education Centre and some of the courses on offer between January and March 2012.

**The timetable** changes every half term, and not all courses are available year-round. Ask for the latest timetable or contact us to find out when the course you are interested in is running.

## What is Back on Track?

Back on Track provides courses, guidance and mentoring for adults (over 18) who, for various reasons, are not able to access 'mainstream' education.

We offer '**starter courses**' to help new learners engage with our services, and '**training programmes**' that help learners progress onto other things outside Back on Track.

**Starter courses**' are 2 or 3 hour sessions, for about half a term (6 weeks), in subjects such as art, cookery, computers and creative writing. These are for people who are **NEW** to Back on Track. You can do 3 of these starter courses at any time, (plus literacy if you want to improve your reading and writing) after which you may want to consider doing one of our Training programmes.

**'Training programmes'** are one full day per week (minimum) for about one term. They are themed around employment sectors, such as health and social care or office administration. The aim of these programmes is to provide an introduction to an area of employment. During the course learners do a short work experience placement, and are supported into voluntary or paid work, further learning or employability courses.

Learners on our training programmes can access **basic skills** classes in literacy (reading and writing), numeracy (maths) and computers. These sessions are not available to students on starter courses.

We aim to help **all** of our students to move on to something positive such as volunteering, paid work, further learning or participation in local clubs and classes. All learners can access our '**Moving On Group**' for help with CV writing, job or voluntary work applications, interview skills or job searching. We also run a '**Work Experience Friday**' every week at our centre, where participants can get a taste of volunteering or work skills (we usually offer tasters in painting and decorating, catering, admin and more!).

Need more information about our service ? Please call us on 0161 832 4488 and speak to a project worker.

# Case study: Julianah

I started at Back on Track last year. I'd had a really bad year. **I was fed up of being at home bored silly doing nothing at all.** As well as being in recovery from my drug addiction, I suffer from depression and stress. I was isolated and felt ashamed about the addiction and had no confidence.

I knew somebody who attended Back on Track. I told them about my situation and they thought it would be right up my street. They said I'd get the help and support that I needed at that time.

Before my first appointment, I had second thoughts about the whole thing. Was I wasting my time? Was I ready? Is this for me? I felt sick and had **butterflies in my stomach.** I began talking myself out of it. My partner was very supportive and gave me encouragement and in the end I thought 'what harm can it do? I can always leave if I don't like it!'

I'm so glad that I went because the support I got from the staff and volunteers at Back on Track **helped change my life.** At first, I felt withdrawn. I wanted to get up and run home. It was different from what I was used to. When people were nice to me I wondered what they wanted from me. It took a while before I realised they didn't want anything from me. **They just really cared about what happened to me** and that felt strange.

I slowly came out of myself and began doing more classes. **With each class, my confidence grew.** I even **took training and classes outside Back on Track.** I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with myself but I've now decided that I'd like to give back to the community that helped me to get back on my feet, rebuild my confidence realise my strengths.

I have recently **graduated from the Bridging the Gap course at ADS and will soon be volunteering to support people with blood-borne viruses.** I have also completed some mentor training and **am mentoring other people at Back on Track.** I'm still too unwell to go back to work but **volunteering is helping me to keep me busy.** I love working with people and helping others to see that **it is possible to change your future,** just like I have.

When the time is right I would really love to work in the field of addiction to continue to help others. **Before, others were helping me to set goals to aim for. I now have the confidence to do it for myself.**



Julianah, 2011

# Who is Back on Track for?

All of the people who attend courses at Back on Track have been going through a period of resettlement in their lives.

This may be because they have had problems in the past with drugs, alcohol, persistent and enduring mental ill-health, homelessness or have been in trouble with the law.

All of our students are from these backgrounds. If you do not fit into our target group we request that you access other courses at a local college, so Back on Track places can be kept free for people who really need them.

## How to enrol



Students can be referred by a worker from another agency, or can contact Back on Track directly.

Ring us on **0161 832 4488** and arrange a time to come and visit Back on Track.

All students have a one-to-one guidance interview with a member of staff from the Back on Track team, to help them decide whether they are ready to commit to a course, and which courses interest them. We will also ask you about your previous experience, your long and short term goals, and your support needs.

If you do want to enrol you can usually start as soon as possible on the course(s) you have chosen!

# Guidelines for referral agents

Back on Track provides education courses for adult students from a wide variety of backgrounds. One of the aims of the centre is to provide students with the skills needed to progress to mainstream education, find paid or voluntary work or move on to other classes or clubs.

Workers referring potential students to Back on Track should ensure that their client is able to:

- understand the kind of services Back on Track offers before they attend their interview.
- make his/her own way to and from Back on Track or come with a support worker for an agreed period.
- make an informed choice about whether or not they want to commit to a course at Back on Track.

Please help us save time and resources by only referring clients who have a basic knowledge of our services and who are ready to commit to a short course.

We are able to work with students with mild to moderate learning disabilities, but do not have the resources to work with learners with moderate to severe learning disabilities.

**Back on Track provides students with a high level of support within our education provision but not outside of this service.**



# Student support at Back on Track

Back on Track aims to offer a friendly and supportive environment for all our students. We offer our students a range of support options alongside our education provision.

## **Deciding what course to do**

Before you enrol on a course at Back on Track you will have a one-to-one meeting with a Back on Track project worker to explore the courses you are interested in, what you would like to achieve during your time here, and your longer term goals.

With their support you can decide on the course or courses which would be most suitable for you.



## **Student travel costs**

We recognise that the cost of getting to and from our centre can prevent some learners from attending, so we refund our students' travel expenses when a valid receipt is shown (ie ticket). All you need to do is bring recent proof of benefit to the office as soon as possible, as expenses can't be back-dated.

## **Learning programme and goals review—every term**

All Back on Track students have a review with a worker at the end of each half term to review their progress towards their long and short term goals, and to help them decide what to do next. Some students move on to another course with us, others progress on to courses at college or the Adult Education Service. Others move on to paid or voluntary work, or undertake an employability programme.

## **Information Service**

Not sure what to do after Back on Track? Looking to move towards paid or voluntary work, find a hobby, join a group or do more education and training? We have comprehensive displays of information for all of our curriculum areas around the centre—please feel free to browse!

## **Mentoring**

If you would like more structured and intensive support to help you move forwards we can match you up with a volunteer mentor. Your mentor would meet with you regularly to offer you support and help you to get the most out of your journey forward.

# Starter Courses

## Introduction to Computers

**3 hours per week for half a term**

### Who is the course for?

Learners who are completely new to computing or want to refresh long forgotten skills.

### What will I learn?

Learn about the basics of:

- The computer: switching it on and finding your way about
- Writing simple sentences and saving your work
- Making alterations to your work
- Printing documents
- Using the internet, working with files



## TV and Reading Group **NEW**

**3 hours per week for half a term**

### Who is the course for?

Learners with good literacy skills who are interested in discussing television programmes, short stories, current affairs.

### What will I learn?

Learners will develop critical thinking skills in a friendly and supportive environment. You will explore different ideas in stories (books, TV, magazines etc) and will increase your knowledge and discussion skills

Don't worry if you are shy or don't read much—your tutor will help the group feel comfortable with games, activities and projects!

# Starter Courses

## Cooking by numbers

**3 hours per week for half a term**

### Who is the course for?

Learners interested in developing their cookery skills and finding out about nutrition.

### What will I learn?

By the end of the course students will:

- have practical experience of cooking meals
- understand some theory behind cooking and healthy eating
- be able to cook delicious meals on a budget
- have developed some numeracy and literacy skills through measuring ingredients and following a recipe.



## Everyday computers

**3 hours per week for half a term**

### Who is the course for?

Learners who have completed an Introduction to Computers course or who have some basic IT skills, who want to learn more about popular computer applications such as the Internet, digital cameras, email etc

### What will I learn?

You will learn how to do the things you want to do with a computer on a regular basis:

- write great letters
- create posters, signs and labels
- use the internet to stay in contact or to grab a bargain by exploring social networking sites and on-line shopping

# Starter Courses

## Art and crafts

**3 hours per week for half a term**

### Who is the course for?

Learners interested in developing art and craft skills.

### What will I learn?

You will look at different drawing and mark-making techniques, as well as craft techniques such as collage, card making and modelling. At the end of the course your tutor will produce a display of your work for the classroom wall.



## Beginners Guitar workshop

**3 hours per week for half a term**

### Who is the course for?

This course is for learners of all levels interested in learning guitar skills. Guitars and music provided—no experience necessary.

### What will I learn?

Learners will gain new musical skills and develop any existing ones, find out how to tune and string guitars, work in groups to learn chords and songs and perhaps even perform at one of our student events! (only if you want to!)

## Drama

**3 hours per week for half a term**

### Who is the course for?

Learners of all levels who enjoy drama and would like to develop their confidence in a fun and creative setting.

### What will I learn?

Learners can develop drama skills through games and exercises and get creative in a safe and lively environment. There is a strong focus on improving confidence using drama exercises, as well as developing performance skills using scripts and improvisation.

The drama sessions are provided by the MAD Theatre Company.

# Starter Courses

## Creative Writing

**3 hours per week for half a term**

### Who is the course for?

Learners with good literacy skills who are interested in developing their creative writing skills.

### What will I learn?

Learners will be taught creative writing techniques and skills and will have the chance to develop their style in a friendly and supportive environment. It is also a good opportunity to improve literacy skills.

Learners might create a wall display or booklet using the work they produce during the course.



## Digital Photography

**3 hours per week for half a term**

### Who is the course for?

Learners who have basic computer skills, with an interest in digital photography and photo editing

### What will I learn?

You will learn about the basic functions of a digital camera, how to take a great picture, and how to edit photos on the computer using Adobe Photoshop Elements. Students will work towards a final exhibition of their best work, which will be displayed in the centre.

## Activities Day - Every Tuesday, morning and / or afternoon

Every Tuesday we run different activities both in our centre and around Manchester. Recent sessions have included a backstage tour and play at the Royal Exchange Theatre, a cookery class, a calendar making session, a trip to the art gallery, and a walk in the countryside.

These activities are open to **all** Back on Track learners—just sign up to the ones you fancy! See the Activities day noticeboard for information about sessions.

(offered in partnership with Zest)

# Training programmes

## Training programmes at Back on Track

We have re-modelled our service and will be focussing more on Vocational Training Programmes from September 2011. These programmes will be one term long and learners will attend for at least one full day per week.

Training Programmes are themed around employment sectors, such as health and social care or office administration. The aim of these programmes is to provide an introduction to an area of work. During the course learners do a short work experience placement, and are supported into voluntary or paid work, further learning or employability courses.

Learners on our training programmes can access **basic skills** classes in literacy (reading and writing), numeracy (maths) and computers.

Learners on these programmes will get basic training and practical experience in the chosen employment sector, explore the skills, qualities and qualifications required to work or volunteer in that sector, and will get help in finding a placement.

## **Intro to Working in Retail and Customer Service** **NEW** 1 day per week for 1 term. Starts January 2012

### **Who is the course for?**

Learners interested in developing the skills needed to provide effective customer service (in either paid or voluntary work)

### **What will I learn?**

The sessions will cover:

- What *is* good customer service
- Identifying different areas in the retail sector and the range of jobs
- How to listen and respond well
- Handling complaints with empathy and efficiency
- Communication skills—face to face and over the telephone
- What retailers are looking for when recruiting staff

### **What can it lead to?**

Learners could progress onto more intensive job training, voluntary work or other related courses such as business administration. All students will be offered advice and guidance throughout the course.

# Training programmes

## Intro to Working in Catering and Hospitality **NEW**

1 day per week for 1 term, starts January 2012

### Who is the course for?

Learners interested in developing their cookery skills and finding out about nutrition and food hygiene, with the aim of exploring job options in the catering industry.

### What will I learn?

By the end of the course students will:

- have practical experience of cooking meals for a number of people
- Be aware of different roles in a professional kitchen
- Understand front of house duties and good customer service
- Have helped to cater for an event at Back on Track
- Understand the basics of food hygiene in food preparation and storage



### What can it lead to?

Learners will set up a work experience placement during the course, which could continue after the course has completed. Other options are more advanced training courses in catering, such as an NVQ, an employability programme, or paid work in the sector. All students will be offered advice and guidance throughout the course.

## Intro to Working in Health and Social Care

1 day per week for 1 term. Starts January 2012

### Who is the course for?

Learners who want to find out more about working in the health and social care sector, or learners who want to find out more about this area.

### What will I learn?

The sessions will cover an overview of jobs in health and social care, essential communication skills and team work, awareness of the needs of different groups eg older people, people with addictions, mental health problems, infectious diseases etc. You will also look at confidentiality and data protection and will explore how to find voluntary / paid work or a further course

### What can it lead on to?

Learners will set up a work experience placement during the course, which could continue after the course has completed. Other options are more advanced training courses in health and social care, such as an NVQ, an employability programme, or paid work in the sector. All students on this course will receive advice and guidance throughout the course to explore voluntary and paid work options.

# Training programmes

## Introduction to Working in Office Administration

1 day per week for 1 term

### Who is the course for?

Learners who are looking to get into paid or voluntary roles in administration or customer service.

### What will I learn?

Learners will learn about the core computer and admin skills required in the modern work place, such as using Word and Excel for common office tasks, filing systems, telephone and customer service skills, and how to use office machinery.

You will also look at how to lay out common office documents such as letters and memos, and data inputting skills.

Learners will explore voluntary and paid roles in the sector, and will be provided with a short work experience placement.

### What can it lead on to?

Learners will set up a work experience placement during the course, which could continue after the course has completed. Other options are more advanced training courses in business administration, such as an NVQ, an employability programme, or paid work in the sector. All students on this course will receive advice and guidance throughout the course to explore voluntary and paid work options.



# Functional skills: (English, maths, computers)

## Basic Skills Screening

All learners who want to improve their basic skills will undergo an assessment of their 'functional skills' in literacy and numeracy, to ensure they are receiving the right support and can access qualifications .

Learners will be able to join a literacy, numeracy or computer class in order to improve these skills and access qualifications for jobs and further training

If you choose to enrol on a functional skills course, our tutors will discuss your needs with you, and you will be asked to do a variety of tasks and exercises. Our tutor will then discuss your results and recommend a plan of action.

There is no obligation to sign up to a basic skills class—just come along and find out where you're up to!

## Literacy

**3 hours per week**

### Who is the course for?

**Learners of all levels who would like to improve their reading and writing.**

### What will I learn?

Learners will develop new literacy skills and brush up on existing ones. There is the option to work towards a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification. You will do both group and individual work.

## Numeracy

**3 hours per week**

### Who is the course for?

Learners of all levels who would like help with their Maths skills.

### What will I learn?

Learners will explore maths skills to suit the level they are at—from beginners up to Level 2. This practical Maths course teaches learners how to apply Maths in everyday life situations such as shopping, measuring and budgeting. You will do both group and individual work.

# Functional skills: (English, maths, computers)

## Computer Skills

3 hours per week



### Who is the course for?

Learners who are completely new to computing or want to refresh long forgotten skills.

### What will I learn?

Learn about the basics of:

- The computer: switching it on and finding your way about
- Writing simple sentences and saving your work
- Making alterations to your work
- Printing documents
- Using the internet, working with files

## Back on Track 'Code of Behaviour'

All staff, students and volunteers must follow the Back on Track Code of Behaviour.

This code makes sure that everyone involved with Back on Track feel comfortable when using the centre. It is very important that nobody is prevented from using the centre because of the unacceptable behaviour of others.

Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- coming to Back on Track whilst under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs
- the use of verbal or physical abuse or any other form of threatening behaviour
- showing a lack of respect for others – e.g. racism or sexism or homophobia.

Anyone who behaves in a way which is offensive or discriminatory will be asked to leave the centre, unless they change their behaviour.

# Preparation for work and volunteering

## Work Experience at Volunteering Fridays

5 hours per week

Volunteering Fridays provide a chance to try out different volunteering / work activities here at Back on Track, including:

- painting and decorating
- catering
- admin
- cleaning

Trained staff and volunteers will introduce you to a range of tasks, and you will receive basic training. All equipment and materials are provided.

You can attend for up to 5 weeks. Each week, you will receive information and advice to help you to seek further volunteering opportunities.

All participants will get a free lunch, and travel expenses will be refunded!



## Moving On Group

3 hours per week

This workshop is for people thinking about moving onto further learning, voluntary work or employment. Over the 6 week programme, you will have opportunities to:

- Consider your options
- Understand the benefits of volunteering
- Explore a range of volunteering opportunities
- Improve your job search skills
- Complete application forms
- Create a CV
- Prepare for interviews

You can attend all 6 sessions, or can just dip in for sessions of particular interest to you at the moment. Please see the 'About Back on Track ' noticeboard for dates and topics.

**Interested and want to find out more?**

**Why not come along to our**

# **Tuesday Drop-in 1.00 – 3.00pm**

Drop-in session every Tuesday afternoon for staff and service users



Have a look round, meet staff and volunteers  
Find out about the courses we offer  
Chat to our guidance team about your options  
Enjoy a *free* cup of tea and biscuit!

**No need to book – just turn up!**

## **Publicity visits**

Our project workers can visit your hostel or day centre to share information about our services, including courses offered in our Manchester education centre, our Outreach service, and other services such as guidance and advice and mentoring. We can also give out information and answer any questions.

We can meet with staff teams and / or service users, at a time that is convenient for you. We often address workers at team meetings, and service users at residents' meetings or during group work sessions.

Contact **Frances Keel** on **0161 832 4488** to arrange a visit.

# Outreach courses



As well as running an education centre in Manchester City Centre, we can also provide FREE sessions on an 'Outreach' basis in hostels, day centres and probation offices in Manchester, and some areas of Greater Manchester (depending on current funding contracts).

The aim of the Outreach sessions is to engage with service users who would not normally attend an adult education centre, with the aim of gradually introducing them to Back on Track and the services we offer in our centre.

The sessions are run as 'tasters', providing a snap-shot of some of the courses in our Education Centre, including a variety of computer courses, cookery, art and creative writing. Learners usually make a visit to our Manchester centre with the tutor as part of these tasters, to have a look round and see if they might be interested in starting a longer course.

We can provide experienced tutors, volunteers to help to support students, and course equipment and materials (including laptops, printers, cameras, cookery ingredients etc). The host agency provides a suitable room with chairs and tables as needed, publicity for the course, and motivated learners!

**If you would like to find out more about setting up an Outreach course in your own venue please contact us on 0161 832 4488.**

## Who's who?

David Fisher: Chief Executive  
Kate Downes: Education Services Manager  
Angela Lyst: Senior Training Co-ordinator  
Claire Assinder: Volunteering Development Worker (ex-offenders)  
John Whetton: Training Co-ordinator  
Frances Keel: Frontline Services Coordinator  
  
James Ellis: JVC placement  
Darren Gray: Admin volunteer  
Andrew Goodwin: Volunteer finance assistant

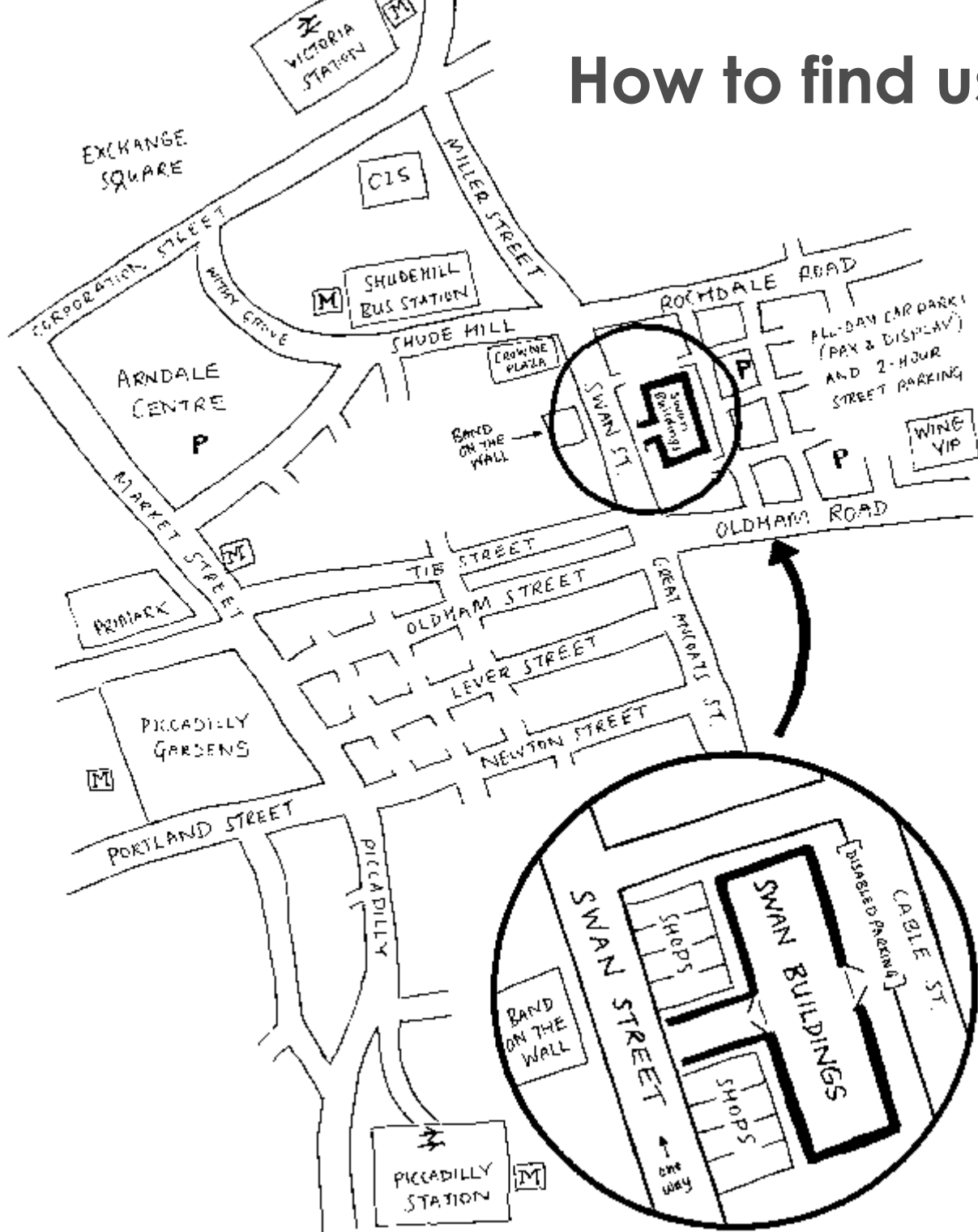
### **Tutors:**

Beverley Hypolite, Tracey Waddington, Angela Sutton, Hugh Clarke, Emily Hayes, Jill Hughes



There is also a team of over thirty dedicated volunteers and placement students who help to keep Back on Track running smoothly.

# How to find us:



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