



Northumberland
County Council



**Your
future
starts
here**



Northumberland Learning & Skills Service

LEARNER HANDBOOK 2020-21



**Where
learning
works
for you**

#LiveAndLearnLocal



WHY GO ANYWHERE ELSE WHEN YOU CAN
#LIVEANDLEARNLOCAL

WELCOME TO THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE

Congratulations! It's time for you to discover your skills and talents.

This is the start of making more of life and seizing the opportunities that come from learning. We know that it will be challenging, new, and sometimes taxing, but overall, it will be enjoyable, exciting and rewarding.

We want to welcome you to what we hope will be the start of great things we can achieve together. We will do our very best to work with you, so you can be what you want to be.

The Learner Handbook is a guide. It is here to help you. It's always available online at www.northumberland.gov.uk/learn for you to download, but you can also find it on all of our computers in our classrooms and on our e-portfolio system.

As part of our drive to use less paper, we don't print these copies out. But if you find you need a paper version, please let the administrator know at the campus where you are learning, or ask your lecturer, and we'll print one for you.

If you feel the handbook doesn't answer your questions, please let any of our staff know, we're here to help. We also welcome suggestions for improving our next edition.



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DISCLAIMER

Whilst the Service makes every effort to ensure that the information in this handbook is accurate, we cannot take responsibility for any subsequent changes that may occur, or for the quality of information or services provided by other organisations. Campus staff will use their best endeavours to inform learners of any changes that will occur during the academic year.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL LEARNER CHARTER

Northumberland County Council seeks to provide an accessible, high quality service. We aim to give you the best possible chance of success. We are committed to putting the learner first. Our commitment to you is to:

- Provide accurate impartial information for you to make an informed choice.
- Provide ongoing advice and guidance and to signpost the progression routes available to you. Refer you to guidance providers, as appropriate.
- Ensure that your course enrolment is handled fairly and efficiently.
- Provide an induction to your learning programme.
- Deliver high quality and enjoyable teaching and learning experiences. Advise you on learning resources to support your studies.
- Ensure that classes start and end on time and where practicable, notify you of any unavoidable changes.
- Make reasonable adjustments to provide additional support when required.
- Explain how you are assessed. Ensure assessments are conducted on a regular basis.
- Effectively prepare you for examinations and external assessments. Ensure assessments are carried out in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. Carry out reviews of progress frequently and additional support needs where these have been identified. Treat you fairly, equitably and with consideration and respect at all times.
- Comply with our commitment not to discriminate against any individual on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- Ensure learning and work takes place in a healthy, safe environment. Provide you with information and advice on Health and Safety and ensure you are aware of your responsibilities.
- Give you both formal and informal opportunities to feed back to us. Use learner feedback to take positive action to continually improve. Be responsive to any concerns you tell us about.
- Deal with complaints fairly and in confidence.



KEEPING YOU SAFE

Our fresh blend of hands-on and digital learning has been designed to keep you safe at all times, including as we navigate the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst helping you to gain essential skills to stand out in life and work.

Rest assured that we are taking all the necessary precautions, including social distancing, and have put measures in place to ensure that you feel safe and secure in our learning environments. Every learner will receive further information about staying safe and the measures we have put in place, at enrolment and as courses start.

AS A LEARNER, I AGREE TO...

- Complete enrolment/registration forms and pay fees as appropriate. Provide proof of entitlement if I want fee remission. Inform us of any changes in my circumstances. Agree to the refunds policy available at bit.ly/RefundPolicy19-20
- Attend regularly and punctually for the agreed number of hours/days. Notify us if I am not able to attend a class or if I have decided to withdraw from my learning programme.
- Take responsibility for my own learning – complete and update assignments, portfolios or attend exams as and when required. Let us know if I need help or further support for my studies. I will not collude, cheat or plagiarise on my work, assessments or exams.
- Comply with the acceptable user policy related to premises, equipment and e-learning systems when on campus and when working remotely/from home.
- Comply with our commitment not to discriminate against any individual on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. Be considerate towards others.
- Support the principles and practice of our Equality and Diversity Statement.
- Comply with Health and Safety requirements and instructions. Be responsible for my own and others Health and Safety and report any unsafe practices.
- Follow the complaints policy if I want to raise a concern, available at: <http://bit.ly/education-and-skills-complaint>

LEARNER SUPPORT

Ok, so you have started on one of our courses or programmes and realised that you could do with a little extra help. Don't be afraid to come and talk to us, we could help to make things easier for you.

You might also have money worries, but we don't want the added costs of learning to add to your burden. Travelling to classes or getting little ones looked after whilst you study can rack up. You can talk to us about this and we can often put financial help in place for your added costs.

The Learning & Skills Service provides a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. We have the same academic, technical or vocational ambitions for all learners, including learners with high levels of SEND as curriculum is designed to be ambitious whilst meeting individual needs.



EXTRA SUPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM

We offer extra support through our team of teaching assistants who work in our service. If you think you need extra help for your studies, let us know when you enrol and we will then be able to prepare for you starting your course. If you need support and you have already started classes, the best thing to do is tell your lecturer or the administrator at the campus where you are studying. They will get in touch with the Learner Support team who will work with you and the lecturer to find the best way to help you.

We can help learners with a wide range of support needs like Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Autism, visual or hearing impairments, physical disability and mental health difficulties. You might also have a medical condition or need help temporarily, for example after an illness or accident.

Our support is broad and tailored to your needs. We may be able to provide you with adapted materials, specialist software and if required we can make special arrangements for exams.

This could include laptops, note-taking equipment, digital recorders, screen reading software and large-print materials.

Alternatively, we can help through 1-1 support with a teaching assistant or provide access to assistive technology loans.

We can also assist with exams and extra time in some circumstances. We will arrange for you to have an assessment with our Educational Psychology team for this.

APPRENTICESHIP MENTOR TEAM

The Apprenticeship Mentor Team works across Northumberland ensuring that you are supported in your workplace. There are also specialist mentors in the team who work with learners who have special educational needs or are looked after children.

Their role is to ensure you are safe and happy in the workplace, you are meeting the employer's standards and code of conduct, you are progressing well and that your welfare needs are being met.

The team provide individual pastoral support, coaching and mentoring - in person and remotely - to help you succeed as well as organising extra learning activities through the various phases of the programme.

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Sometimes life has a habit of taking us by surprise, and sometimes that can mean we face a tough time. We want to help our learners make the best of life and learning, so we offer support through our qualified BACP counsellors. They can offer professional counselling sessions to learners.

This service is designed to support you either short term, or if you have been referred for mental health support through your GP and you are on a long waiting list. We can provide you with support until those services start. To access the service, the best thing to do is tell your lecturer or the administrator at the campus where you are studying.

Counsellors help individuals to deal with problems which are having a negative effect on their learning, traineeship or apprenticeship. We can help you by:

- Identifying the issues and giving you a chance to talk about and explore the issues in a safe environment.
- Help you plan to deal with the issues where you can.
- Develop self-awareness and a range of life skills.
- Make informed choices about how you can still stay in learning and improve your chances of success.
- Make contact with other services that can help you.
- Help you access other self-help resources.



16-18 BURSARY FUND

The aim of the 16-18 bursary is to assist in the removal of financial barriers that might otherwise prevent young learners from fully participating in education. There are 2 types of 16-18 bursaries:

- Discretionary bursary
- Defined vulnerable groups bursary

The full application and eligibility pack can be downloaded from www.northumberland.gov.uk/learn, you can collect a copy from your local campus or you can request a pack from our Finance and Learning Loans Officer by calling 01670 622 105.

16-18 CHILD CARE

If you are a parent under the age of 20 you can get help with your childcare costs through "Care to Learn". This scheme can help with the cost of childcare and can pay up to £160 a week for each child. The scheme is run nationally by the 'Learner Support Service'. You can get an application pack on the scheme from them by calling 0800 121 8989.

If you are 20 or older looking for childcare help whilst you study, our Adult Discretionary Learner Support Fund below may be able to help.

ADULT DISCRETIONARY LEARNER SUPPORT FUND

The support fund offers financial help for learners with a specific financial hardship preventing them from taking part or continuing in learning. These are categorised as one of the following types:

- 19+ Hardship funding – general financial support for vulnerable and financially disadvantaged learners to support participation.
- 20+ childcare funding – for learners aged 20 or older on the first day of learning who are at risk of not starting or continuing learning because of childcare costs.
- Residential Access funding – to support ESFA funded AEB learners where they need to live away from home.

The full application and eligibility pack can be downloaded from www.northumberland.gov.uk/learn, you can collect a copy from your local campus or you can request a pack from our Finance and Learning Loans Officer by calling 01670 622 105.



MATHS AND ENGLISH

Maths and English as well as digital skills are essential parts of your studies - support needed to achieve these will be determined depending on your prior attainment.

Free and friendly maths and English courses are offered at our ten campuses across Northumberland, from Entry Level to Level 2. These are arranged with starts throughout the year.

All you need to do is to do a simple initial assessment so we know which level you are at, and we can fit you in to the right class for you. We use BKSb initial assessment, which is an assessment and diagnostic tool to accurately record each learner's correct starting point. It is essential to attend regularly.

GCSE maths and English classes are also offered at sites around the county and with an annual September start: you can sit the exams in the following June. You are expected to attend every week and complete the independent learning set by your lecturers.

Many people sign up for our free courses in English and maths because they need to improve their skills and gain a qualification however once they begin a class they discover that learning with us is fun and a great boost to confidence.

You will be able to:

- Learn the basics.
- Improve your everyday English: reading, writing, spelling, grammar, speaking and listening skills.
- Improve your everyday maths: addition, subtraction, division, multiplication, fractions, percentages, shape, ratio and budgeting skills.
- Refresh your skills and improve confidence.
- Gain recognised qualifications that employers are looking for.

Our full programme of English and maths courses is available in our latest course guide, which can be downloaded at www.northumberland.gov.uk/learn, or you can ask at any of our campuses for your nearest class.

Although you might not have signed up directly for an English or maths course, we know that improving the core skills of learners remains a major priority for the Service and employers.

The Service aims to promote and support teaching and learning of English and maths in all of its programmes to you achieve learning goals and career plans.





ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Our dedicated team of curriculum leads and lecturers are ready to help. They can advise which level to start at, as well as helping you choose the route that will best suit your interests and aspirations. Our team can give you advice on courses, entry requirements and progression routes into further learning and work. You may be unsure the course you are thinking of enrolling on next and whether it is the right direction for you. You might also be seeking a careers guidance session to help you to choose - we are very pleased to provide you with advice over the phone, or you may wish to have a private appointment at one of our campuses.

The Service holds the Matrix standard for the provision of objective information, advice and guidance, so you can rest assured we have your best interests at heart. Signposting and referral will take place when it becomes clear that another individual, supplier or agency can offer more appropriate help or support to you. We will not refer you to an outside organisation or share your data unless you have given us your permission.

WORK PLACEMENTS AND EXPERIENCE

If you need a work placement to complete your qualification, or you recognise the benefits of getting some up to date experience with an employer, we'll do all we can to help you find a relevant placement. Going into a work placement on a regular basis will help you to become confident, develop your skills outside the classroom, provide the evidence you need for your qualification, and give you a great addition to your CV. You can also find your own work placement and we'll check out that the employer will provide a safe place for you to work.



JOB CLUBS

One of the things people feel most acutely when out of work is that you are the only person that this is happening to. It's easy to feel that you're facing this all alone.

Job clubs, where you can meet and be supported by experts as you search, have been very successful in helping people find permanent work and give you the chance to share knowledge, experience and job hunting tips.

We will be running these remotely so you will need suitable IT equipment, access to the internet and basic ICT skills. They are free to attend and you can attend as much as you need to, to help you find work.

We will offer you help with the following:

- Writing a great CV
- Completing application forms
- Guidance on all aspects of job seeking and career change
- Friendly support while searching for a job or starting a business
- Help in rebuilding confidence
- Networking help (many jobs are found through networking and never advertised)
- Finding the right local networking organisations
- Online networks such as LinkedIn

Our experts are always at hand to help you make the most of opportunities as they come along. Please check our latest brochure for details of your nearest Job Club.

OUR POLICIES: ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Attendance and punctuality are the responsibility of all, and is closely monitored by staff. Where attendance and punctuality fall below expectations this can fundamentally impact on your chances of succeeding on time, or in extreme cases, to succeed at all. As such, staff will support and challenge attendance and punctuality issues.

Learners are required to attend all scheduled classes both online and offline, and to be punctual in doing so. Please note that in the case of operating remotely and attending classes online, electronic tracking will ensure registers are up-to-date. However, the Service also recognises that, for some of our learners, adhering to these expectations could be too demanding; therefore absences/lateness due to personal circumstances will be considered on an individual basis. This is a term and condition of the learner agreement.

Where learners persistently breach the agreement, the service reserves the right to implement sanctions through the learner disciplinary policy. Where there is a personal issue that means you might need to take a break from learning but want to return, a process is in place for learners and staff to apply for a planned break and ensure it is compliant with funding rules.

CANCELLATION OF SESSIONS

In the event of bad weather, teacher illness or any other unanticipated changes we will make every effort to inform you of any changes to your timetable. However, some changes occur in a short period of time and this may not always be possible. We will try to arrange replacement sessions.

In the case of operating remotely and working outside the classroom - as is the case as we tackle the Covid-19 pandemic - we endeavour to continue learning using digital means and online classes, plus mentor/lecturer support to keep your learning on track.

COACHING, TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Service aims to ensure that coaching and teaching is delivered to the highest standards so that you can attain your desired outcomes (particularly learning and work outcomes).

We expect lecturers to have a good knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach and to provide effective support. Support staff working with you must similarly provide the same good level of expertise.

Teaching should be designed and resourced to help you with your individual starting point. Over the course of study, teaching in the Service should help you to remember content you have been taught and to use this new knowledge effectively to achieve well, develop yourself and make progress.

Our goal is for you to exceed the national averages in the qualifications and outcomes obtained. We aim to have made you ready for the next stage of education, employment or training.

TEACHING FOCUS

We will model teaching around the core EIF teaching focus areas of:

Intent

We will provide a full curriculum that is ambitious, resourced, and designed to give all learners the knowledge and cultural capital they will need to succeed in life.

Implementation

Our lecturers will check your learning and understanding on a regular basis within lessons. They will identify any actions required accurately and provide clear, direct feedback to you.

Impact

Our lecturers will help you will develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result and outcome, we will expect you to achieve well.

Behaviour and attitudes

We have high expectations for learners' behaviour and conduct and will apply these expectations consistently and fairly.

Personal development

We will ensure that the curriculum offer extends beyond the academic, technical or vocational. It will provide for you a broader development, enabling you to develop and discover your interests and talents.

Leadership and Management

Our leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training for all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice.



ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE

We aim to ensure that all assessment decisions are fair, consistent and are based on valid judgements.

We also aim to ensure all examinations are held to the strictest conditions in line with awarding body requirements. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when a candidate may wish to question an examination result or assessment decision made.

In order to deal with such situations, we have processes for reviews, appeals, assessments and complaints which are designed to:

- Provide a means of reviewing and, where appropriate, revising decisions made by a teacher
- Be fair and non-discriminatory to all parties
- Be readily accessible and easy to use
- Have realistic target time limits for each stage
- Keep both the candidate and the teacher informed of the progress of the review or appeal

All candidates have the right to appeal against any assessment decision made by their teacher following which they feel that:

- Their learning needs have not been met
- They have been discriminated against
- They disagree with an assessment decision

For a full copy of the examinations and assessment appeals procedure contact the Data and Exams Manager on 01670 622 115 or email Laura.Hunt@northumberland.gov.uk

RECORD-KEEPING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Information will be treated as confidential and will only be used to:

- Verify your identity where this is required
- Contact you by post, email or telephone
- Understand your needs and how they may be met
- Deliver our services and meet our legal responsibilities
- Securing funding from government and non-governmental organisations for your course or programme
- Provide joined up services to you
- Process financial and non-financial transactions
- Maintain our records
- Carry out and provide research
- Prevent and detect crime, fraud or corruption

Further information on how we use your data can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-privacy-notice

and

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Contact/Information.aspx#privacynotices>

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

You may have enrolled on a course that leads to a nationally recognised qualification, which will be assessed by examination, coursework, or by you completing a portfolio. Prices for our courses are set on the basis that you intend to and do participate in the assessment. The fee includes first attempt examination fees only.

Results and non-attendance fees for examinations may be charged at the discretion of the service. If you do not wish to take part in the assessment you will need to pay the unsubsidised rate for the course or you may be asked to leave the course.

You will be supported to achieve the qualification. We will tell you about the qualification, the course specification, the awarding body and how you will be assessed, provide you with regular feedback on how your work is progressing and measure and record your achievement. We will follow all guidelines set out by the awarding organisations as well as Government guidelines as updates are received as we safely navigate the Covid-19 pandemic.

You will need to present your work for assessment or attend examinations as directed by your lecturer. If anything happens that might prevent you from presenting satisfactory work at an assessment you should try and tell your teacher beforehand. If you have any concerns about working towards the qualification please speak to your teacher as soon as possible.

It is essential to understand the following terms in relation to your work, assessments and exams. Any action knowingly taken by a student which involves misrepresentation of their work or abilities and skills may be considered dishonesty and as such is an offence which the Service believes should merit the application of very severe penalties. Learners are expected not to cheat in their work, exam and assessments.

Polishing: It is not acceptable in the Service to submit a first draft of an assignment for the lecturer to give comments, feedback and suggestions, to then resubmit the work for a higher grade. Learners cannot fail to achieve and it does not accurately demonstrate learning has taken place. Learners are able to submit an assignment plan only for comment, no later than 7 full days before the assignment is due. The assignment plan can contain titles, bullet points and planned sources only.

Plagiarism: is used as a general term to describe taking and using another's thoughts and writings as one's own. Plagiarism can occur not only in essays and dissertations, but also in scientific experimentation, diagrams, maps, fieldwork, computer programmes, and all other forms of study where you are expected to work independently and produce original material. If a learner uses the work of others, they must either quote it or paraphrase it, but whichever method they choose, they must include a citation and reference. Learners must not simply copy materials from other learners, past or present, from written sources, from the Internet, or from any other source whether this is through cutting and pasting, rewriting or by any other means. Changing a few words within a copied piece of text does not render these original and still counts as plagiarism.

In short, work submitted by learners must be their own unless it is specifically indicated within the text through appropriate referencing that this is not the case – or where originality was clearly not a requirement of the assessment being undertaken.

Collusion: is the active cooperation of two or more learners to deceive examiners. You will be guilty of collusion if you knowingly allow any of your work to be acquired by another person for presentation as if it were that person's own work. If you offer to provide work to another student to be passed off as their own you are guilty of collusion.

USE OF DATA

The majority of our programmes are supported by funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

We need to keep data for them. We require you to complete a number of forms during your course, although we try to keep this to a minimum. Please co-operate with us by providing the information we require.

The privacy notice included on your enrolment is issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department of Education (DfE).

It is to inform learners how their personal information will be used by the DfE, the ESFA (an executive agency of the DfE) and any successor bodies to these organisations.

For the purposes of relevant data protection legislation, the DfE is the data controller for personal data processed by the ESFA. Your personal information is used by the DfE to exercise its functions and to meet its statutory responsibilities, including under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and to create and maintain a unique learner number (ULN) and a personal learning record (PLR).

Your information will be securely destroyed after it is no longer required for these purposes. Your information may be used for education, training, employment and well-being related purposes, including for research.

The DfE and the English European Social Fund (ESF) Managing Authority (or agents acting on their behalf) may contact you in order for them to carry out research and evaluation to inform the effectiveness of training.

Your information may also be shared with other third parties for the above purposes, but only where the law allows it and the sharing is in compliance with data protection legislation.

Further information about use of and access to your personal data, details of organisations with whom we regularly share data, information about how long we retain your data, and how to change your consent to being contacted, please visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-privacy-notice



REFUNDS POLICY

This policy applies to all courses provided by Northumberland County Council Learning & Skills Service.

COURSE CANCELLATIONS

Tuition fee refunds will normally only be made where a course is cancelled or where the times or location of the course are significantly changed by Northumberland Learning and Skills Service and the learner is no longer able to attend.

In the case of a course cancellation, we will make every effort to offer an alternative that is comparable provision but where this is not possible tuition fees will be refunded as follows:

- Cancellation of the course prior to published start date – full refund of tuition fees
- Closure of the course within the first two weeks – full refund of tuition fees
- Closure of the course beyond the first two weeks – pro rata refund of tuition fees for remaining weeks not provided minus an administration fee of £5.00 per course

LEARNER WITHDRAWALS

Unfortunately, no refunds can be made where a learner decides to leave a course of their own volition, as a result of changes in the learner's personal circumstances, as a result of weather conditions preventing learner attendance when our campuses are open, or in the unusual case of them being asked to leave the course due to a breach of the Code of Conduct.

The only exception to the above is where a learner has to leave a course on medical grounds. Only the learner's own medical circumstances can be considered; unfortunately, this cannot be extended to include the medical circumstances of family and friends. Consideration will only be given to tuition fee refund requests where the learner is supported by evidence from the learner's GP or medical specialist that they are unfit to continue.

Evidence will normally be in the form of a fit note or letter on official headed paper from the GP or specialist. If granted, the refund will be pro-rata depending on the classes attended minus an administration fee of £5.00 per course.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR REFUNDS

Once a refund has been approved a refund will be made to the card on which the payment was initially made or, in the case of cheque or cash payments, a refund via cheque will be issued. Refunds will be processed as soon as possible but this may be up to 30 days during peak periods.

For further information about the progress of your refund, please contact the support team on 01670 622 105



HEALTH AND SAFETY

You are required at all times to work in a safe and responsible manner, paying due regard for your own safety and that of others. We ask you to pay particular attention to any health and safety notices issued to you. We will provide a safe environment in which you can study. This will include instructions on what equipment and/or materials you can or cannot use for your safety.

We have a designated lead for Health and Safety who will work with any of our students in need, to ensure appropriate action is taken to address your concerns and ensure you are safe. If you have a concern related to health and safety you should discuss it in the first instance with your lecturer or a member of staff at the campus where you are studying.

Our health and safety policy covers all aspects of premises, including car parks and grounds. All of our campuses operate a no-smoking policy. This means there will be no smoking in any part of the campuses or sites. This includes e-cigarettes. Learners are kindly requested to use premises with consideration, paying particular attention for children and young people on all of our sites.

Please park your car with care, keeping all access routes free from obstruction, and only use bays marked for drivers with a disability if you are a blue badge holder. Please take particular care on grounds during winter weather. Building defects should be reported to the staff immediately.

CCTV MONITORING

In a few of our campuses, CCTV is in operation and they are covered by a CCTV policy. The areas covered by CCTV are clearly marked.

ACCIDENT REPORTING

If you have an accident, no matter how small it may seem, you are asked to complete an accident report form in your campus or work placement. The process will be explained at induction.

COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

Remember to take care when using computing equipment: please take regular breaks from the screen. Do not tamper with or misuse the equipment, and only use the software provided by the service. With your help, we will keep our computing equipment and resources in good working order. Guidelines for display screen equipment users are available at every campus, look for the bookmark on the side of the monitor and use the guide to ensure you can find the best sitting position for working at a computer and how to adjust your seat and equipment correctly.

MANUAL HANDLING

You should not undertake a significant amount of lifting in our campuses unless it is part of your course and you have been trained in safe manual handling techniques. If you require assistance with carrying equipment etc. you can approach a member of staff.



ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Maintenance and testing of equipment is routinely undertaken as part of our electrical testing programme. Equipment owned by learners must be tested before being used in our campuses. Learners are asked not to use equipment they have not been trained or authorised to use. If in doubt about using any equipment or machinery please ask a member of the staff in your campus first.

FIRST AID

A trained first aider is on duty in our venues. There will be clear procedures known by the teaching staff for summoning help. The details of where and from whom you can receive first aid in the event of an accident or illness will be explained during induction.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

If you need protective clothing or equipment for your course, we will advise you prior to the start of the course, or it will be supplied on loan to you. It is provided free to 16-18 year old learners.

FIRE SAFETY

At the first session of your course, teaching staff will explain to you the sound of the fire alarm in your campus. Please take note of the emergency evacuation routes and assembly points at your campus. You must take part in any fire alarm practices.

Although the fire alarm, emergency evacuation routes and assembly points are different in each campus, the procedure is the same across the county:

- Raise the alarm - On discovering a fire, ring the nearest alarm and/or call for assistance
- If the fire is small enough to be easily and safely extinguished, attempt to do so with the correct extinguisher. Circumstances will dictate whether fighting the fire should be attempted. However, no attempt to fight fires alone should be made. Firefighting must always be secondary to the safety of life
- Inform the campus staff immediately
- On hearing the alarm staff will escort learners to the assembly point
- Exit from the building should be by the nearest marked escape route in a quiet and orderly manner
- The member of teaching staff will bring the class register with them. Do not leave the assembly point until you are told by a member of staff that you may do so. The register will be taken again at the assembly point to make sure all staff and learners are safe
- The staff on duty will check that the building is clear and co-ordinate the fire service response
- Do not stop to collect belongings
- Do not return to the building until you are instructed to do so by the fire service and staff

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Learning & Skills Service is committed to ensuring the promotion of equality of opportunity for all members of the learning community.

It is a service in which all forms of discriminatory behaviour are challenged and differences between individuals celebrated, to generate a culture where all staff and learners are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

The Service is keen to ensure that equality of opportunity underpins all policies, and treating all involved in the service equally. Promoting, celebrating and valuing diversity is at the heart of our core values.

RESPECT

The service will undertake to ensure all individuals and courteously and with respect. Beliefs, values and religious views will be respected and tolerance encouraged where individuals/groups have differences.

EXCELLENCE AND HIGH ASPIRATIONS

The service will ensure that all members of the community are encouraged, supported and have equal opportunity to achieve their full potential. Pride will be taken in all achievements, and celebrated annually.

SUPPORT

Learners will be given equal access to support in their work or studies. The service will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure individuals are given assistance and help where appropriate.

BRITISH VALUES

The Learning and Skills Service believe in the fundamental British Values and their place within our own core values. Fundamental British values are democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.



DEMOCRACY

We like everybody to be involved fairly with decision making, for example in electing a new government. Learners and staff are also encouraged to be part of our service democracy by sharing their views and helping to shape the service through staff and learner voice events, focus groups and surveys.

INCLUSION

Diversity is not only valued by the service, but also celebrated and promoted. The service will seek to ensure that individuals understand differences in others and that activities and opportunities are adjusted where appropriate to ensure equality of access for all groups.

BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

The Learning & Skills Service will engender and foster relationships among learners and staff that reflect a positive and respectful culture. We will create an environment where bullying, peer-on-peer abuse or discrimination are not tolerated. If they do occur, staff will deal with issues quickly and effectively, and will not allow them to spread.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The service celebrates and promotes understanding of international differences, encouraging all members of the community to develop a better appreciation, tolerance and respect for global issues.

ENTHUSIASM

We are passionate about the place we work and learn, and will seek to nurture a positive attitude amongst all of the community towards diversity, celebrating and exploring differences and valuing all individuals.

INTEGRITY

All inappropriate behaviour and actions against the spirit of the Equality Policy will be challenged and not tolerated. Staff are expected to act with integrity at all times in recognising and respecting individuals' differences.



LGBT+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Learners will not be denied access to courses or progression to other courses because of any aspect of their LGBT+ identity. Any LGBT+ learners will receive fair and equal treatment whilst studying.

The curriculum will be checked to ensure that it does not rely on or reinforce stereotypical assumptions about members of the LGBT+ community and that it does not contain LGBT+ - phobic material.

LGBT+ abuse, harassment or bullying (name-calling, derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, and intrusive questions) is a serious disciplinary offence and will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with NCC anti-bullying procedure.

The Learning & Skills Service will provide a supportive environment for learners who wish their LGBT+ identity to be known. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their gender identity or sexuality. To 'out' someone without their permission is a form of harassment, and possibly a criminal offence.

All anti-LGBT+ propaganda, in the form of written materials, graffiti, music or speeches will not be tolerated. The Learning and Skills Service undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises.

If you are LGBT+ and want to be put in touch with other LGBT+ residents, let us know and we can refer you to local social and support groups.



HEALTH MATTERS

Teaching staff should be aware of your medical needs in the event of an emergency. Please inform your teacher of any relevant information to ensure you are properly cared for in the event of illness, accident or emergency.

We also have specific procedures we need to follow if you need us to administer or store any medication for you.

If you are attending a health or fitness activity you will be asked to reveal any medical condition that could affect your ability to participate. However gentle the fitness activity is, if you have a medical condition, you are advised to take advice from your GP.

You should always follow your teacher's guidance about safe exercise. We cannot take responsibility or liability for personal injury if you have not disclosed medical information or have not followed instructions given.

You are advised to wear appropriate clothing and footwear to prevent injury and to enable you to fully participate in the sessions.

For further information or any concerns, contact our Education Leads for Learner Support:

BRIAN HARRISON

Email brian.harrison@northumberland.gov.uk or call 01670 622 100

Emergency out of hours contact: 07800 885 174

GILLIAN FOX

Email gillian.fox@northumberland.gov.uk or call 01670 622 107

Emergency out of hours contact: 07951 938 385

A CULTURE OF SAFEGUARDING

Our leaders protect learners from bullying and harassment. Within the team, senior staff responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. Senior leaders, with responsibility for governance, will ensure that the Learning & Skills Service fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010 and other duties, including in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy, safeguarding, and promoting the overall welfare of learners.

We have a culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to:

- Identify learners who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation
- Help learners reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need, or referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help

SAFEGUARDING

We are fully committed to ensuring that consistent effective safeguarding procedures are in place to support all who use our service.

We are committed to Safeguarding and ensuring all learners experience a secure, safe and welcoming environment in which they can learn. We work with students to develop the skills necessary to take responsibility for their own safety and have specific arrangements to protect young people and vulnerable adults.

All concerns are passed through the members of staff who are trained as "Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officers" in our service.

The Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officers are Brian Harrison and Gillian Fox. They are supported by a team of other staff who have also been trained.

There are a number of ways you can report concerns about yourself or someone else in the service.

- You can report to your class lecturer or any member of staff at our campuses
- You can also contact our Education Leads for Learner Support, who are our Designated
- Safeguarding Officers
- You can report via our online Safeguarding portal "tootoot"

Sometimes people simply aren't confident enough to speak to someone face-to-face about their concerns, for fear of being identified or worrying about perhaps making matters worse.

To reduce the stigma attached to having a voice, learners can use our online safeguarding platform and mobile device app to report confidentially to us. Learners can access tootoot at any time of day and can report their concerns, or on behalf of their peers using any web-enabled device.

Learners with iPhones, iPads and Android devices can even download the tootoot app to use on the move. All learners are anonymous at the point of reporting but identities can be disclosed to designated learner support staff. We have also placed the tootoot icon on all of our network computers. Just click on the tootoot icon and you are on the website. Posters are in every campus on display. All learners on induction will be introduced to the system.

For any of our hot topics or concerns on health and safety, equality or safeguarding you can contact our Education Leads for Learner Support:

BRIAN HARRISON

Email brian.harrison@northumberland.gov.uk or call 01670 622 100

Emergency out of hours contact: 07800 885 174

GILLIAN FOX

Email gillian.fox@northumberland.gov.uk or call 01670 622 107

Emergency out of hours contact: 07951 938 385



KEEPING YOU SAFE

Our fresh blend of hands-on and digital learning has been designed to keep you safe at all times, including as we navigate the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst helping you to gain essential skills to stand out in life and work. We are taking all the necessary precautions, including social distancing, and have put measures in place to ensure that you feel safe and secure in our learning environments.

We will continue to follow Government and local guidelines to ensure the safety of our staff, learners and local communities. All of our stakeholders will be informed of expectations regarding these measures and any associated PPE regularly.

E-SAFETY

All computers within our Service have forensic software installed which is a sophisticated system that monitors, records and prevents computer misuse in our campuses. This allows a comprehensive and automatic protection for everyone who uses our computer equipment.

We take our duty of care seriously and take active steps to protect our learning community. You must not use or download material which may be offensive to others, download or forward any abusive material. You must not access, create or transmit material that is contrary to the law. Screen captures are taken all day, every day, of anything that could potentially be breaching our rules. We investigate all causes for concern.

An acceptable use policy is available from your campus. Any breaches in the policy are taken very seriously, and may result in your access to the network or course being removed. As part of our monthly 'Hot Topics' we will draw your attention to themes in E-Safety that we believe are important in protecting you as a technology user. You can ask us for advice on e-safety at any time.

PREVENT AND RADICALISATION

The Learning and Skills Service responds quickly to safeguarding concerns for children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable to the messages of extremism and the risks of radicalisation. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Radicalisation is the process by which people come to support terrorism, extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

Prevent is a government strategy, its aim is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Early intervention is at the heart of "Prevent" in diverting people away from being drawn into terrorist activity. "Prevent" happens before any criminal activity takes place. It is about recognising, supporting and protecting people who might be susceptible to radicalisation. The Learning & Skills Service is a safe place to learn and we intend to keep it this way.

Reporting concerns is everybody's business. If you have any PREVENT concerns, you can raise these concerns in exactly the same way as any safeguarding concern.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

At each stage of your education, the Learning and Skills Service will prepare you for future success in your next steps. We will prepare you for life in modern Britain by equipping you to be responsible, respectful and an active citizen who contributes positively to society.

LEARNING RECORDS

Throughout your course you will be asked to complete a Personal Learning Record to record your learning journey. In the record, there is a learning log for you to fill in after each session and there is a course feedback questionnaire. You can complete these during and at the end of the programme.

LEARNER SURVEYS

We conduct national learner surveys on particular weeks during the academic year and you may be asked to complete a survey.

An observer, verifier or OFSTED inspector may visit your class to check the quality of teaching and learning and ask if you are satisfied with your learning. You may be asked to participate in our 'Learner Voice' focus groups to collect your views.





COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

The Learning & Skills Service aims to:

- Actively gather feedback from learners throughout the academic year cycle
- Invite compliments and comments about the service at all times
- Provide a clear and transparent process for learners to follow to raise concerns or complaints about the service

We warmly welcome your feedback, compliments and comments. We use both positive and negative feedback to shape the service and endeavour to improve it for all learners.

Whilst we try our best to make sure your experience with us excellent, we know we sometimes don't achieve this. In these instances, we would like the chance to put this right as quickly as possible.

This relies on you telling us quickly if you think things aren't as good as they should be, and giving us the opportunity to properly investigate and take action.

We love it when learners talk to us directly about what we can do to help, rather than to someone else.

We will ask for learner and stakeholder feedback in a number of ways:

You can complete the 'Tell Us What You Think' leaflet at any time and hand it in to any member of staff at any campus.

WRITE TO US: Northumberland Learning & Skills Service, Northumbria House, Manor Walks, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 6UR

EMAIL US: learn@northumberland.gov.uk

MEET US: You can book an appointment to meet with us at any of our campuses or education leads.

Call the campus or lead you would like to meet with. Telephone numbers are also available on the Council's website at: www.northumberland.gov.uk/learn or on the back page of this handbook.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We value your views and would like to encourage you to feedback at any time throughout your course. If you feel the matter warrants it, we have a process for making a complaint.

We hope to make it easy for you to express your views and receive a speedy and effective response.

If you feel you would like to complain, then you must observe the following procedure. It is important that you do not skip a stage in asking us to investigate your complaint.

Where your complaint involves requesting a refund of your course fees, you are also advised to read our Refunds Policy prior to submitting a complaint.

STEP 1

Speak directly to the person who, in your opinion, is responsible or to your Lecturer. We hope to resolve most complaints at this stage but, if you feel the matter remains unresolved, move on to formal step 2.

STEP 2

If you feel the response to your complaint is not satisfactory, you can write to the Campus Manager or Education Lead. They will investigate your complaint and use their best endeavours to respond to you within 10 working days. At this stage, you must make your complaint in writing.

STEP 3

If you still feel the response to your complaint is not satisfactory, you can then write to: Quality & Organisational Development Lead, Northumberland Learning & Skills Service, Northumbria House, Manor Walks, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 6UR

STEP 4

If you still feel the response to your complaint is not satisfactory, you can then write to: Head of Skills and Employability, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

At this stage your complaint will also be considered by the Director of Education & Skills.

If you still feel the complaint has not been resolved, you can take this matter to the course's funding body. Before you do this, you must have followed steps 1-4.

We will let you know who the funding body is for your course, provide contact details and help you to make your approach putting forward your complaint.



Enrol Now!

#LiveAndLearnLocal

Where learning works for you

Call your local campus - lines open Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm.

learn@northumberland.gov.uk

www.northumberland.gov.uk/learn

ALNWICK CAMPUS

Lindisfarne Road, Alnwick,
NE66 1AX.
Tel: 01670 623 691

BEDLINGTON CAMPUS

Jubilee Terrace,
Bedlington, NE22 5HB.
Tel: 01670 623 687
(Closed on Fridays)

BERWICK CAMPUS

Walkergate Building,
Walkergate
Berwick upon Tweed,
TD15 1DB.
Tel: 01670 626 107

BLYTH CAMPUS

Brunel Building,
Blyth, NE24 1LT.
Tel: 01670 622 099

CRAMLINGTON CAMPUS

Northumbria House,
Manor Walks, Cramlington,
NE23 6UR.
Tel: 01670 622 104

HAYDON BRIDGE CAMPUS

Haydon Bridge High School,
NE47 6LR.
Tel: 01670 622 258

WENTWORTH HEXHAM

Wentworth Leisure Centre,
Hexham, NE46 3PD.
Tel: 01670 623 701

MORPETH CAMPUS

Cottingwood Lane,
Morpeth,
NE61 1DN.
Tel: 01670 622 257

FUSE PRUDHOE

Moor Road,
Prudhoe, NE42 5LJ.
Tel: 01670 623 689 or
01670 623 688

WANSBECK WORKSPACE

Rotary Parkway,
Ashington, NE63 8QZ.
Tel: 01670 623 894

DISCLAIMER

Northumberland County Council takes all reasonable steps to provide the services and courses described in this prospectus. However, it does not guarantee the provision of such services. The provision of courses is dependent on there being sufficient demand and funding to make their operation viable.

OTHER FORMATS

If you need this information in large print, Braille, Audio, or in another format or language please contact us: 01670 622 099. If you are Deaf or can't speak on the phone, contact us using Relay UK. Download the Relay UK app or using your existing text phone prefix our dedicated text Relay number: 018001 01670 623 515. British Sign Language users can contact us using an online sign language interpreting service: northumberlandcc-cs.signvideo.net



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