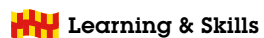




Northumberland  
County Council

# LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE

LEARNER HANDBOOK 2018 - 2019



[www.northumberland.gov.uk/adultlearning](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/adultlearning)

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## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

Please call **01670 624 878** Central Adult & Learning  
or visit **[www.northumberland.gov.uk/adultlearning](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/adultlearning)**

# LEARNER HANDBOOK

**Congratulations it's time for you to discover your skills and talents.**

Welcome to the Learning and Skills Service. 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.

## THIS GUIDE IS HERE TO HELP YOU

Keep it safe so you can refer to it at any time. If it doesn't answer your questions, please let any of our staff know, we're here to help.



## **OTHER FORMATS**

If you or someone you know needs course information in a different format or language, let us know and we will seek to provide it promptly.

## **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. Centre staff will use their best endeavours to inform learners of any changes that will occur during the academic year.

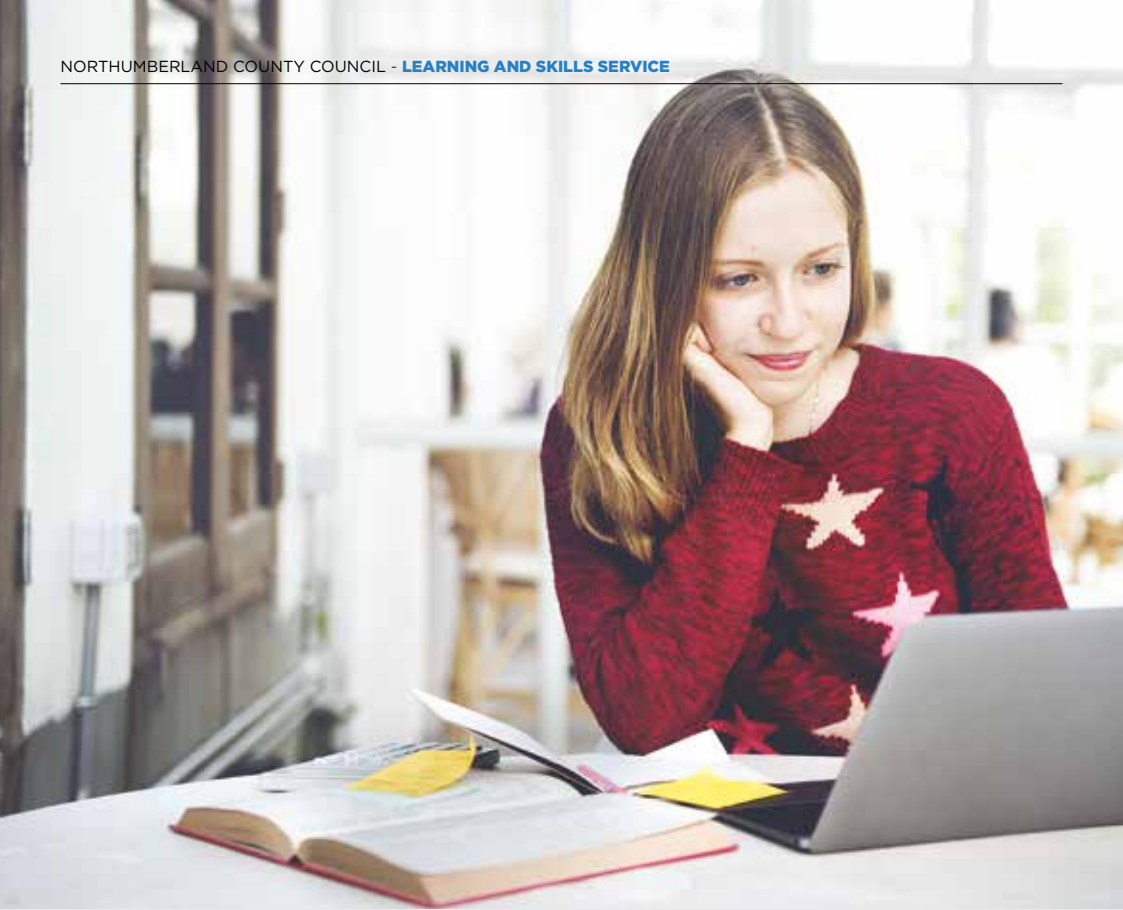
# LEARNER CHARTER

**We seek to provide an accessible, high quality service and 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 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 at least every 12 weeks or more frequently if required and where additional support needs have been identified
- Treat you fairly, equitably and with consideration and respect at all times
- Comply with Learning and Skills Service - Adult Learning commitment not to discriminate against any individual on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability
- Comply with the acceptable user policy related to premises, equipment and e-learning systems
- 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







As a learner you agree to:-

- Complete enrolment/registration forms and pay fees as appropriate
- Provide proof of entitlement if you want fee remission
- Inform us of any changes in your circumstances
- Understand and sign a learning agreement
- Comply with the terms and conditions of the service as set out in the learning agreement
- Attend regularly and punctually for the agreed number of hours/days
- Notify us if you are not able to attend a class or if you have decided to withdraw from your learning programme
- Notify us if you are unable to attend your work placement or training session
- Take responsibility for your own learning - complete and update assignments, portfolios or attend exams as and when required
- Let us know if you need help or further support for your studies
- Be aware of and comply with Learning and Skills Service - Adult Learning ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure
- 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
- Be responsible for your own and others Health and Safety and report any unsafe practices and procedures

**This charter is available  
in large print on request**

# 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.

If you have a disability, learning difficulty or other particular need we will make any reasonable adjustment to help you access and get the most out of your studies.



**HERE'S A SNIPPET OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF HELP AVAILABLE.**



## 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 centre 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, Asperger's Syndrome, 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.



## 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 who 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 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 centre 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



# LEARNER SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

## 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 to help you succeed as well as organising extra-curricular activities through the various phases of the programme.

## Apprenticeship Support & Counselling Service by Remploy

This new free service supports apprentices who are feeling low, upset and struggling to keep up with their apprenticeship. It is completely confidential and run by fully trained professionals with expertise in mental health.

By working in partnership with Access to Work; a Job Centre Plus scheme, Remploy are delivering this service in England to apprentices who are affected by a mental health condition in the workplace.

An expert from Remploy will provide apprentices with personal, emotional wellbeing support and advice for six months, and help individuals cope better so they can concentrate on their apprenticeship. They will help develop a step-by-step support plan to keep apprentices on track and advise on some workplace adjustments.



## Bursary Fund



Full-time learners aged 16 to 18 may be eligible to receive up to **£1,200** through our bursary scheme. How much you may be entitled to will depend on your household income and circumstances. There are two tiers of bursary payment:

- A higher rate of a maximum of **£1,200** per year for vulnerable learners (young people in care, care leavers, young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit and disabled young people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments).
- A lower rate of a maximum of **£600** per year for other 16-18 year old full time learners

If you are eligible, you are able to spend your grant to help with travel, books, equipment and materials, or anything else that you need along the way.

**Contact Gemma on 01670 622 105 to apply.**

## Childcare



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 19+ looking for help with the costs of childcare, then you can apply to our Adult Discretionary Learner Support Fund below.

## Adult Discretionary Learner Support Fund

If you are 19+ and studying one of our qualification programmes you may be eligible for help with a grant to help you to pay for some of the costs of your learning. This might include travel costs, childcare costs, equipment, books, materials or a uniform. It can also occasionally help some students with tuition fees and exam/registration fees.

**To apply speak to Gemma on 01670 622 105 or speak to any member of staff at any of our centres.**



## English and maths

Free and friendly maths and English courses are offered in ten sites across Northumberland, from Entry Level to Level 2. These are arranged on a roll-on/roll-off basis so you can join throughout the year and sit your assessments as soon as you are ready. We also offer a free initial assessment. It is essential to be able 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. We also offer a free initial assessment. 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:

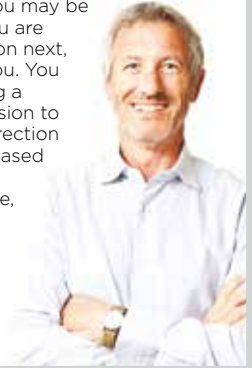
- Learn the basics
- Improve your everyday English: reading, writing, spelling, grammar, speaking and listening skills
- Improve your everyday maths: addition, subtraction, division, multiplication, fractions, percentages, shape, ratio, budgeting skills
- Refresh your skills and improve confidence
-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

**Our full programme of English and maths courses is available at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/adultlearning](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/adultlearning) or you can ask at any of our centres for your nearest class.**



## Advice and Guidance

Our great team of staff can give you advice on courses, entry requirements, progression routes into further learning and work. You may be unsure the course you are thinking of enrolling on next, is the right one for you. You might also be seeking a careers guidance session to help you choose a direction in life. We're very pleased to provide you with advice over the phone, or you may wish to have a private appointment at one of our centres.



## Job Clubs

One of the things people feel most acutely when out of work is isolation. 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. We focus on helping you to prepare your CV and how to create compelling cover letters. And we can help give your confidence a boost as you get ready for interviews. We also run budget sessions to help you cope on benefits until you are able to get back into work. Our experts are always at hand to help you make the most of opportunities as they come along.

## Here is the job club programme:

<b>Alnwick</b> Wednesday 09:30 - 11:30 & 17:30 - 19:30
<b>Bedlington</b> Tuesday 13:00 - 15:00
<b>Berwick</b> Monday 09:30 - 11:30 & 17:30 - 19:30
<b>Blyth</b> Thursday 09:30 - 11:30, 13:00 - 15:00 & 17:30 - 19:30
<b>Cramlington</b> Monday 09:30 - 11:30, 13:00 - 15:00 & 17:30 - 19:30
<b>Morpeth</b> Tuesday 09:30 - 11:30
<b>Wansbeck Workspace</b> Wednesday 17:30 - 19:30, 09:30 - 11:30 & 13:00 - 15:00



### **Work Placements and Experience**

If you need a work placement to complete your qualification, 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 for your CV. You can also find your own work placement too and we'll check out that the employer will provide a safe place for you to work.



### **Student Union**

We are registered with the National Union of Students (NUS) which enables all our students to purchase an NUS card to benefit from a massive range of discounts. You must be 16 or over and studying with us to be eligible. The card is available to students, studying full time or part time. Your course must have started, before you are eligible to purchase an NUS extra card.



## **If lack of transport is hampering your job search why not try Wheels 2 Work?**

Wheels 2 Work offers low cost scooter and electric bike loan to people who live or work in Northumberland.

Fees include training, equipment, maintenance and insurance.

They are available to anyone aged 16 or over, with secure employment or an apprenticeship and a valid provisional or full driving licence.



For full Ts and Cs and more details, contact David or Kay on 01670 620 136, 07974 388 651 or email [w2w@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:w2w@northumberland.gov.uk)





# POLICIES



## Attendance Policy for Learners

Please try to attend all classes punctually and regularly. If you are unable to attend a class you should contact your centre at your earliest opportunity so we can tell your teacher and note your absence in the class register.

The centre will endeavour to contact you if you do not attend your class. If we are unable to make contact with you, you have not informed us of your absence and have been absent for three or more consecutive sessions, you will be removed from the class register. If you wish to continue the course you will need to re-enrol. **Please see our Refunds Policy on page 14 for circumstances in which we provide refunds.**

## 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.

## 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. Resits 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.

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.





# POLICIES (CONTINUED)



## 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 Exams Officer on 01670 622 115 or email [Laura.Hunt@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Laura.Hunt@northumberland.gov.uk)**

## Record-Keeping, Confidentiality and Data Protection

The majority of our courses are supported by funds from the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency, and 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. You will be asked to complete:

- Individual Learner Record (ILR) - This records all of your contact, course and payment details. It records monitoring information to ensure we are fairly delivering our services to different groups in our community. It also records your emergency contact/next of kin details. In signing this form you are confirming your eligibility to undertake a learning programme.
- Personal Learning Record (PLR) - This records your induction, learning plan and goals, a record of your learning and progress, feedback on your experience and the impacts of your learning. You need to contribute to your Personal Learning Record regularly; regardless of the type of course you are following.
- Attendance Register - we will keep a register of your attendance at class.





### How We Use Your Personal Information

The privacy notice included on your Individual Learner Record (ILR) 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 shared with third parties for education, training, employment and well-being related purposes, including for research. This will only take place where the law allows it and the sharing is in compliance with data protection legislation.

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

You can agree to be contacted for other purposes by ticking any of the following boxes on your ILR:

- About courses or learning opportunities
- For surveys and research
- By post
- By phone
- By e-mail

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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-privacy-notice>





# REFUNDS POLICY

**This policy applies to all courses provided by Northumberland Learning and 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. 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**

## Student Withdrawals

Unfortunately no refunds can be made where a student decides to leave a course of their own volition, as a result of changes in the student's personal circumstances, as a result of weather conditions preventing student attendance when our centres 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 student has to leave a course on medical grounds. Only the student'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 student is supported by evidence from the student'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**.



## Customer Complaints

A part or full refund may be offered where a student has made an official complaint through the Complaints Procedure and this has been upheld as a result of investigation.

## Payment Arrangements for Refunds

Once a refund request 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.**





# HOT TOPICS

**What are Hot Topics?** - Hot topics are bite-sized pieces of information on **PREVENT, health and safety, safeguarding and equality and diversity, British values and citizenship, and well-being. They are for staff, learners and employers.**

## YOU CAN SHARE THEM.

They are often referred to as SHEDSS, which stands for **Safety, Health, Equality, Diversity, Safeguarding, Sustainability**

### How do I get Hot Topics?

Hot Topics appear in our newsletters, are on the Hot Topics walls in our centres and held by staff for use in classes, assessments and reviews. They change every month so look out for the new hot topics.

### Why do we use Hot Topics?

#### We want to keep you up-to-date:

- tell you about changes in legislation
- protect you from harm
- promote your health and wellbeing
- voice your rights and responsibilities
- enable you to face change and challenge
- develop your interests
- ensure fairness
- encourage you to look out for one another
- guarantee you know what to do if there is a problem
- widen your knowledge about subjects beyond your experience
- help you to take responsibility for your own safety
- give you confidence to explore sensitive issues
- change hearts and minds and remove prejudice

### Why are Hot Topics so important?

The hot topics we produce for staff and learners are linked to protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It is the responsibility of Learning and Skills Service to proactively promote these Hot Topics each month so that all of our learners, staff and employers understand.



# SAFETY

**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.**



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 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 centre where you are studying. You can also contact our Education Leads for Learner Support:

**Brian Harrison**

[Brian.Harrison@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Brian.Harrison@northumberland.gov.uk)  
**01670 622 100**

Emergency out of hours contact: **07800 885 174**

**Gillian Fox**

[Gillian.Fox@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Gillian.Fox@northumberland.gov.uk)  
**01670 622 107**

Emergency out of hours contact: **07951 938 385**



## 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 centre or work placement. The process will be explained at induction.

## Buildings

Our health and safety policy covers all aspects of premises, including car parks and grounds. All of our centres operate a no-smoking policy. This means there will be no smoking in any part of the centres 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 school staff immediately.

## CCTV Monitoring

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

## 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 centre, 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.



### 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.

### 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 centres. 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 centre first.

### Fire Safety



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

### Manual Handling

You should not undertake a significant amount of lifting in our centres 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.

### Personal Protective Equipment

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.

### 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.

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.

# EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Learning and 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. If you have any concerns about equality in our service you can also contact our Education Leads for Learner Support:

**Brian Harrison**

[Brian.Harrison@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Brian.Harrison@northumberland.gov.uk)  
01670 622 100

Emergency out of hours contact: 07800 885 174

**Gillian Fox**

[Gillian.Fox@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Gillian.Fox@northumberland.gov.uk)  
01670 622 107

Emergency out of hours contact: 07951 938 385

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 groups are treated fairly, courteously and with respect. Beliefs, values and religious views will be respected and tolerance encouraged where individuals or groups may 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. ➔



**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.

**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. Staffs are expected to act with integrity at all times in recognising and respecting individuals' differences.

**British Values – Life in Britain**

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**

A country where equality and freedom is at the centre of who we are. In which everybody is involved with decision making. For example: 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.



### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Learners

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 at Learning and Skills service.

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.

Learning and Skills will respect the confidentiality of all LGBT+ staff and learners and will not reveal information without prior agreement.

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

Learning and 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.

We also work alongside Stonewall's priorities which are:

#### To empower individuals

We will support individuals to work out how they can make a difference for LGBT+ people at work, home and in their communities. We will support them, and the people they reach, to be themselves and achieve their full potential.

#### To transform institutions

Institutions have power and influence. We will reach more people and have a greater impact by transforming institutions and by embedding an inclusive and accepting culture and the benefits they bring all employees, service users and members of the community.

#### To change hearts and minds

We will go deeper into our communities than ever before to reach people who we may not have had a relationship with in the past, including people from a range of ethnic and religious backgrounds, as well as rural communities. We will work with these communities, and partners and allies close to these communities, to demonstrate the strengths that our differences can bring, and to let all lesbian, gay, bi and trans people, here and abroad, know they're not alone.

#### To change laws

We will continue to campaign and lobby government to change laws that do not ensure equality for LGBT+ people, or laws that do not go far enough. Despite good progress for lesbian, gay and bisexual people under the law, trans people still do not have the right legal framework to enable them to be themselves.



**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.**

# SAFEGUARDING

**The Learning and Skills Service is totally committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our learners and staff and we expect all learners and staff to share this commitment.**

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

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 accordingly. We have access to a range of services for learner support.

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.


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

1. You can report to your class lecturer or any member of staff at our centres
2. You can also contact our Education Leads for Learner Support, who are our Designated Safeguarding Officers:

**Brian Harrison**  
[Brian.Harrison@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Brian.Harrison@northumberland.gov.uk)  
**01670 622 100**  
 Emergency out of hours contact:  
**07800 885 174**

**Gillian Fox**  
[Gillian.Fox@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Gillian.Fox@northumberland.gov.uk)  
**01670 622 107**  
 Emergency out of hours contact:  
**07951 938 385**



3. 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 now 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 and iPads 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.

For staff and learners who have an iPhone, you can download the app direct to your device. This is not yet available for android phones but will be later this year.

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 centre on display. All learners on induction will be introduced to the system.**



## 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.

### PREVENT is 1 of the 4 elements of the government's counter-terrorism strategy.

It is a strategy that:

- aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
- provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support
- works with a wide range of sectors where there are risks of people becoming radicalised
- deals with all forms of terrorism, including far right extremism and some non-violent extremism



As part of our PREVENT strategy for all learners we are:

- P**romoting Equality and Diversity and ensuring sites are safe for all learners
- R**eferring any Safeguarding and Prevent concerns to the appropriate authorities
- E**ncouraging positive relationships between learners and staff
- V**etting and removal of any materials of an extremist nature including banning access to extremist materials on our IT systems
- E**ducating learners via induction, tutorials and hot topics
- N**ews monitoring of any concerns whether nationally, regionally, locally or for individuals and following these up
- T**raining of our staff to raise awareness of the signs and risks

The Learning and 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.

## 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 centres. 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 centre. 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.

# QUALITY AND FEEDBACK

**We need to monitor the quality of your course to continually improve the service wherever possible.**

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We will ask for your 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 your centre
- You can write to, email, visit or telephone the manager of your centre
- You should complete the learning logs and feedback on your personal learning record at the end of the programme
- You may be asked to complete a survey on particular weeks during the academic year

- An observer, verifier or OFSTED inspector may visit your class to check and record the quality of teaching 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
- We use the VEO (Video Enhanced Observation) application to improve teaching and learning

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.**

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**We encourage you to talk to us about areas of concern or dissatisfaction in the hope that it avoids matters becoming serious problems for you or others.**

If you feel you would like to complain then please observe the following procedure:

## 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, you can move on to **step 2**.



**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO NOT SKIP A STAGE IN ASKING US TO INVESTIGATE YOUR COMPLAINT.**

## STEP 2

If you still feel the response to your complaint is not satisfactory, you can write or talk to the centre manager where you are studying. They will investigate your complaint and endeavour to respond to you within ten working days.



## STEP 3

If you still feel the response to your complaint is not satisfactory, you can then write to: **Quality and Organisational Development Lead, Northumbria House, Manor Walks Cramlington, NE23 6UR**. At this stage you must make your complaint in writing.



## STEP 4

If you still feel the response to your complaint is not satisfactory, you can write to: **Head of Employability and Skills, Northumbria House, Manor Walks, Cramlington, NE23 6UR**. You must make your complaint in writing.

## STEP 5

If you still feel the complaint has not been resolved, you can take this matter to the funding body for your course. Before you do this you must have followed **steps 1 to 4**. We will let you know who the funding body is for your course and their contact details. We will help you to approach them with your complaint.





# Northumberland County Council

**A REMINDER OF WHERE  
WE ARE AND HOW TO  
GET IN TOUCH WITH US**

## LEARNING CENTRES

**ALNWICK ADULT  
LEARNING CENTRE**  
Lindisfarne Road  
Alnwick,  
NE66 1AX  
Tel: 01670 623 691

**WANSBECK  
WORKSPACE**  
Rotary Parkway,  
Ashington,  
NE63 8QZ  
Tel: 01670 623 894

**BERWICK ADULT  
LEARNING CENTRE**  
Walkergate  
Berwick upon Tweed,  
TD15 1DB  
Tel: 01670 626 107

**CRAMLINGTON ADULT  
LEARNING CENTRE**  
Northumbria House  
Manor Walks  
Cramlington, NE23 6UR  
Tel: 01670 622 104

**MORPETH ADULT  
LEARNING CENTRE**  
Cottingwood Lane  
Morpeth,  
NE61 1DN  
Tel: 01670 622 257

**ASHINGTON  
CONSTRUCTION AND  
ENGINEERING**  
Freeman Way  
Ashington, NE63 0YB  
Tel: 01670 623 666

**BEDLINGTON OPEN  
LEARNING CENTRE**  
Jubilee Terrace  
Bedlington,  
NE22 5HB  
Tel: 01670 623 687

**BLYTH ADULT  
LEARNING CENTRE**  
Brunel Building,  
Regent Street,  
Blyth, NE24 1LT  
Tel: 01670 622 099

**HEXHAM ADULT  
LEARNING CENTRE**  
The Gatehouse  
Wanless Lane, Hexham,  
NE46 1BU  
Tel: 01670 623 701

**PRUDHOE FUSE  
MEDIA CENTRE**  
Moor Road  
Prudhoe,  
NE42 5LJ  
Tel: 01670 623 689

[www.northumberland.gov.uk/adultlearning](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/adultlearning)