

Community Learning Strategy

Issue 1

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Summary of Strategy

This sets out how the College will use the Community Learning Budget to encourage the participation in learning of people of different ages and backgrounds to help them gain new skills and improve their health, re-connect with learning, pursue an interest, or prepare for progression into further learning

Senior Manager Responsible:

Susan Ross

Director of Planning and
Performance

1:0 Government Supported Community Learning

The Skills Funding Agency provides funding to allow access to a broad range of learning opportunities for adults, often of different ages and backgrounds, to enable them to pursue an interest, address a need, acquire a new skill, become healthier or learn how to support their children. The purpose of this funding is to maximise access to learning for adults, providing them with new opportunities for learning, whatever their circumstances. Community Learning funding should promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement and improve the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Its objectives are to:

- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills
- Provide opportunities for learning that may or may not lead to a qualification
- Provide opportunities for learning that is undertaken for its own sake
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot
- Widen participation and transform people's lives through improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning, through acquisition of skills preparing people for training, employment or self-employment, through improved digital, financial literacy and/or communication skills
- Improved/maintained health and/or social well-being

2:0 Our Strategy

Our strategy is to encourage the participation in learning of people of different ages and backgrounds to help them gain new skills and improve their health, re-connect with learning, pursue an interest, or prepare for progression into more formal learning.

- We will provide learning opportunities to encourage the participation of those at risk of social exclusion and who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, bringing together people from backgrounds, cultures and income groups, including people who can or cannot afford to pay
- We will provide 'second chance' or return to learning opportunities for those who have not engaged in learning for some time
- We will provide a wide range of short duration non-regulated learning opportunities to attract new learners and encourage the development of new skills and we will ensure there are progression opportunities for those who wish to continue more formally in their area of interest

- We will provide a small range of regulated provision aimed at those who need specific support or skills to enable them to join the jobs market, using this flexibility to fund provision that we cannot deliver through our Adult Skills Budget
- We will engage with the Local Authority to produce a joint prospectus so that the community of North Tyneside have the widest choice of both formal and informal learning opportunities
- We will regularly evaluate the success of our offer to ensure we are meeting the needs of a cross section of the population. This will be done three times per year in line with the current marketing schedule.

3:0 Learner Eligibility

All learners who wish to undertake learning as part of the Skills Funding Agency's Community Learning budget must first meet the overall Skills Funding Agency's eligibility rules. These rules are set out in the Skills Funding Agency's Funding Rules which are updated annually. Most individuals who want to take part in learning will be eligible for funding if:

- they are a citizen of the United Kingdom and Islands, have Right of Abode (the right to live permanently in the United Kingdom without any immigration restrictions),
- or they are a citizen of a country that is within the European Economic Area (EEA)
- and they have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands or the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA) continuously for at least the previous three years on the first day of learning

The above is not a definitive list and other individuals could be eligible (Please refer to the Skills Funding Agency's Funding Rules). To qualify for Skills Funding Agency Funding learners must be eligible on the first day of starting the learning aim.

4:0 Financial contributions and Pounds Plus (£+)

Government rules are that eligibility to funding does not give the individual the right to funding, just the ability to be funded. A learner's right to be fully funded for their learning is dependent on their circumstances, such as previous achievement and economic status.

Therefore in addition to meeting the Skills Funding Agency's eligibility rules and in order to ensure that Community Learning funding is targeted appropriately, TyneMet College will fully fund learners from the Community Learning budget only if they meet the following criteria:

- they are new to learning or they have not participated in any formal learning activities, whether qualification based or not in the past 1 year; and
- they are unwaged and their joint family income is less than £21,000 per year.

Learners who do not meet the above criteria will still be allowed to take part in the learning activity funded through the Community Learning budget but will be expected to make a modest contribution to the cost of the learning (£+).

Learners who do not meet the overall Skills Funding Agency’s eligibility criteria will still be able to participate in the learning but will be expected to cover the full cost of learning themselves without any Government subsidy.

Having a mix of fully funded, partially funded and non Government funded learners taking part in the same learning activity will ensure the best value for money and efficiencies in the planning and delivery of the learning.

Learners who are funded through the Community Learning budget are not eligible for any other financial assistance to help them take part in learning and any costs related to the learning e.g. travel, childcare or equipment costs, must be borne by the learners themselves.

5:0 Learner assessments

Where appropriate, and always for those undertaking regulated provision, learners will have access to initial assessment tools and/or processes and will be signposted to other appropriate provision, for example if their assessment reveals a basic skills need.

We will ensure learners are signposted to other appropriate and recognised accreditation for those who wish to progress.

6:0 Control of this document

The senior member of staff with lead responsibility for admissions will review this strategy for effectiveness and the need for change. The strategy will normally be approved on a three-year cycle, unless there is a need for prior change. Recommendations for change will be made to the Senior Leadership Team. The latest version of the document will be maintained on the College’s website and Toolkit.

Prepared by: Director of Planning and Performance

Validation & tracking by: Executive Officer

Senior Leadership Team

Jon Vincent

Approval: Signed:.....

11 May 2015

Date:.....

May 2018

To be reviewed: **Date:**.....