

Community Engagement and Responsiveness Strategy

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1.0 Executive Summary

Craven College acts as a hub of knowledge and learning which supports the local community, develops skills in the economy and by doing so enhances the area, and the College's own reputation.

Through our engagement and responsiveness, we aim to:

- ensure the College offers a wide range of accessible curriculum which is fit for economic and social purpose;
- provide support, information and guidance for the community;
- promote equality and diversity within the College and our wider community;
- provide outreach learning within communities of need;
- develop the local economy through business training and support;
- provide services to the community, seeking additional funding where we cannot support through existing funding streams.

The College has identified four key activity areas which ensure it engages with the local community, is well placed to define need, and then develop appropriate provision which meets these needs.

2.0 Context

As a College we seek to support, interact, serve and provide skills in our local community. We recognise the vision of Further Education colleges as:

'a 'dynamic nucleus' at the heart of their communities, promoting a shared agenda of activities which both fulfil their central role of providing learning and skills training to young people and adults but which also reach out into their communities, catalysing a whole range of further activities.'¹

As a key educator and employer in the local area, the College acknowledges its role in engaging with the community and providing a service that improves the economic prospects of individuals and communities of interest within the local and regional area. There are four key ways in which we engage with communities:

1. Strategic liaison and approaches
2. Community input into mainstream provision
3. Courses and projects delivered in the community or with partnership organisations
4. Services to the community

Community engagement and responsiveness is key in the above, and strengthens the impact that the College is able to make.

3.0 The Strategy

3.1 Aims

The College's 'Community Engagement and Responsiveness Strategy' has set the following Key Aims:

i. Relevant and accessible curriculum

The College responds to local economic needs, designing and planning a wide range of curriculum around local priorities and market demand, whilst also providing local people with a route to Higher Education and access to a range of emerging careers and industries across the region and beyond. It accepts a responsibility to raise the aspirations and extend the horizons of

¹ A Dynamic Nucleus – Colleges at the heart of local communities *Baroness Sharp* (NIACE; 2011; p4)

local learners, promoting active engagement with important issues both within the community and the world of work.

Accessible curriculum refers also to levels and modes of study with pathways from pre-entry through to higher level study. The College provides local Higher Education study facilities for those who do not choose or find it difficult, for a variety of reasons, to travel further afield or live away from home.

ii. Professional student support services

An inclusive, professional learner support service lies at the heart of the College and the community, widening access to education and training. In addition to the care shown by academic teams, specialist assessment and help is available to learners experiencing a wide range of difficulties and disabilities – treating every student as an individual. The support service plays a major role in reengaging disaffected learners, helping also to reintegrate those not involved in training or employment.

The team supports students to access relevant work experience and career planning support by liaising with local organisation and business leaders, in addition to providing students with relevant labour market information.

iii. Equality and diversity in a safe environment

There are many social benefits from bringing together students from different walks of life in the same institution. The College wishes to reflect the full diversity of its extensive 'travel to learn' catchment area. Within a safe and supportive atmosphere, the College sets out to promote integration and challenge intolerance and inequality through the promotion of United Values.

iv. A healthy adult and community education programme

Adult and community education is part of the fabric of an engaged community, providing a vehicle for social interaction, a gateway to learning and increasingly a lifelong learning bridge between leisure pursuits and vocational training. Within the Dales, where much employment is part-time, there is a tradition of combining jobs to make a living and skills learnt in a leisure context can provide an additional source of income or sufficiency. Community education interfaces with enterprise, business support and training, and can result in new businesses and self-employment.

In recent years, adult education has suffered from an ongoing withdrawal of government funding. The College strives to offer affordable programmes by utilising limited funding, charging affordable fees and attracting new sources of income to pilot alternative frameworks for provision. The College is committed to adult and continuing education which includes leisure, social, vocational and professional provision.

v. Supporting the business community and SMEs

This aspect of the College's provision reflects the work of Tyro Training, the Apprenticeship team, the careers team and the Employer Engagement Strategy. The business sector is an integral part of the broader community and social wellbeing depends greatly upon economic prosperity.

vi. Identifying local needs and promoting the College as a community resource

The role that a college can play in building a strong community cannot be underestimated provided it is responsive to the needs of individuals, groups and agencies and indeed accountable to them.

Staff, governors and students draw in information from a wide range of sources both formal and informal. Often this provokes a direct or particular School or department response, in other cases needs are filtered through senior management to develop cross-college strategies.

The College itself is a resource to be utilised by the community – a hub of professional knowledge and expertise, accommodation and equipment. The College's social mission and its commitment to value for money dictate that these resources should be put to public and efficient use.

vii. Encouraging strategic and operational partnerships

No one individual organisation within the community can provide a panacea in addressing economic and social issues. By acting in partnership, linked by a common vision, there may be opportunities to progress, improve and develop. Given limited public resources, partnership work allows communities to make best use of its shared assets and expertise for the good of the wider community.

As a key employer and the most significant post-16 education and training provider, the College is a valuable asset to partnerships within the area.

viii. Seeking alternative and additional funding in response to local needs

The College seeks to meet local needs at a time when financial constraint and austerity impact greatly on government funding received and therefore resources. As such, we seek to increase fee income activity where individuals and businesses can afford to invest in skills, and to attract additional funding to conduct projects and activities which will have positive social and economic benefit, but cannot be supported through our main funding.

The College has developed considerable expertise in project management and partnership activity and has the confidence of a range of funding agencies. Community projects, partnership ventures and important agendas such as addressing unemployment, will all benefit from efforts to attract new sources of finance. The College has traditionally shared the expertise of its Projects and Community team with key stakeholders and this will continue as part of its community ethos.

3.3 Activity

To achieve the above aims the College commits to the following four areas of activity:

1) Strategic Liaison and Approaches

Strategic Liaison occurs at a number of levels, predominantly with the Senior Management Team, but also with School and Department Managers deputising and/or leading for their specialist field. Taking part in these networks/partnerships provides the College with vital Management Information on the demographics of the surrounding areas, ensures that we respond in a way that enhances the offer to communities and meets our own business needs. The main partnership organisations/networks the College is involved in are listed in Appendix B.

2) Community and partnership input into mainstream provision

Community and partnership input into mainstream provision occurs at different levels across the Schools, as appropriate to the vocation/subject area. The activity broadly falls under the following areas²:

- **Supporting work placements:** This is coordinated by Schools with the support of the Admissions, Careers and Employability Team. See the Work Experience within Study Programmes Policy and T-Levels Strategy for additional information.
- **Talks, tours and presentations that provide an insight into vocational industries:** This ranges from broader overviews of an industry to specific topics or focusses. A full list of activities is held on the Enrichment log.
- **Supporting and/or hosting competitions:** Outside agencies providing opportunities for our learners to demonstrate their competency.

² Specific instances are available on a School by School basis via the Enrichment Log

- **Collaborative employer/community lead projects and assignments:** for example, designing websites, planning community events in line with an employer or community organisation brief

For those students directly involved in community engagement activities, the real learning opportunities to pursue and complement their studies give greater incentives for the learner to perform, stretch themselves and take an extra pride in their achievements. It also allows the College to showcase the work, skills and potential of students thereby enhancing the reputation of learners and the College in general.

In addition to community input directly into School provision, much community interaction is supported and coordinated by the Student Services team:

- Referral processes for students who need additional support
- Police Community Support Sessions
- A programme of talks from specialist agencies for both students and staff

3) Courses and projects delivered in the community or with partnership organisations

These courses or projects provide more specific curriculum for an identified community of need. These are most often developed through discretionary funded projects, with a long term goal of moving the provision into mainstream funding.

Some community based provision can be immediately supported through our mainstream Education and Skills Funding Agency allocation, most commonly by the Adult Education Budget, and are instigated in the following ways:

- Developed by key workers tasked with community liaison
- Developed as a response to government initiatives
- Developed strategically between Heads of Schools and the Projects and Community Manager

As noted, above, many outreach projects begin with the College or a partner agency sourcing additional discretionary funding to support communities of need. These are largely coordinated by the Projects and Community team and developed through the strategic liaison noted in paragraph 3.3.i.

As a minimum, discretionary projects are tasked to cover their additional costs (including staff), are assessed for risk and checked to ensure they meet overall College strategic objectives (along with that of the community), prior to application.

4) Services to the Community

In certain cases, the partners or 'communities of interest' that we work with are able to purchase services through their own funding streams. Depending on the service and or status of the organisation, these are largely charged at cost with nominal overheads, however in the case of eg employers, a commercial rate is charged. Examples of services include:

- **Local Schools:** liaison with local to schools to support transition.
- **Employers:** through Tyro we provide a range of training services (including bespoke tailored programmes, and some consultancy) to meet the needs of our local employers.

- **Open access services:** discounted public/commercial services which support our student learning experiences, such as the Brasserie
- **Specialist services:** These tend to be brokered through partnership working. College staff provide occasional support to organisations, on a 'goodwill' basis, in line with their College role. This is approved by line managers with the aim of enhancing reputation of the College. In addition to supporting the local community, this helps us to maintain positive partner relations, although there are often spin off benefits.

It is important to instil an ethos of community responsibility within students, and as such, fundraising is undertaken by all Schools, the proceeds of which go to a range of charities chosen by students and staff, such as Macmillan Cancer Trust, Children in Need, Manorlands.

Additionally a number of Schools have links to volunteering and additional work placements which are utilised by students to enhance their CVs, but also provide a service to community organisation.

Appendix A – Community Learning Planning and Pound Plus Policy

Context

1. The College previously received a Community Learning allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (formerly known as Personal Community Development Learning). Although this funding is no longer ring-fenced solely for Community Learning, the College has decided (in line with guidance) to retain the ring-fenced funding in order to deliver the following:
 - a. Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances;
 - b. Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement;
 - c. Maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities;
2. The funding is regarded as a contribution to locally owned community networks with clear strategic plans. The College is part of North Yorkshire Community Learning Partnership (NYCLP) which involves a range of community providers across North Yorkshire mapping need and provision collaboratively to ensure even coverage across the county which is community led and makes best use of public funding.
3. The College has signed a memorandum of agreement with the partnership. The usage of the funding will be led by the partnership's strategic objectives, with each partner focussing on their own 'universal' offer and the partnership collectively allocating resources and public funds to develop targeted provision which meets identified needs.
4. **NYCLP Statement of Commitments and Priorities:**
 - a) *The North Yorkshire Community Learning Partnership seeks to ensure that the provision made by its member organisations and partners is planned collaboratively to be inclusive and meet the needs and reasonable aspirations of, as far as possible, all residents of North Yorkshire. In order to achieve that, a "universal" offer will be complemented by provision specifically targeted towards learner groups that are currently under-represented in learning. These will include:*
 - *Neighbourhoods with participation rates significantly below the local average and with high levels of basic and other skills needs including Family Learning designed to have learning outcomes for both parents/carers and their children*
 - *The most rural parts of the county*
 - *Provision for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including adults with mental health issues*
 - *Provision that will impact positively on people's quality of life, health and well-being*
 - *Older adults*
 - *Males*
 - *Adults from BAME backgrounds*
 - b) *The members of the CLP also expect Community Learning provision to contribute (alongside provision funded through other routes) to tackling the barriers people face when trying to secure employment including:*
 - *Work related Skills eg IT, Literacy, Numeracy and work-related personal skills with a focus on progression into further learning and/or work.*
 - *Work Clubs looking at CV development, interview techniques, job search, personal impact etc.*
 - *Provision designed to help participants to run their own businesses.*
 - *English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)*
 - *Community capacity building provision eg volunteer development provision, increasing civic participation and mentoring.*
 - *Capacity building for community & voluntary organisations to be able to deliver learning.*

- Vocational sector specific provision that provides a gateway (first step) to local employment opportunities.
- 1 to 1 Mentoring to support effective transition between levels of learning and work.

The degree to which such provision is funded through community learning will vary across the county as provision funded by other means varies.

- c) The NYCLP through its Steering Group and Area Groups (and with the agreement of its members) will, over a period of time, increase the proportion of targeted work being funded through community learning budgets but, at the same time, seek to generate additional income to ensure that the "universal" offer is not significantly diminished. The NYCLP will monitor the progress being made and effectiveness of this approach in terms of the outcomes achieved by individual participants.

Planning Process

5. Initial usage of the funding allocation is planned by the Projects and Community Manager, based on analysis of Labour Market Information and market trends. .
6. Community learning provision is planned to attract fees where learners are able to pay, in line with ESFA guidance, demonstrating 'Pound Plus'.
7. Course planning is shared with NYCLP and more locally at the Craven Community Learning Partnership (CCLP) to assess the cross county offer, identify gaps and duplication, and then recommend appropriate action for the College or other partner providers to undertake.
8. Gaps will be determined by measuring community need and demand against strategic priorities. The College will work with NYCLP and CCLP to address gaps, with providers utilising ESFA funding available across the partnership's collective budgets.
9. The Projects and Community Manager attends the County Meetings and chairs the Craven group. Project and Community staff attend and contribute to local area planning, coordinating actions within the College to develop new provision where needed, and where allocation allows.

Pound Plus Policy

10. It is expected that some targeted provision will be deployed annually, with no learner fee, aimed to support priority target groups identified by NYCLP and agreed at local CCLP meetings as areas of need
11. Similarly, it is expected that where learners and communities are able to fund their own learning, ESFA funding is gradually withdrawn as a subsidy. The College operates as a not-for-profit entity and reinvests all profit back into learning provision. This fee income is therefore directly reinvested into learning.
12. 'Pound Plus' income is invested in the people who most need, and can least afford, community learning provision in the following ways:
 - a. Subsidising learning activities for which no fee income is sought, and which break even, without contribution to College central costs
 - b. To subsidise learning for volunteers and VCSOs that will contribute to wider community learning and help develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected and proactive citizens
 - c. Supporting the cost of outreach keyworkers
 - d. Supporting partnership work and liaison which identifies and then develops targeted provision for those most in need.

Appendix B - Network Activity Register - Updated August 2019

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs): The College continues to interact with the two LEPs, York, North Yorkshire and East Riding (YNYER) and Leeds City Region (LCR) on a variety of levels: from individual contacts and approaches to being represented on the LCR Skills Board via North Yorkshire Principals.

Local Authorities, both NYCC and CDC: Due to council cuts previous forums such as the Local Strategic Partnerships and NY Work and Skills Partnerships no longer exist as a network/platform, however contact is held at an operational level with key members of staff, and via involvement in collaborative groups outlined below (eg Local Action groups).

Relevant Skills Provider Groups/Boards: Including North Yorkshire Principals' Group, Craven Area Deputies' Group, Craven Area Secondary Heads' Group, Higher York (HE),

North Yorkshire Community Learning Partnership: The College attends the North Yorkshire Strategy group and chairs the local meetings in Craven. The partnership maps need and provision collaboratively to ensure even coverage and community led use of public funding, while promoting wider of first step and community learning opportunities delivered by the third sector.

Jobcentre Plus (JCP): Contact is maintained locally (predominantly: Skipton, Keighley, Scarborough, York and Harrogate) to communicate our existing offer, and discuss new JCP client needs, developing appropriate provision where possible/viable, eg Sector Based Work Academies.

Craven Collaborative: Fortnightly meetings to discuss vulnerable students within the Craven area and how best to cater for them (Minutes shared with College for information).

Craven Bronze Prevent Group: multi-agency forum to discuss local Prevent activity

Chambers of Commerce: including locally at Skipton and the wider Leeds, York and North Yorkshire Chamber. We attend network meetings, support/host events, along with delivering training via Tyro.

Federation of Small Businesses: as above, a local network of small businesses – we attend meetings and events to determine local needs and concerns.

Connecting Craven VCS Network: Chaired and facilitated by Community First Yorkshire. Quarterly meetings of voluntary community sector front line staff to discuss and action priorities for Craven as well as information sharing to avoid duplication and encourage collaboration.

Craven Communities Together Partnership Group: Chaired and facilitated by NHS, Community Services team. Large membership includes public services, emergency services, social care, youth, CCQ, GPs, health and voluntary sector orgs. Bi-monthly meetings to discuss and action priorities for Craven as well as information sharing to avoid duplication and encourage collaboration.

Craven VCS Delivery Partnership Meeting: Chaired and facilitated by Community First Yorkshire. Voluntary sector partners with focus on CCG links and local funding opportunities.

Careers and Enterprise Company/York & North Yorkshire Career Hub: local secondary schools and colleges located in the same geographic area, working together, and with partners in the business, public, education and voluntary sectors to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks and ensuring that careers outcomes are improved for all young people.