

**Strategy description:**

This strategy outlines the context and purpose of community engagement, and the benefits brought to the College, community and local economy. It highlights the eight key aims the College wishes to achieve through community engagement and responsiveness, and the four key activities that will be conducted in order to achieve those aims.

**Supporting documentation:**

SFA Funding Rules 2015/16– Community Learning Section

**Links to other policies:**

- Employer Engagement and Responsiveness
- Single Equality Scheme
- Volunteering Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders
- Prevent strategy 2015-2016
- Work Experience within Study Programmes Policy

## Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Context
3. Strategy
  - 3.1 Aims
  - 3.2 Activities
4. Supporting Documents:
  - Appendix A - Community Learning Planning
  - Appendix B - Network Activity Register

## 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.

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. 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.

## 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.'<sup>1</sup>

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. **A broad curriculum – real choice for local people**

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

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

A broad 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 the many 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. It widens access to education and training for thousands of learners. In addition to the care shown by course tutors, 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.

**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. Ignorance of other people's background and beliefs can breed mutual suspicion and distrust. 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. It avoids differentiation and segregation by treating all learners as individuals.

**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 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 a more senior management route requiring 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 the inherent 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:

#### **i. 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.

#### **ii. 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 areas<sup>2</sup>:

- **Supporting work placements:** This is coordinated by Schools with the support of the Career, Enterprise and Employability team. It can include Work Experience within the European Union (via Erasmus+ Funding), which provide additional diversity and cultural understanding within the context of a student's vocational area. See the Work Experience within Study Programmes Policy for additional information.
- **Talks, tours and presentations that provide an insight into vocational industries:** This ranges from broader overviews: eg Coniston Hotel providing tours and careers presentations on their activity to Hospitality students; to the specific: eg Revlon and Dermalogica running specialist sessions on tanning or false eyelashes.

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<sup>2</sup> Specific instances are available on a School by School basis.

- **Supporting and/or hosting competitions:** Outside agencies providing opportunities for our learners to demonstrate their competency.

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

### iii. **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 Skills Funding Agency allocation, most commonly by the Adult Skills Budget, and are instigated in the following ways:

- Developed by key workers tasked with community liaison
- Developed as a response to government initiatives
- Developed from within the School through their contacts

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.

### iv. **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 Bistro and the Hair and Beauty Salon.
- **Specialist services:** These tend to be brokered through partnership working. College staff also 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 are divided between the Craven College Charitable Trust, and a range of charities chosen by students, 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: eg Gateway students volunteering in Charity Shops and on Gardening projects.

## **4. Supporting documents**

### **Appendix A – Community Learning Planning**

#### **Context**

1. The College receives a limited allocation for Community Learning from the Skills Funding Agency (formerly known as Personal Community Development Learning). It is the purpose of this funding to:
  - 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 all providers with SFA Community Learning funding in 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. The College also contributes to Bradford Community Learning Partnership, with respect to its community delivery in Keighley, subcontracted by Bradford College.

#### **Planning Process**

5. Curriculum staff are well placed to develop provision which meets the objectives outlined in paragraph 1. As such, initial usage of the funding allocation is to be determined through curriculum planning based on analysis of LMI and market trends, with support from the Projects and Community team.
6. Community Learning provision should be planned to attract fees where learners are able to pay, in line with SFA guidance. Fees gathered are intended to contribute to NYCLP's community strategy as a whole, in addition to SFA funding, demonstrating our 'Pound Plus'.
7. This planning is shared with NYCLP 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 to address gaps, with providers utilising SFA funding available across the partnership's collective budgets.
9. The Director of Business and Community Development (or their nominee) will attend the County Meetings. Project and Community staff will attend and contribute to local area planning, coordinating actions within the College to develop new provision where needed, and where allocation allows.
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.



11. Similarly, it is expected that where learners and communities are able to fund their own learning, SFA funding is gradually withdrawn as a subsidy.

#### **4. Supporting documents**

##### **Appendix B - Network Activity Register - Updated August 2015**

**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. For 2013-2015, the College delivered on ESF SFA co-financed 'Skills Support for the Workforce' projects for both LEPs, steered by LEP priorities. Through this activity the College delivered to action research projects for YNYER on Health and Social Care sector training needs and Visitor Economy training needs for growth.

**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),

**NY Community Learning Partnership:** Following the government pilot for Community Learning Trusts, this involves all providers with SFA Community Learning Funding in North Yorkshire mapping need and provision collaboratively to ensure even coverage and community led use of public funding. The College attends the local area (Craven) and NY meetings.

**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 (see below).

**Craven Together:** A multi-agency platform for organisations to meet with community leaders and address community cohesion issues; eg the Police, CDC, NYCC, Broughton Road Women's Group, Councillors, Craven Volunteer Group.

**Craven Collaborative:** Fortnightly meetings to discuss vulnerable students within the Craven area and how best to cater for them.

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

**Craven Work Club:** A multi-agency approach to providing skills development, work placement and ongoing support to harder-to-reach JCP clients; includes, NYCC Adult Learner Services; Children's Centres, Craven Volunteer Centre, Credit Union, Looking Well, Greatwood Community Centre, Town Councillor, Housing Associations.

**Craven Local Action Teams:** Led by CDC, this multi-agency approach provides support to identified community projects by linking them to appropriate public and private organisations who can support project development. The College is an advisor at regular workshops and provides more intensive support for appropriate projects; eg Friends of Aireville Park; South Craven Project.

**Children's Centre Craven Area Steering Group:** A multi-agency approach to supporting, mapping progression and opportunities for young parents and their children.

**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.

**Bradford Education and Skills Partnership:** This is an informal forum chaired by Shipley College to include all major providers of adult education, including FE Colleges, voluntary organisations and

private providers. Partners provide activity updates to increase labour market knowledge and awareness of provision/project activity across the partnership.

**Keighley Learning Consortium:** this group was initiated by the College, and partner organisations and community leaders feed in specific needs and demands in the community area. The KLC then determines collaborative approaches met by either the College's SFA funding or discretionary funding bids to meet these needs. Includes: the Extended Schools Cluster; Small World Cultural Arts Collective; Bracken Bank Community Centre, Kingfisher Centre, Highfield Centre, Sangat Centre, Bangladeshi Community Association; Temple Row Centre; Keighley Asian Women and Children's Centre; The Join Project.