

## **Remote Education Offer at NCG**

This guidance is to inform all of our learners, including HE students and apprentices, along with their parents/carers/employers what to expect from NCG's colleges in periods of national or local Covid-19 restrictions and enforced lockdowns, extending to school and college campus closures. The measures will generally extend to learners who may be asked to self-isolate during college open-status.

This is a summary of expectations across NCG's colleges, which include Carlisle College, Kidderminster College, Lewisham College, Newcastle College, Newcastle Sixth Form College, Southwark College and West Lancashire College.

### **Expectations of NCG Colleges During Periods of Remote Learning**

#### **1. Arrangements for timetabling and delivery of remote teaching and learning**

During periods of remote learning, NCG expects our teaching colleagues to deliver as many planned timetabled hours as possible to our learners and apprentices.

We expect that existing planned timetable hours will largely be maintained wherever possible. There may be some instances where planned delivery is not possible, and we will therefore allow staff to plan with a degree of local flexibility with approval from college leadership teams. Schemes of learning and assessment will be adjusted to accommodate the nature of delivery; for example, some practical elements may need to be deferred until our staff are able to return to face-to-face delivery. This position will continue to be monitored and will be reviewed in the event of extended remote learning.

As far as possible, lessons will be delivered via live online teaching in lieu of face-to-face delivery and this will be periodically sampled and monitored through an approved revision to our TLA policy to ensure the quality and experience of this delivery is appropriate and that learners are safe and well. All courses have access to Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and Microsoft Teams as a minimum and staff are now using a wide range of NCG-approved platforms to support remote and online learning. Live lessons will typically be delivered via Microsoft Teams and all teaching colleagues have access to guidance associated with good practice whilst delivering online live streaming and remote learning. This is circulated by email and is held on an internal portal for teaching and learning (our Great Place to Teach intranet site).

We have produced a detailed guide on delivering remote and online learning, including a digital taxonomy, to support staff with the delivery of high-quality digital learning. We are providing regular training and masterclass sessions to continue to support teaching colleagues in the delivery of remote learning. There is additional support for staff including identified Instructor Led Training (ILT) leads and an NCG working group for ILT, subject communities of practice, continuous professional development (CPD) and regular email bulletins. Students access support and training as part of their programme.

#### **2. Contact with students and support**

All staff are kept up-to-date with the latest government guidance and durations of lockdown through NCG and/or college communications. It is expected that colleagues will continue to record student engagement and on-site attendance (for those attending as vulnerable or children of critical workers) using our student record system. Teachers, educators, learning support and pastoral staff will maintain regular contact with all students, including those who do not engage with remote learning. College

curriculum managers and programme leaders will maintain regular contact with learners to ensure they are aware of changes to delivery arrangements.

Personal Tutors will remain in regular contact with all students and will be the first point of contact for any queries or support requests from students. Any student requiring any academic or pastoral support will be offered it remotely. Personal Tutors will be responsible for referring students to appropriate support services.

### **3. Arrangements for assessments and examinations**

NCG will closely follow any instructions and guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofqual in relation to exams and assessments.

Whilst vocational examinations scheduled in January 2021 have not been cancelled by the government, in line with many colleges across the country NCG's Executive Team agreed to cancel all vocational exams scheduled in January 2021, when provided with the opportunity to make an informed decision.

This cancellation was communicated to students scheduled to sit exams and via college websites and social media channels. The reasons for doing this were many, including rising hospital admissions, very high rates in several of our college locations and to prevent students and staff leaving home to travel to college to sit and conduct exams. It is NCG's intention to ensure that no student is disadvantaged as a result of cancelled examinations or assessments and we made the decision to cancel when assurances had been provided by Ofqual that alternative arrangements would be put in place.

Academic exams scheduled for Summer Term have been cancelled, including GCSEs and A-Levels. NCG is currently awaiting further guidance from the DfE and Ofqual on the plans for assessment and exams this year, including arrangements for vocational assessments and exams scheduled later this academic year. Ofqual and the DfE are currently consulting with college leaders and Awarding Bodies to look at the different options for the forthcoming assessments and exams. Having undertaken a similar process last year, NCG is confident that we can implement a consistent and robust process in line with Ofqual guidance.

End Point Assessments for Apprenticeships will continue either remotely, or in-person where there is a pressing need to secure a license to practice. Any such assessment will be subject to detailed risk assessments and NCG will not place apprentices or staff at risk.

NCG will communicate any updates directly to students and parents and will publish it on the NCG and college websites once it has been received.

### **Expectations of Students During Periods of Remote Learning**

All students are expected to continue their learning from home wherever possible, in line with their existing timetables and information provided to them by their teachers. Where it is not possible, NCG will endeavour to assist through the provision of equipment, or by providing a safe alternative arrangement to remote learning. Some learners will continue to attend in person in line with government expectations, and all colleges are open to these groups of learners by agreement and arrangement. Learners should not visit college unless they have been explicitly instructed to do so.

The majority of work placements are deferred. There may be isolated exceptions, for example where an adult learner is volunteering in critical services and this has some links to a course. In these isolated cases, a full COVID risk assessment will be undertaken and any relevant consent and authorisations will be sought.

If students currently attend work as an apprentice, they should continue to attend unless they are told otherwise by their employer. Their Skills Trainers and lecturers will continue to support them and whilst our staff will follow government advice to work from home where we can, some staff can visit the workplace subject to secure COVID risk assessments, consent and authorisation from the employer and college leadership team. Day or block release training will continue online, as will the majority of progress reviews.

All students should continue regular contact with their Personal Tutors and direct any questions to them.

### **Learners with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)**

At all NCG colleges, vulnerable learners are formally identified early in the academic year and are supported through specific education and learning plans. Learners with specific needs are supported via educational health care plans (EHCP) and college arrangements for learning support. These plans have been reviewed to ensure continuity of support during lockdown and arrangements are personalised to individual needs. Many learners will continue to attend college in-person if that is deemed the most appropriate to their circumstances and learning requirements.

### **Access to Specialist Equipment and Facilities**

During temporary periods of remote learning, access to campus facilities is unavailable for most learners. Learning plans for all courses are adjusted to defer elements that require specific equipment or access to facilities such as workshops, salons, or industrial kitchens.

This is continually monitored and during longer periods of remote learning, access may be arranged where it is necessary for assessment and where this is in line with government guidance.

In some cases, specific software may be provided via the deployment of additional licences or virtual networks. This will differ by course and by college depending on the demands of the course.

### **Support for Students Without Suitable Access to Learn Remotely**

College leaders have been asked to carefully document the number of learners who genuinely do not have access to a) appropriate hardware/kit, b) access to the internet and/or c) an appropriate space to learn and we will action within our means to do so.

During a move to remote delivery, arrangements to support these students are highly personalised. Where possible, we will provide suitable equipment. Some students may be able to continue attending college in a safe environment to access remote learning on campus. The position at each college is reviewed weekly by the college leadership team and the NCG executive COVID-response team.