



## CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Meeting of 14 February 2024

## CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

### NOTICE

There will be a meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Committee on Wednesday 14 February 2024 at 1000 hours through the use of Microsoft Teams.

### AGENDA

Agenda Item		Paper
20-23	Apologies for Absence	
21-23	Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items	
22-23	Minutes of Previous Meeting – November 2023	x
23-23	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting – November 2023	x
	<b>Reserved Matters</b>	
	<b>Performance Reporting</b>	
24-23	Overview of Activity and Credits position AY2023-24 (Robert Laird)	x
25-23	AY204/25 Applications update/(presentation) (Paul Smith)	
26-23	SFC Pathfinder Update (presentation) (Robert Larid)	x
	<b>Matters for Decision</b>	
	There are no matters for decision at this meeting	
	<b>Matters for Discussion</b>	
27-23	Student Support Activity (presentation) – including Active Campus Coordinator Update and Mental health Transitions Funding Proposals (Alesia Du Plessis/Gwen Watt)	
28-23	Students' Association – Activity Report	x
29-23	Quality Enhancement Initiatives (Presentation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education Scotland Thematic Review</li> </ul>	x
	<b>Matters for Information</b>	
	There are no matters for information	
30-23	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
31-23	<b>Summation of Actions and Date of Next Meeting</b> The next meeting will take place on 22 May 2024, held at 1000 hours via MS Teams.	

## CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

**Draft** Minute of the Curriculum & Quality Committee held on Thursday 30 November 2023 at 1000 hours through the use of Microsoft Teams.

MINUTE OF MEETING		
Agenda Item		Paper
	<p><b>Present:</b>            Bryan Hutcheson (Chair)            Neil Cowie            David Blackhall            Carrie Beaton            Duncan Cockburn            Mark Fotheringham            Susan Elston</p> <p><b>In attendance:</b>            Robin McGregor, Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality            Alesia du Plessis, Associate Vice Principal            Kevin Bruce, Associate Vice Principal            Duncan Abernethy, Director of Business Development            Susan Lawrance, Secretary to the Board            Lorraine Garden, Minute Secretary</p>	
01-23	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b>            Apologies for absence were received in advance of the meeting from Cindy Dempster and Gill Griffin</p>	
02-23	<p><b>Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items</b>            No declarations of potential conflict of interest received.</p>	
03-23	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting – May 2023</b>            The Minute of the previous meeting was approved.</p>	x
04-23	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting – May 2023</b>            The Committee noted the Report with no additional comments made.</p>	x
	<b>Reserved Matters</b>	
	<b>Performance Reporting</b>	
05-23	<p><b>Overview of Activity and Credits position AY2023-24 (Robert Laird)</b></p>	x

06-23	<b>Business and Community Development Update (Presentation)</b>	
	<b>Matters for Decision</b>	
07-23	<b>Committee Terms of Reference</b> Members reviewed the Terms of Reference and agreed the content. One amendment for the Committee to consider is a recommendation that the SA Budget be included in the College Draft Budget. <b>This change was accepted and approved by the Committee.</b>	x
08-23	<b>Programme of Business AY2023-24</b> Members considered the information provided, noting the opportunity to hold additional meeting and amend Agenda items should business needs dictate. <b>The Programme of Business was accepted by the Committee.</b>	x
	<b>Matters for Discussion</b>	
09-23	<b>Student Support – Activity Report</b> (Alesia Du Plessis) A du Plessis provided an update on key items, highlighting the Corporate Parenting Plan, currently with M&C team for final branding will be launched	x

	<p>in January 2024. Final updates are also being made to the Wellbeing Strategy and will be shared at the next Committee Meeting in February 2024.</p> <p>The inclusion of the Wellbeing Matters group within the Equalities and Wellbeing Committee was highlighted, with plans for Transition funding allocated by SFC to be provided at a future meeting.</p> <p>An update on Events and Initiatives was shared with Members, including the College's participation in a CDN Trauma Informed College Programme.</p> <p>Members noted the considerable increase in safeguarding requirements, and the training being offered to additional staff to support this.</p> <p>N Cowie commended A Du Plessis and her team for the strong wrap around support offered to students; with S Elston echoing this and sharing the high praise the College received at a recent CPA Board Meeting, with special mention of the work with Aberdeen Alcohol and Drug Partnership.</p>	
10-23	<p><b>Students' Association – Activity Report</b></p> <p>C Beaton provided an update on key points including the recent successes at Freshers' which spanned over 4 weeks, thus helping to reduce the intensity impact of starting College – Members noted the positive feedback and engagement received.</p> <p>Information on the three key areas of the Student Partnership Agreement were noted. Members also noted the significantly increased number of class reps this academic year, with great engagement across all campus locations; with C Beaton advising this is the strongest positive engagement and partnership she has seen, with an increased confidence on campus; with students providing a voice within the College and feeling more able to support each other.</p> <p>The continuing success of the Breakfast Club across all campuses, and the SA proposal for a student kitchen which is being progressed with the Principal and Executive Team, which will provide students with free hot water and the use of a microwave were highlighted. N Cowie advised the SA and Executive Team continue to meet regularly.</p> <p>A summary of recent events, Clubs and Societies was providing, with space remaining a key challenge. The Student Pantry also continues to be popular, with thanks noted to partners, including CFine and NHS.</p> <p>S Lawrance thanked C Beaton for attending all Board and Committee meetings, until such time as an additional SA representative is in place.</p>	x
11-23	<p><b>First impressions Survey</b> (ahead of presentation to Dec Board)</p> <p>R McGregor summarised the Report, and highlighted the large response rate and the high level of student satisfaction on all but one of the 28 statements, which relates to wifi connectivity difficulties experienced at the start of the AY. Assurance was provided to Committee of work undertaken by the IT department to rectify the problems and learn from them. R McGregor also highlighted the positive responses to the induction experience.</p>	x
	<b>Matters for Information</b>	
12-23	<p><b>Annual Quality Assurance Report</b> (G Griffin)</p> <p>R McGregor shared the high-level summary of key quality assurance activities, and a breakdown of work completed, including spotlight reviews to provide a "deep dive" into certain curriculum areas; and the robust processes in place in relation to complaints, which has seen a 40% reduction of front-line complaints compared to last year.</p>	x
13-23	<p><b>SA Partnership Agreement</b> (ahead of presentation to Dec Board)</p> <p>K Pettiitt joined the meeting and provided an update on the Student Partnership Agreement 2023/24 (signed off by student representative</p>	

	members) which has been shared for information, and is to be presented to the Regional Board in December. An update on previous AY priority projects was also provided.	
14-23	<b>SA Budget (AY2023/24) update</b> K Pettitt presented an update on the SA budget figures and main allocations which have been agreed by the Student Representative Committee. The anticipated expenditure of allocated budgets was provided noting a reserve is still available and being used to support the Student Breakfast Club. The ongoing discussions with the Executive Team on the funding of the Student Breakfast Club was highlighted to Members.	x
15-23	<b>Committee Evaluation Feedback</b> S Lawrance thanked members for their feedback and advised no negatives responses were received. A discussion took place on the low response rate which Members noted may be due to the turn-over of Committee Membership.	x
16-23	<b>Draft KPI results from AY2022/23</b> R McGregor provided a summary of the paper showing academic successes for the last academic year, stressing the final data will be available once all College FES results have been submitted to SFC.  R McGregor highlighted the improved results, with the College now on the right trajectory with improvement in both FE and HE. Whilst partial success, remains challenging the data includes some students who have completed part of their course, R McGregor provided details of the SFC regulations regarding partial success. R McGregor assured Members of the College's ambition to achieve ever increasing KPI results. N Cowie commended colleagues for their work in getting to this position.	x
17-23	<b>Block 1 Curriculum update (presentation)</b> R McGregor shared a presentation giving an overview to the introduction of AY 2023/24, and reinforced the positive start and highlighted the impact this has had on student confidence and satisfaction. Additional information on the work to build on the fundamentals focus from the last academic year was provided by R McGregor.  Further information was also provided on recent managerial changes; the upcoming Education Scotland Thematic Review and key curriculum initiatives, including the migration from Blackboard to Brightspace, ongoing SFC Pathfinder Projects and review of the College's Strategic Plan.  Details regarding NESA were shared with Members, who noted the signed MoU and the grant funding which it is anticipated will support 650 individuals across varying SCQF levels and courses.	
18-23	<b>Any Other Business</b> Members were asked if the agenda meets Board needs going forward. Any feedback to be shared via S Lawrance prior to the next meeting.	
19-23	<b>Summation of Actions and Date of Next Meeting</b> The next meeting will take place on 14 February 2024. Summation provided by S Lawrance. A reminder of the upcoming College Open Day was given.	

Actions from Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting			
Agenda Item	Action	Responsible Person	Deadline
09-23	<b>Wellbeing Strategy:</b> Update to be provided for next Committee.	A du Plessis	Feb 2024
13-23	<b>SA Partnership Agreement:</b> To be presented to Regional Board in December 2023.	K Pettitt	Dec 2023



## Agenda Item 23-23

### CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

An update on matters arising from the meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Committee held on 31.11.23

Agenda Item	
09-23	<b>Action:</b> Wellbeing Strategy: To be updated for next Meeting.
	<b>Status: Complete</b> – on Agenda for 14.02.24 Meeting.
13-23	<b>Action:</b> SA Partnership Agreement: To be presented to Regional Board in December 2023.
	<b>Status: Complete</b> – Presented and approved by Regional Board.



## Agenda Item 28-23

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE	
Meeting of 14 February 2024	
<b>Title:</b> Students' Association Update	
<b>Author:</b> Carrie Beaton	<b>Contributor(s):</b> Kirsty Pettitt
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b> <b>For Decision</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>For Discussion</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>For Information</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Reserved Item of Business</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Purpose:</b> To enable the Committee to keep up to date with current initiatives and work the SA are taking part in.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Theme:</b> Choose an item.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Risk(s):</b> Insert relevant risk reference number	
<b>Executive Summary: Included</b> An overview of the activities we've taken part in, updates to our projects and the collaborative working we have taken part in since the last meeting.	
<b>Recommendation:</b> It is recommended that the Committee read the following paper and share any feedback.	
<b>Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval</b> (if applicable):	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b> <b>Positive Impact</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Negative Impact</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No Impact</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Evidence:</b>	



## Curriculum and Quality Board Report

Unfortunately we are down a member of staff as Dan, our Fraserburgh Deputy has stepped down due to finding difficulty balancing work and study. I, Carrie, will be hosting the Fraserburgh Class Reps going forward and being present on Campus at least once a week to continue engagement there.

Alina has been meeting with key staff members as her project for Student Kitchens is becoming a reality. Work will be beginning soon so that students will have access to hot water and microwaves across each campus. This has been highly requested since before our team and we are so grateful to see it happening, as are students. Alina will be meeting with Inspire to discuss continuing our partnership with them but

Carrie has submitted a proposal to create a Mature Student Network, providing peer support and wellbeing activities. This comes from student feedback that mature students often find themselves being the “parent” of their class, this sometimes means being asked advice or being relayed upsetting or sensitive information. The hope is to help students having these experiences find each other, while Carrie signposts and engages in activities in self-care. Wellbeing advisors will be invited along to appropriate sessions to offer insight and guidance.



The Students' Association have seen a vast increase in use of the Student Pantry and with our Breakfast Club initiative this year. In October and November alone, costs for Breakfast Club came to £2000 pounds which is more than the previous 3 months combined. Alina will be meeting with Inspire to propose continuing our Breakfast Club partnership with them but in a different setting, which will hopefully mean that costs can decrease even with the high need.

The Student Pantry has also seen even more increase in need but unfortunately, due to misuse, we are changing the way it works on a trial basis. We'll be providing a few days a week where students will be welcomed to take up to 5 items, at a manned stall of staff or volunteers. This gives us the opportunity to ask if anyone needs a foodbank referral or if they'd like support to apply for discretionary funding. This is a work in progress and hope to get feedback with the help of one of our wonderful learning opps classes who volunteer with us each week. Tanya and Leanne, two of our City Wellbeing Advisors have offered their time to help the running of the Pantry also which we are very grateful for.

Elections are getting ever closer, with nominations for the next team open on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, campaigning starting from 4<sup>th</sup> of March with polling days from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup>. Our Student Representative Committee voted to have 2 full time President Roles available to the new team instead of one full time and two part time. There is an ask for commitment to have in person attendance at Fraserburgh Campus twice a week to provide better coverage



**WINTER BREAK  
SUPPORT**



and awareness. Kirsty has put together a video, information packs and stalls to encourage participation and student involvement.

We'll be having our Annual Progress Meeting on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of February in which we'll cover what the SA have done so far. We'll be talking through elections and have an open forum for any questions as all students are welcome to attend. Carrie met with Education Scotland during the thematic review alongside two Executive Officers, Laurence and Emma, where we shared our experiences from a student and SA point of view and we received some fantastic feedback about the work we've been doing.

Carrie also had the opportunity to come together with other student representatives to meet some of our local counsellors to share the current challenges students face and start a continuing collaboration and conversation between us all. We will be meeting again in March and hope this is something that the SA can continue to do when the new representatives are elected.



CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE	
Meeting of 14 February 2024	
<b>Title:</b> Education Scotland's national thematic review on college approaches to meeting the additional needs of learners.	
<b>Author: Education Scotland</b>	<b>Contributor(s):</b> Brian Dunn, Head of Sector, Care, Education & Social Sciences Tony Young, Curriculum Manager, Performing Arts & Animation
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>For Decision</div> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>For Discussion</div> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>For Information</div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Reserved Item of Business</div> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>	
<b>Purpose:</b> To enable the Committee to note the summary of activities completed by the Quality team during AY 2022-23.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Theme:</b> <b>4. Delivering Excellence and Innovation</b>	
<b>Linked to Strategic Risk(s):</b> 4.1 If the SFC fails to provide adequate funding for counsellors and other targeted health and wellbeing support then student outcomes and experiences will decline.	
<b>Executive Summary:</b> The College was notified in August 2023 of the proposed Education Scotland arrangements for external quality assurance, engagement and enhancement for AY 2023-24, which included the programme of thematic reviews. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One regional thematic review focussing on learner progress and outcomes;</li> <li>• One national subject review of Care, and</li> <li>• One national thematic review focussing on approaches to meeting the additional needs of all learners.</li> </ul> <p>NESCol was subsequently selected for the on-site thematic review focussing on approaches to meeting the additional needs of all learners and the review was completed on the 16 January, with feedback provided on the 17 January. The thematic review will focus on a total of eleven colleges with eight on-site college visits. The remaining three</p>	

colleges will participate in online meetings or questionnaire inquiry to compare the collective findings from other colleges.

The thematic review will produce a published report that will consider how effectively colleges have responded to meet these additional needs in all aspects of their operations and will cover:

- The effectiveness of services and partnerships for learners with additional needs to help them succeed at college.
- The impact of supportive and effective transitions available from college to employment and further training opportunities.
- Learners' understanding of what support they'll receive, and from whom.
- Tracking the success of the support in helping learners to stay on their programme and achieve.
- The implementation of credible progression pathways.
- Pathways involving meaningful discussions with learners.

During the review the team used a selection of the Quality Indicators (QIs) from the Education Scotland *How Good is Our College* (HGIOC) framework, to help focus discussions during the team visits, these are outlined in the Education Scotland briefing note provided.

A total of 15 meetings took place and had a combination of support and teaching staff, students' association, external stakeholders and a sample of students. Education Scotland identified eight areas of positive progress, one area for development and two potential examples of highly effective practice, both submissions provided.

Although there will not be an individual college report we received summary feedback to share internally, provided below. The outcome of NESCol's thematic review will form part of the information to support the overall thematic review. The full report will be published later in the year.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Committee note the content of the briefing note and highly effective practice submissions.

**Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):**

N/A

**Equality Impact Assessment:**

**Positive Impact** ☒

**Negative Impact** ☐

**No Impact** ☐

**Evidence:**

## **Education Scotland's national thematic review. Focussing on college approaches to meeting the additional needs of all learners.**

Increasing numbers of learners presenting with often multicomplex needs has led to different types and levels of support being delivered by colleges, providers and other public services. Since COVID, and the return to face-to-face tuition and attendance, there has been a surge of learners presenting with additional needs.

Recent national reports which focus on meeting the extended needs of learners have mainly been focused on school pupils with little information being gathered on the transition to college and the impact on college services during a period of austerity.

This thematic review will focus on eleven colleges. No college will be named in the published report unless any highly effective practice is identified and shared.

Eight colleges will have thematic visits with on-site activities at these colleges taking place over one day, with initial feedback to college management the following day. This review will not include observations of learning and teaching. The remaining three colleges will participate in online meetings or questionnaire inquiry to compare the collective findings from other colleges.

The evidence captured during the visits and meetings will be summarised and emerging findings will be prepared, and a report published in Spring 2024 or thereabouts.

This report will consider how effectively colleges have responded to meet these additional needs in all aspects of their operations. In particular, the review will cover:

- The effectiveness of services and partnerships for learners with additional needs to help them succeed at college.
- The impact of supportive and effective transitions available from college to employment and further training opportunities.

These areas will involve professional discussions with staff, managers, partners and learners at college concerning:

### **Implementing support systems for learners with additional needs and the impact on their levels of success:**

- Learners' understanding of what support they'll receive, and from whom.
- Tracking the success of the support in helping learners to stay on their programme and achieve.

**The delivery of meaningful and appropriate progression pathways for learners with additional needs which offer credible routes to employment or further training, including:**

- The implementation of credible progression pathways.
- Pathways involving meaningful discussions with learners.

**The creation of strong partnerships with a range of services to support learners with additional needs in their transitions from one opportunity to the next.**

During the review the team will use a selection of the Quality Indicators (QIs) from the Education Scotland *How Good is Our College* (HGIOC) framework, to help focus discussions during the team visits. These are included in the section below.

All meetings will have a combination of support staff and teaching staff attending to gain an understanding of the issues facing teaching staff and to understand the synchronicity between support services and the needs of learners within classrooms and workspaces.

1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement	Analysis and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well do managers lead the evaluation of provision and services for learners with additional needs?</li> <li>• How well do managers and staff engage in evaluation of provision and services for learners with additional needs?</li> </ul>
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2.4 Services to support learning	<p>Management of services to support learning which contribute to achievement, attainment and progression.</p> <p>Teaching staff working with services staff on learner needs.</p> <p>Services which contribute to progression to a positive destination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective are arrangements for identifying the needs of individual learners to provide support for learning?</li> <li>• How effective are arrangements for learners to reflect on and discuss their progress with all staff?</li> <li>• How well do all staff capture and draw on feedback from learners and stakeholders to improve the quality of services to support learning?</li> <li>• How well do all staff work with external agencies to enable learners to access additional services to support learning?</li> <li>• How well do all staff involve learner representatives and stakeholders in evaluating the support service experience to plan for improvement?</li> </ul>
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2.5 Transitions	Collaborative planning and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well do staff work with external partners to ensure effective transition arrangements into and out of college programmes?</li> </ul>
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	Arrangements to support learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effectively are learners supported to make informed choices about the next phase of their learning or employment?</li> </ul>
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2.6 Partnerships	Collaborative arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well do staff work with partners to improve outcomes for learners?</li> <li>• How effectively do staff work with key partners to meet community and regional priorities?</li> </ul>
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3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners	Learner success over time  Equity for learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well do learners with additional support needs achieve and maintain high levels of retention, attainment and progression?</li> <li>• How well does the college ensure equity of success and achievement for these learners?</li> </ul>
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# Thematic Review: Meeting the Additional Needs of Learners

Summary of findings for: **NESCOL** 17 January 2024

## Areas of positive progress

- SLT have put in place the Supporting Successful Students framework and Respect campaign to provide a consistent approach from academic tutors and the student support team that supports learners well with increasingly diverse needs. Anecdotal evidence shows that there are improvements to withdrawal and attainment rates. However, based on the 2021/2022 data, there is still work to be done in improving performance levels of key learner groups and overall performance in successful completion and withdrawal rates compared with college and national benchmarks.
- The collaborative approach to support and improve learner progress and outcomes within college departments and with external partners supports key learners effectively. For example, Care after Care learners as part of the care experienced forum at Fraserburgh campus. However, some external partners would appreciate basic LPO data from the college to help measure the impact of their service provision. E.g. ACIS
- Early disclosure by learners of additional support needs is promoted well by “onboarding” and “keep warm” processes as well as the anonymous Report and Support online platform. The Upstream project at the Altens campus is supporting young male learners effectively to disclose mental health concerns and access support. However, the increasing level of disclosures from learners is now increasing the waiting times for learner referrals. A few learners mentioned that the college was slow to transfer their assessment of needs plan to support their assessment arrangements.
- Staff use learner feedback well and are proactive in managing mental health issues. The Spectrum Life, 24- hour multi- lingual online platform provides health and well being advice, a digital gym and good access to counselling materials. The SA is a real strength and very proactive in supporting initiatives to support learners’ health and well-being.
- Curriculum teams make good use of learner feedback to adapt learning and teaching resources and assessment approaches to reduce the anxiety levels of learners and support them to achieve.
- Ready Steady Study initiatives are in place to support transition arrangements for school pupils to start college. These include taster sessions and informal workshops with a focus on disengaged learners from school.
- College staff are supporting asylum seekers and refugees to access ESOL programmes as Aberdeen is now a city of Sanctuary. Student support advisors have recently completed CLPL in refugee trauma informed practice to support these learners. (Up to date figures suggest a growth in the local population). The student advice and support team have recently completed CLPL in trauma informed practice which considers groups such as asylum seekers and refugees and this training is being rolled out more widely across the organisation.
- The college has strong partnerships with SDS and local universities. These are effective in supporting key groups of learners through work placements and internships. The college hosts space for agencies and universities to promote their services and opportunities for learners. Learners are able to access career advisors and advice and guidance from a good range of external partners to help them make decisions about their future options.



### **Areas for development**

- Schools do not provide SCP transition information consistently to support learners i.e. PLSLPs. (online school portal at Clyde suggested to explore).

### **Learner Progress and Outcomes**

- AY- 2021/2022- Care experienced successful completion rates are 2.9% less than sector. Successful completion rates for disabled learners are 2.8% less than sector and 5.57% lower than those without a disability at the college. Learners from an ethnic background are 8% less successful with a 2.7% higher rate of withdrawal compared to sector. Successful completion rates for learners who are from SIMD 10 and 20 are well below average.

### **Potential Examples of Highly Effective Practice**

- Refugee trauma officer
- Metaskills

**Sarah Halliwell**

**HM Inspector**

### Potential Highly Effective Practice

<b>College name</b>	North East Scotland College
<b>Title of example</b>	Animating Meta-skills
<b>Date</b>	18/01/2024

Please provide the following details in the sections below:

1. Overview of example, which will be the basis of the published text. This should:
  - describe practice in a curriculum area or support service area that can be replicated or modified more widely to good effect;
  - outline the particular challenge that the practice supports or addresses; and
  - describe briefly the activity or practice.
2. Strong evidence of positive impact on learners, staff and/or other stakeholders.
3. Evidence available to college HMI – particularly digital coverage, marketing or other celebratory materials or resources.
4. Linkage and alignment with SFC focus on improvements to recruitment, retention, attainment and progression, or other Scottish Government priorities.
5. How the activity will develop in the future.

## 1. Overview: (200 words max)

North East Scotland College (NESCol) is committed to advancing partnership working as a key priority, as outlined in our Strategic Plan 2021-2023. When approached by Aberdeen City Council, we seized the opportunity to develop a co-created learning experience for the academic session of 2022/2023 to assist in communicating the message of meta-skills. The project's main objective was to offer learners in the creative industries the opportunity to engage with a live project that communicates the meaning of meta-skills to pupils and teachers in Aberdeen City Schools.

The project aimed to seamlessly integrate qualification evidence requirements across various subject areas within the creative industries, including 3D computer animation, music, drama, and sound production, while fulfilling the demands of a client led, live brief. The end result was the creation of narrated animated videos that were distributed throughout all secondary schools in Aberdeen City, communicating the meaning of meta-skills and visually explaining the importance and impact of skills 4.0 to teachers and pupils across the region.

In November 2023, we were thrilled that our initiative was announced as the winner for the prestigious award for skills development at the CDN annual awards.

**2. Describe the positive impact on learners, staff and/or other stakeholders (300 words max)**

The positive impact of this project on the learners, staff, and stakeholders was significant. The learners benefited from the project in various ways. Firstly, they had the opportunity to develop their own meta-skills, which are highly valued in the workplace. Through collaboration, learners learned how to work effectively with their peers and build positive relationships, which are essential for success in any career. Time-management skills were also developed as the learners had to manage their time effectively to meet project deadlines. Adaptability was another skill that was honed as learners had to adjust to new situations and solve problems in a creative manner.

Moreover, the learners were highly motivated throughout the project, and they expressed enthusiasm for the activity. They were working on a live brief, which provided them with a sense of responsibility and pride. The learners also had the opportunity to showcase their work to an employer, which was a valuable addition to their CVs.

The staff also benefited from the project as they had the opportunity to connect with colleagues from different departments and learn from each other's professional practices. This established professional relationships, which has led to future interdisciplinary learning and the sharing of knowledge and resources. The collaboration with Aberdeen City Council was also highly beneficial for the College as it strengthened its relationship with the council and provided positive networking opportunities.

In terms of the stakeholder benefits, Aberdeen City Council has gained several animations to promote their services and initiatives, which help in raising awareness of meta-skills in schools. The project also helped the College to continue as a valuable contributor to the community and demonstrated its commitment to providing students with a high-quality education that prepares them for the workplace.

Overall, the project had a positive impact on the learners, staff, and stakeholders involved. It provided learners with valuable skills and experiences, staff with professional development opportunities, and stakeholders with tangible benefits.

### 3. Evidence available to college HMI (brief bullet points only) and links to college digital materials to support

The precursor project that led to the development of the Meta-skills project with Aberdeen City Council was a previous project about mental health support available to students at North East Scotland College.

This video was created by 3D Computer Animation students at NESCol about mental health support: 'Mental Health Matters at NESCol'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lofwb8BaKd4>

NESCol was invited to showcase this initiative to other colleges through the College Development Network Virtual Bridge sessions. The session, called 'Mental Health Matters - Animating the Message,' features the 90-second 3D animation produced by students during the pandemic to raise awareness around mental health support. The session covered the creative process involved and how animation was used to deliver the message to the student audience. You can watch the virtual bridge session here:

[https://youtu.be/spGAjxQ\\_n6o](https://youtu.be/spGAjxQ_n6o)

#### **Meta-skills showcase links**

Below is a link to the 'making of' video where our students talk about the processes they went through to produce the final meta-skills animations:

<https://youtu.be/rCXVfVtoU4k>

Below are links to a range of some of the final student works:

<https://youtu.be/RG4Wo-YHwMc>

<https://youtu.be/AVy4UJfs4ow>

<https://youtu.be/6aklgN4fS54>

<https://youtu.be/QosaFKGEH6U>

<https://youtu.be/SbklgViRX7M>

<https://youtu.be/MP4PTn7HgrM>

<https://youtu.be/JNxpmSC0yes>

**4. How does the example support any current SFC or Scottish Government priorities? (100 words max)**

**SDS Meta-skills 4.0**

The project work has supported the development of a range of meta-skills such as collaboration, time-management, adaptability, and creativity for those students who have had the opportunity to work on this interdisciplinary exercise. The animation products will support the understanding and development of meta-skills for the young people in Aberdeen City and beyond, extending the impact of the project and providing a much wider reach.

**Scottish Funding Council**

The project has aligned with improving educational outcomes, developing the skills of the workforce, promoting innovation and enterprise, and building strong partnerships between education and industry.

**5. How will the activity develop in the future? (100 words max)**

There are several potential ways in which the project could develop in the future.

These include:

- scaling up to involve more learners and disciplines
- diversifying industry partnerships
- integrating a wider range of digital technologies
- enhancing evaluation and impact assessment
- supporting learner entrepreneurship

These developments could lead to even greater benefits for learners, educators, and industry partners, and help to further align the ethos of this project with the priorities of the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council.

**College contact name and details**

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Please submit this potential example of highly effective practice to the Lead Inspector (LI) in advance of the Thematic Review, AEV or PV.

Examples may also be submitted to the college HMI throughout the year

### Potential Highly Effective Practice

College name	North East Scotland College
Title of example	Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Date	30/01/2024

Please provide the following details in the sections below:

1. Overview of example, which will be the basis of the published text. This should:
  - describe practice in a curriculum area or support service area that can be replicated or modified more widely to good effect;
  - outline the particular challenge that the practice supports or addresses; and
  - describe briefly the activity or practice.
2. Strong evidence of positive impact on learners, staff and/or other stakeholders.
3. Evidence available to college HMI – particularly digital coverage, marketing or other celebratory materials or resources.
4. Linkage and alignment with SFC focus on improvements to recruitment, retention, attainment and progression, or other Scottish Government priorities.
5. How the activity will develop in the future.

#### 1. Overview: (200 words max)

North East Scotland College has seen the demand for ESOL significantly increase over the past few years, mainly due to Ukrainian refugees and those classed as non-Ukrainian Asylum seekers and refugees. The asylum seekers were found to include *Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children/Young People*. This group of Looked After/Care Experienced Children were given specific focus to ensure that the College was prioritising this group within the context of increasing demand for ESOL education.

Following discussions between the College, the Aberdeenshire Council UASC Social Work team, and the Aberdeenshire English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service a course for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children was established as part of NESCol's Schools-College Partnership programme.

These young people were not always engaging with a school curriculum, some were able to access a range of subjects whilst many had little or no previous education and unable to access most senior phase subjects.

The course focused on ESOL, including literacy, and was delivered at a level that matched the needs of the pupils. The UASC pupils' College experience was enhanced with hands-on, practical activities and curriculum-driven classes, such as Sports Leadership and Hospitality.

## **2. Describe the positive impact on learners, staff and/or other stakeholders (300 words max)**

When the course launched in February 2023, the aim was to review the success of this 'pilot' course after 10 weeks with intention to extend to 18 weeks. In total there were 17 pupils registered from Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Banff Academies. With intelligence from the English as Additional Language (EAL) Service, they were split into two classes dependent on their English language abilities to ensure that the ESOL they were taught aligned with their existing level of understanding. Their transition to College was supported by an EAL Service team member, who attended with them while they settled in the first few weeks.

As the pilot was drawing to a close in April, it was identified that the pupils were benefiting hugely from their College experience – and also that there were new Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children attending schools in the area, who may benefit from inclusion on the course. Following the Easter holidays, 6 newcomers was added to the original cohort bringing the group to 23.

The young people were entitled to a meal on their College day and therefore provision was made to include Halal prepared meals for the young people. Recognising the trauma that these young people had experienced in their lives, the decision was taken to use the services of a qualified Refugee Trauma Counsellor for a session with the young people.

Following completion of the course in July 2023, several of the UASC pupils progressed to study full time at NESCol, with 10 undertaking a Full Time Beginners ESOL course, and four taking a Full Time Elementary ESOL course. Seven of the cohort remained in school and planned to return to College to continue their studies on the Schools-College Partnership course in AY 2023/24.



**3. Evidence available to college HMI (brief bullet points only) and links to college digital materials to support**

Case Study - UASC

**4. How does the example support any current SFC or Scottish Government priorities? (100 words max)**

Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide support to certain vulnerable young people, known as looked after children/care-experienced.

Attracting more young people from a care-experienced background to further and higher education is a priority for SFC, as part of an overall strategy to ensure fair access. Care-experienced young people are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society. Through its National Ambition for Care-Experienced Students, the aim is to address the under-representation and poor educational outcomes for this group.

**5. How will the activity develop in the future? (100 words max)**

Having established a School Links UASC course in Aberdeenshire at Fraserburgh Campus, the aim is to extend the UASC/YP provision to Aberdeen City.

Following Aberdeen City which has become a City of Sanctuary and the University of Aberdeen which has become a University of Sanctuary, North East Scotland College has ambitions of becoming a College of Sanctuary.

**College contact name and details**

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**Please submit this potential example of highly effective practice to the Lead Inspector (LI) in advance of the AEV or PV.**

**Examples may also be submitted to the college HMI throughout the year.**

## case study

# Course for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

NORTH EAST  
SCOTLAND  
COLLEGE

Since February 2023, North East Scotland College (NESCol) has been delivering a course in their Fraserburgh Campus for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

### **The purpose of the course**

The course was established following discussions between the College, the Aberdeenshire Council UASC Social Work team, and the Aberdeenshire English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service.

It was recognised during these discussions that there were several Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children living or arriving in the region from countries including Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Sudan and South Sudan. These young people were enrolled, or would be enrolling, in local schools but – for a variety of reasons – were not always engaging with a school curriculum.

For example, schools had worked hard with Community Learning Development and EAL colleagues to offer young people as broad a curriculum as possible. Yet, while some young people were able to access a range of subjects, many had little or no previous education, and were unable to access most senior phase subjects.

It was evident, however, that these young people wanted to learn, and so NESCol developed a course specifically for them. It would initially be a 10-week pilot, delivered one day per week as part of NESCol's Schools-College Partnership programme, where pupils attend classes at College as part of their school curriculum.

The content of the course was established in response to information from Social Work and the EAL Service. They identified that one of the biggest barriers facing the UASC pupils was their varying, often poor, understanding of the English Language.

Hence, part of the College course would be ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), including literacy, delivered at a level that matched the needs of the pupils. And to enhance the UASC pupils' College experience with hands-on, practical activities, they would also have some curriculum-driven classes, such as Sports Leadership and Hospitality.

Also in response to information from the EAL and Social Work partners, the College used the services of a trained Refugee Trauma Counsellor to ensure the pupils' needs were fully understood.

### Delivery of the course

When the course launched in February 2023, there were 17 pupils registered from Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Banff Academies. With assistance from the EAL Service, they were split into two classes dependent on their English language abilities to ensure that the ESOL they were taught aligned with their existing level of understanding. Their transition to College was supported by an EAL Service team member, who attended with them while they settled in.

One group spent the morning in the ESOL classroom and the afternoon in the Sport and Fitness facilities; the other group vice versa. Later on, some weeks had Hospitality provision replace Sports in the pupils' timetables.

As the pilot was drawing to a close in April, it was identified that the pupils were benefiting hugely from their College experience – and also that there were new Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children attending schools in the area, who may benefit from inclusion on the course. Therefore it was decided to extend the programme, which restarted after the Easter Holidays with the original 17 pupils plus 6 newcomers, making a cohort of 23.

### Outcomes of the course

Throughout the year, the impact that the College course had on the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children was tremendous. Not only was there an improvement in the pupils' English language abilities, but they also gained Meta Skills such as communication, teamwork and punctuality. A sense of camaraderie was developed among the pupils, who also developed aspirations for the future. Some comments about the course from the pupils include:

- 'I love college'
- 'I want to go to college'
- 'I like the college teachers'
- 'Yes I like college. College is very good'

Natasha McDuma, head of the UASC Team in Aberdeenshire, has noticed a huge change in the pupils who studied at NESCol. She said,

***"I cannot begin to explain the impact College has had on these young people. From the welcome they received to the positive experience of learning in the College environment, this course has been so engaging. I have seen these young men, some of whom had very little enthusiasm for school, excited to get up for the bus to College at 7.30AM. Not only has their English improved remarkably, but their confidence and their outlook."***

***"One young person came to us and did not want to leave his room for 6 or 7 months, but with the College course he has made a group of friends that he is excited to spend time with and his English is so improved. It really has been life-changing."***

Following completion of the course in July 2023, several of the UASC pupils progressed to study full time at NESCol, with 10 undertaking a Beginners ESOL course, and four taking an Elementary ESOL course. Seven of the cohort remained in school and will be returning to College to continue their studies on the Schools-College Partnership course, continuing to develop their English and experience other curriculum areas at NESCol's Fraserburgh Campus.

The course is running again in the 23-24 academic year with a cohort of 13, and places available to be taken up by newcomers to the area until 12 October 2023.

